Children's BIBLE Stories

407 BIBLE STORIES

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CHARACTER BUILDING STORIES



407 BIBLE STORIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

TEACHING GUIDE:AS YOU DO DAILY DEVOTION PAY ATTENTION TO:

CHARACTER BUILDING STORIES

FOR EACH DEVOTION ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS NEW?
2. WHAT IS SUPRISING?
3. WHAT DOES THE STORY SAY ABOUT GOD?
4. WHAT DOES THE STORY SAY ABOUT MISSION?
5. WHAT DOES THE STORY SAY ABOUT PEOPLE AND MYSELF?
6. WHAT IS THE LESSON I LEARNT FROM THE STORY?
7. THE BIBLE HAS 8100+ PROMISES TO CLAIM. IN THE BIBLE READING TODAY, WHAT DO I CLAIM?
8. PAY ATTENTION TO THE HIGHLIGHTED BAR FOR SCRIPTURES/MEMORY VERSE, PRAYER, ACTIVITY.

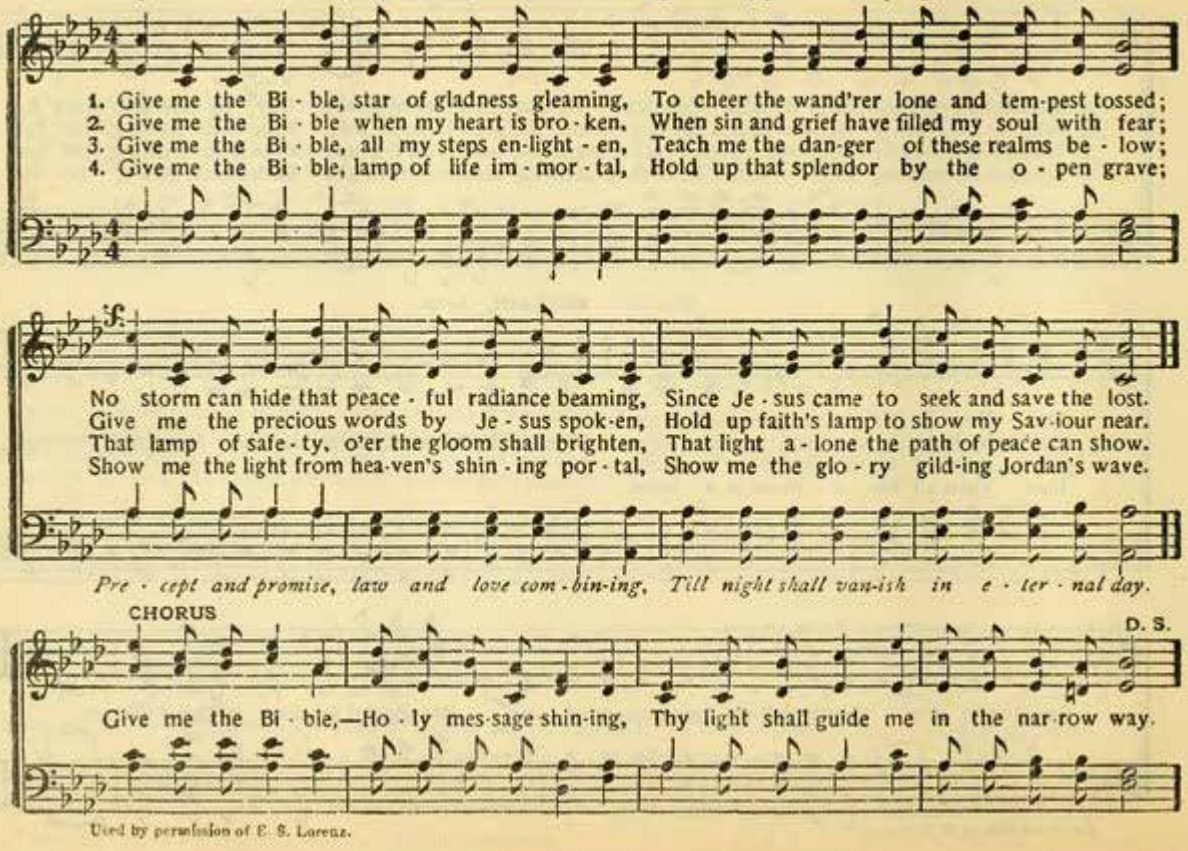
GIVE ME THE BIBLE SO THAT I MAY RECEIVE LIGHT AS I JOURNEY

Offered to all who desire and seek to walk closely with God.

498

GIVE ME THE BIBLE.

PRISCILLA J OWENS. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."— Ps. 119: 105. E. S. LORENZ.



Used by permission of E. S. Lorenz.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to:

1. CREATOR, SUSTAINER AND REDEEMER

2. Pendo Nyafanga Makori – Rorya, Tanzania

3. Denis Chilala Momadi – Masasi, Tanzania

4. Jemima Kivunge Nyafanga – Arusha, Tanzania

5. Paulina Bisieri Masaka – Kisii, Kenya

6. Machwati Masaka – Kisii, Kenya

7. New Filipo – Malawi

8. Nyafanga Nicanor Makori – Mara, Tanzania

9. Prisca Adongo Nyafanga – Migori, Kenya

10. Ana Jogoro – Masasi, Tanzania

11. Chilala Momadi – Masasi, Tanzania

Writing of this book:

Those who were involved in preparing this book at various stages by the grace of God include Writers, Prayer Warriors, Technologists, Editors, and Artists (illustrations and design):

Grace Momadi-Masaka from New Jersey, USA

Daniel Nyangaresi Masaka from Kisii, Kenya

Debby Bisheli-Nairobi, Kenya

Bunga Dettu from Lamadi, Tanzania

Pastor Daniel Elfoard Matekere – Majita, Tanzania

Stephen Letta from Masasi, Tanzania

Gerard Odot Nyafanga from Rorya, Tanzania

Musa Budodi-Shinyanga, Tanzania

Mbusi Mpagalushu from Bariadi, Tanzania

Bettie Magesa Muasya from Nairobi, Kenya

David Jabez Masaka from Pennsylvania, USA

Paul Momadi Masaka from New Jersey, USA

Obadiah Murimi from Nakuru, Kenya

Esrom Katuma from Mara, Tanzania

Ainnes Mngure Mwakiluli-Arusha, Tanzania

Ezekiel Ojwang-Tarime, Tanzania

Dr. and Mrs. Wilson Trickett from Michigan, USA

Damas Kivunge from Arusha, Tanzania

Charles Muraguri from Nairobi, Kenya

Evans Mobegi-Nakuru, Kenya

Books at Home in the Diaspora
Swahili Lulu for Immigrants and Refugees of Swahili

First Edition: Currently at Editorial Review No. 3

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 4
Writing of this book: 5
Other Books: 15
INTRODUCTION 19
GIVE ME THE BIBLE 27
A brief overview of the BIBLE: 32
THE BIBLE IS A MAP 39
Topic: Creation or Beginning 46
Topic: Creation of Man 52
Lesson: The Seventh Day and Rest for Man 57
LESSON: The Fall of Man – Sin Entering the World 62
LESSON: Satan Falls From Heaven 67
LESSON: The consequences of rebellion 71
LESSON: The First Child and the First Death, truly, anger is a very bad thing. 77
TOPIC: The Life of Enoch 82
TOPIC: Noah, the Ark, and the Flood 86
TOPIC: Tower of Babel 92
LESSON: Abram – Father of the Faithful 96
LESSON: The Birth of Ishmael and the Promise of Isaac's Birth 100
LESSON: Abraham Speaks with God and the Fire of Judgment 105
LESSON: The Birth of Isaac 109
LESSON: A Great Test for Abraham 112
LESSON: A Wife for Isaac 116
LESSON: The Struggle of the Twins and the Birthright 120
LESSON: Jacob Takes Esau's Blessing 123
TOPIC: The Family of Jacob 129
TOPIC: The Struggle of the Night 135
TOPIC: Joseph and His Brothers 139
TOPIC: Joseph Comes Out of Prison 143
LESSON: The Sons of Jacob Go to Buy Grain 147
Lesson: Jacob Meets Joseph – Repaying Good for Evil 152
TOPIC: Jacob's Family Goes to Egypt 155
TOPIC: Jacob Finishes Well by Blessing His Sons 160
The Birth of Moses 164
LESSON: Suffering Makes One Strong & Moses and the Burning Bush 170
LESSON: Moses is Empowered to Face Pharaoh 175
LESSON: The Plagues of Egypt 177
LESSON: The First Passover 181
LESSON: Crossing the Red Sea 185
TOPIC: Bitter Water and the Bread of Manna – Complaints Increase 190
LESSON: The Waters of Meribah and Dividing Leadership 196
LESSON: The Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (Horeb) 198
TOPIC: The Law and Judgment 205
TOPIC: "Let Them Build Me a Sanctuary" 208
LESSON: The Sin of Worshiping the Golden Calf 211
LESSON: Moses Goes Up the Mountain Again 217
TOPIC: Reasons for Having the Sanctuary 221
TOPIC: Consecrating the Priests and Their Garments for God's Glory 226

TOPIC: The Services of the Sanctuary 231
TOPIC: The Holiness of the Priestly Ministry 235
TOPIC: The Day of Atonement 240
TOPIC: Clean and Unclean Things 246
TOPIC: God and His Complaining People (Leviticus 251
TOPIC: The Siblings of Moses and Rebellion 256
TOPIC: God Commands the Sending of 12 Spies 261
TOPIC: The Waters of Meribah Cause Moses to Miss Entering Canaan 266
TOPIC: Journeying On Amidst Challenges 269
TOPIC: Offerings, Feasts, and the Census of the Israelites 273
TOPIC: The Story is Repeated a Second Time as Moses Bids Farewell to Jeshurun 278
TOPIC: The Song and Death of Moses 283
TOPIC: Rahab and the Scarlet Cord 287
TOPIC: Crossing the Jordan River 291
TOPIC: Joshua Encounters the Commander of the Army 294
TOPIC: The Sin of Achan—No One Is an Island 298
TOPIC: Joshua Deceived by the Gibeonites and the Sun Stands Still 302
TOPIC: The Last Days of Joshua 306
TOPIC: Choose for Yourselves Today 311
TOPIC: The First Judges and Israel's Rebellion 314
Gideon – Are You Ready to Remove 31,700 Things from Your Life? 318
TOPIC: Jephthah and the Vow of Sacrifice 323
LESSON: The Man Who Was Once Mighty Over All 328
TOPIC: Samson's Riddle 333
TOPIC: The End of Samson 338
Topic: The Evil of One Person Spreads to the Whole Family! 342
TOPIC: The Evil That Burns the Ears in Israel 346
TOPIC: Naomi Returns Home, and the Daughter-in-law Who Loved Her Goes with Her 350
LESSON: Boaz Marries Ruth 355
TOPIC: The Child Samuel, A Blessing to a God-fearing Mother 359
LESSON: The Boy Samuel in the Temple 364
TOPIC: The Philistines Capture the Ark of the Covenant (Ichabod) 369
TOPIC: Samuel, the Last Judge of Israel 374
TOPIC: Saul is Anointed as King 379
TOPIC: Sinning by Performing the Priest's Duty 383
TOPIC: God Regrets About Saul, Who Valued Traditions More Than Obedience 387
LESSON: David is Chosen as King 391
TOPIC: The Battle Belongs to the Lord, Not to Us 397
TOPIC: The Friendship of David and Jonathan 401
TOPIC: The Slaughter of the Priests 405
LESSON: Abiathar Flees to David 410
TOPIC: David, Nabal, and Abigail 414
TOPIC: Saul Pursues David Again 418
LESSON: The Witch of Endor 422
LESSON: Satan's Deceptions 426
TOPIC: The Death of Saul 428
TOPIC: David Rules Over Hebron and All Israel 433
TOPIC: The Ark of the LORD Returns 437
TOPIC: Repaying Kindness Through Mephibosheth 442
TOPIC: The Great Sin of David 445

TOPIC: David's Punishment 449
TOPIC: David's Repentance 454
TOPIC: Evil in the House of David 458
TOPIC: Absalom and Joab 462
TOPIC: Unholy Desires 467
TOPIC: Absalom Goes to War Against His Father 471
TOPIC: Absalom is Killed 475
TOPIC: David Returns to the Kingdom 480
TOPIC: David's Mighty Warriors 485
TOPIC: David Counts Israel 489
TOPIC: The Coronation of Solomon 493
TOPIC: Psalms, Songs, and Worship 497
TOPIC: Solomon and His Father's Instructions 503
TOPIC: The LORD Appears to Solomon 507
TOPIC: Words of Wisdom 512
TOPIC: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes 518
TOPIC: Ecclesiastes or Koheleth 522
TOPIC: Building the Temple 528
TOPIC: The Completion of the Temple Construction 533
TOPIC: The Temple is Dedicated 537
TOPIC: The Lord's Response to Solomon 542
TOPIC: The Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon 547
TOPIC: Solomon Forsakes God 552
TOPIC: How to Avoid Regret 556
LESSON: The Kingdom of Israel Divided 559
TOPIC: The Withered Hand of Jeroboam 562
TOPIC: The Kings of Judah and Israel 565
TOPIC: Kings and Prophet Elijah the Tishbite 569
TOPIC: The Widow's Son of Zarephath is Raised 574
TOPIC: The Prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel 577
TOPIC: Elijah Loses Courage and Flees 582
TOPIC: Elijah Anoints His Successor 586
TOPIC: Naboth's Vineyard 590
LESSON: The Last Days of Ahab 594
TOPIC: Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah, and Elijah 598
TOPIC: What Blessing Would You Ask for If You Were Asked? 601
TOPIC: Disobedient Children Are Punished 606
TOPIC: The Widow and the Shunammite Woman 611
TOPIC: Poisonous Food and the Sunken Axe 616
TOPIC: Commander Naaman and the Slave Girl 621
TOPIC: Naaman's Leprosy Transfers to Gehazi 626
TOPIC: Chariots of Fire 629
The LORD Fights for Israel 632
TOPIC: Hazael Becomes King of Aram 636
TOPIC: The Reign of Jehu 640
TOPIC: Joash – The Boy King 644
TOPIC: The Choir That Won the Battle 649
TOPIC: The Evil Years of the Kings 654
TOPIC: More Kings 659
TOPIC: How the Ten Tribes of Israel Were Lost 664

TOPIC: King Hezekiah – Revival and Reformation 667
TOPIC: Hezekiah's Illness and the Sun Standing Still 671
TOPIC: King Manasseh and Josiah 676
TOPIC: Josiah Carries Out Reforms 680
TOPIC: The Last Kingdom of Judah 687
TOPIC: The Example of Ezra the Priest 693
TOPIC: Ezra and Nehemiah – We Cannot Come Down from the Wall 697
TOPIC: Our God Will Fight for Us 702
TOPIC: The Lord Says, "Come, Let Us Reason Together" 707
TOPIC: More Messages from Isaiah 712
TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Jeremiah 716
TOPIC: The Further Message of Jeremiah 720
TOPIC: The Prophet Ezekiel 724
TOPIC: Ezekiel's Message Continues 728
TOPIC: Esther Becomes Queen 732
TOPIC: Esther and the Jews Hold a Special Prayer 737
TOPIC: Mordecai is Promoted and the Jews Defend Themselves 742
LESSON: The Man of God, Job 747
TOPIC: Daniel Goes into Exile 752
TOPIC: Suitable Food 757
LESSON: The King Dreams a Dream 762
TOPIC: The Kingdoms That Will Rule the World 766
TOPIC: The Importance of the Prophecy of Daniel 2 770
TOPIC: An In-depth Study of Daniel 2 Prophecy 774
TOPIC: Forced to Worship an Idol 779
TOPIC: King Nebuchadnezzar Lives in the Wild 784
TOPIC: The Bloodless Hand Writes on the Wall 790
TOPIC: Daniel is Thrown into the Lions' Den 795
TOPIC: Strange Beasts 800
TOPIC: The Interpretation of Daniel's Dream 803
TOPIC: The Vision of the Ram and the Goat 806
TOPIC: Daniel Receives Further Revelation of Prophecy 810
TOPIC: The Prophecy of the 2300 Days Revealed 814
TOPIC: Increasing Knowledge 818
TOPIC: God's Love for His People (Hosea) 823
TOPIC: The Message of Joel – How Can I Leave You? How Can I Save You, O Israel? 827
TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Amos 830
TOPIC: The Message of Micah 833
TOPIC: Jonah – The Prophet Swallowed by a Fish 837
TOPIC: Jonah Inside the Fish 841
TOPIC: Building the Temple – Haggai 846
TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Nahum 849
TOPIC: Obadiah – The Day of the LORD 852
TOPIC: Habakkuk Asks God Questions 855
TOPIC: The Message of Zephaniah 859
LESSON: Zechariah – A Message to the Returnees from Exile in 520 B.C. 862
TOPIC: Malachi – The Message of Restoration, The Lord Will Open Windows and Not Doors! 866
TOPIC: Has God Forgotten Us? People Asked Themselves 874
TOPIC: The Harmony of the Gospel Books 878
TOPIC: JESUS HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, AND HE LIVES FOREVER. 883

TOPIC: The Prophecy of the Birth of Jesus the Messiah and Our Lord. 888
TOPIC: The Birth of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah 892
TOPIC: The Birth of Jesus the Messiah
and the Son of God. 897
TOPIC: The Wise Men from the East Visit Jesus 902
TOPIC: Jesus Blessed in the Temple at 40 Days Old 908
TOPIC: Jesus in the Temple at Age 12 913
TOPIC: The Childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist 918
TOPIC: Jesus is Anointed through Baptism in the Jordan River 923
TOPIC: Jesus is Tempted by Satan in the Wilderness 927
TOPIC: The Calling of the First Disciples 931
TOPIC: Calling the First Disciples 935
TOPIC: Jesus Performs His First Miracle at the Wedding in Cana 940
TOPIC: Jesus Overturns the Temple Tables and Cleanses the Temple. 944
TOPIC: Nicodemus, a Disciple of Jesus Who Came at Night 948
TOPIC: The Samaritan Woman of Sychar at the Well 952
TOPIC: John is Imprisoned and Killed 957
TOPIC: Jesus Begins His Ministry in His Hometown
of Nazareth 961
TOPIC: Jesus Rejected at Nazareth 965
TOPIC: The Fishermen Are Called Again to Be Disciples 970
TOPIC: Matthew is called to be a disciple and hosts
a farewell feast for his friends. 974
TOPIC: Things to Do on the Sabbath 979
TOPIC: Healing on the Sabbath 984
TOPIC: The Gate to Heaven is Narrow 988
TOPIC: The Mountain of Blessing 993
TOPIC: The Mount of Blessing –
The Law and Living a Christian Life 999
TOPIC: Blessed, Happy, or Fortunate 1004
TOPIC: The Lord's Prayer That Jesus Taught Us to Pray 1008
TOPIC: Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to
you. 1012
TOPIC: The Centurion's Servant is Healed 1017
TOPIC: Mary Magdalene and the Perfume of Love 1021
TOPIC: Martha and Mary – Two Sisters Who Served Jesus 1025
TOPIC: The Sower, Jesus Teaches in Parables 1029
TOPIC: The Parables of Jesus – The Wind Obeys Him 1033
TOPIC: The Twelve Apostles Go to Work 1037
TOPIC: Sending the Seventy Disciples on a Mission 1041
TOPIC: The Good Samaritan 1045
TOPIC: Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness 1050
TOPIC: Carrying the Cross 1054
TOPIC: The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Precious Pearl or a Fishing Net. 1058
TOPIC: Five Loaves and Two Fish Feeding Thousands 1062
TOPIC: Peter Walks on Water 1067
TOPIC: Some Disciples Turn Back and Others Abandon Him 1072
TOPIC: The Woman Caught in Adultery 1075
TOPIC: The Blind Man is Healed 1080
TOPIC: The Blind Man Who Was Healed Is Cast Out of the Synagogue 1084

TOPIC: The Demon-Possessed Man of Gerasa 1088
TOPIC: Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with the Issue of Blood 1092
TOPIC: You Cannot Serve Two Masters 1095
TOPIC: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus 1097
TOPIC: Returning Thanks 1100
TOPIC: Sin Can Follow a Person to Church 1103
TOPIC: Zacchaeus, the Short Man Who Climbed a Tree 1106
TOPIC: The Faith of the Persistent Woman 1109
TOPIC: The Feeding of the 4,000 with Bread and Fish for the Second Time 1113
TOPIC: Carrying the Cross and Denying Oneself 1118
TOPIC: The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon 1122
LESSON: Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God? 1127
TOPIC: Is it lawful to divorce or separate? 1132
TOPIC: Let the Little Children Come to Me 1136
TOPIC: The Rich Young Ruler 1141
TOPIC: The Early and Late Workers Paid Equally 1145
TOPIC: Sitting at the Right or Left Hand in Heaven 1148
TOPIC: Blind Bartimaeus 1152
TOPIC: Paying Taxes is Lawful 1156
TOPIC: We Must Forgive Others as God Forgives Us 1160
TOPIC: Hosanna, Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the LORD 1163
TOPIC: Learn from the Fig Tree 1168
TOPIC: The Vineyard Owner and the Wicked Workers 1172
TOPIC: The Sadducees, Marriage, and the Resurrection 1175
TOPIC: Which Commandment is the Greatest? 1178
TOPIC: Woe to the Pharisees 1181
TOPIC: The Pharisees – Part Two 1184
TOPIC: Jesus Is Coming Soon 1188
TOPIC: Signs of the End Times 1193
TOPIC: The Parable of the Ten Virgins is a Lesson for Us 1197
TOPIC: Using Our Talents to Be Fruitful 1202
TOPIC: Passport to Heaven 1204
TOPIC: Jesus Raises Lazarus 1209
TOPIC: Plans to Kill Jesus 1214
TOPIC: The Greeks Seek Jesus 1218
TOPIC: Invited to the Wedding 1222
TOPIC: The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin 1224
TOPIC: The Child Who Ran Away from Home 1228
TOPIC: Foot Washing 1232
TOPIC: The Last Passover 1237
TOPIC: Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled 1241
TOPIC: Jesus, the True Vine 1246
TOPIC: Jesus' Prayer for All of Us 1251
TOPIC: Jesus is Arrested 1256
TOPIC: Jesus before Pilate. 1261
TOPIC: The Crown of Thorns 1266
TOPIC: TETELESTAI – IT IS FINISHED 1270
TOPIC: The Burial of Jesus 1277
TOPIC: The Greatest Good News in the World! 1282
TOPIC: The Road to Emmaus: Cleopas and His Companion Receive a Bible Lesson! 1286

TOPIC: Simon and John Go to the Tomb to Confirm 1291
TOPIC: Jesus Appears to His Disciples for 40 Days 1296
TOPIC: Jesus Strengthens Peter 1300
TOPIC: Jesus Ascends to Heaven 1303
TOPIC: We Have a Friend in Heaven 1308
TOPIC: Share the Story of Salvation in Three Minutes! 1312
TOPIC: Waiting for the Holy Spirit / Pentecost in Jerusalem 1315
TOPIC: Pentecost 1317
TOPIC: Peter's Sermon 1321
TOPIC: The Lame Man Jumps. 1326
TOPIC: The Apostles Are Imprisoned for the First Time 1331
TOPIC: Ananias and Sapphira. 1336
TOPIC: The Apostles Are Imprisoned Twice 1340
TOPIC: The Persecution and Martyrdom of Stephen 1344
TOPIC: Saul Persecutes the Saints and the Church 1349
TOPIC: Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch 1353
TOPIC: Saul Encounters Jesus 1356
TOPIC: Tabitha or Dorcas, the Kind Woman, is Raised to Life. 1361
TOPIC: Cornelius of the Gentiles – His Prayers Were Heard 1364
TOPIC: Truly, God Shows No Favoritism 1369
TOPIC: Peter is freed from prison by an Angel 1372
TOPIC: The Jews Reject the Gospel, Christianity Goes to the Gentiles. 1377
TOPIC: Paul is Stoned at Lystra 1382
TOPIC: A Song in Prison 1386
TOPIC: The People Who Turned the World Upside Down. 1390
TOPIC: Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos 1394
TOPIC: Evil Books Are Burned 1399
TOPIC: The Ephesians and Their Goddess Artemis 1402
TOPIC: Paul Bids Farewell to the Believers 1404
TOPIC: Paul is Arrested 1408
TOPIC: Paul Defends Himself and Repeats the History of the Gospel 1412
TOPIC: The Sadducees and Pharisees Argue Over Paul 1415
TOPIC: Paul Goes to Caesarea with the Army 1418
TOPIC: Paul Before Governor Felix 1421
TOPIC: Paul Appeals to Go to Rome Before Agrippa 1424
TOPIC: Paul testifies about his story again 1427
TOPIC: Paul Challenges King Herod Agrippa 1430
TOPIC: Shipwrecked and Swimming. 1434
TOPIC: On the Island of Malta and Their Kindness 1438
TOPIC: Paul Testifies in Rome and Writes Letters to the Churches. 1442
TOPIC: The Letters of Paul, the Apostles, Jude, and James. 1446
TOPIC: For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel! 1450
TOPIC: Problems Faced by New Believers in Corinth Are Discussed 1454
TOPIC: When we are weak, then we are strong. 1458
TOPIC: The Fruit of the Spirit 1462
TOPIC: The Message of Relationships 1466
TOPIC: Rejoice in the Lord, again I say, rejoice 1470
TOPIC: As we have received Christ, let us walk in Him. 1474
TOPIC: Pray Without Ceasing 1478
TOPIC: If anyone is not willing to work, let them not eat 1482

TOPIC: The Character of a Pastor and a Deacon 1486
TOPIC: Victors Will Receive Crowns of Victory 1490
TOPIC: The Character of a Pastor and an Elder 1494
TOPIC: Forgive Onesimus and Accept Him as a Brother 1498
TOPIC: Jesus is superior to all. 1502
TOPIC: Faith Without Good Deeds is Dead 1508
TOPIC: The First Letter of Peter 1512
TOPIC: The Second Epistle of Peter. 1516
TOPIC: Behold the Amazing Love! 1520
TOPIC: The Second Epistle of John 1524
TOPIC: I Pray That You May Prosper in All Things 1528
TOPIC: GOD can keep us from stumbling if we allow Him 1533
TOPIC: Blessed is the One Who Reads 1537
TOPIC: The Seven Churches of Asia Minor 1541
TOPIC: Who is worthy to open the scroll? 1546
TOPIC: How Satan and His Angels Fell to Earth 1549
TOPIC: The First and Second Beast 1553
TOPIC: The Four Angels and the 144,000 Saints 1557
TOPIC: Avoiding False Teachings 1562
TOPIC: Hell (Part 1) 1566
TOPIC: Hell (Part II) 1572
TOPIC: Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man 1576
TOPIC: Forever and Ever in Heaven 1579
TOPIC: The New Jerusalem Descends 1584
TOPIC: Christian Education Is the Eternal and Best Education of All 1588
TOPIC: Making Friends with God 1592
TOPIC: How God Loves Humanity 1596
TOPIC: The Great Controversy is Over! 1600
TOPIC: How to Develop Your Brain to Become a Genius 1604
TOPIC: Steps to Success in Your Life 1608
TOPIC: Methods of Studying the Holy Scriptures: 1611
References: 1614
DAILY BIBLE STORY READING PLAN 1623
WHAT IS ETIQUETTE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS? 1633
ALPHABET OF CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING 1654
RAISING A BOY TO BECOME A PRIEST TO LEAD HIS HOME 1656
GOD'S STEWARD 1715
In These Morally Challenging Times 1731
Did God Create Satan? 1744
Lesson 3 1758
The Colossal City 1767
Keys to a Happy Marriage 1780
Written in Stone 1790
The Lost Day of History 1803
Final Redemption 1812
Purity and Power! 1828
Do the Dead Really Die? 1838
Does Satan Lead to Hell? 1846
1,000 Years of Peace 1856
God's Health Plan for Free 1868

Is Obedience Valid? 1879
Who is the Antichrist? 1889
Message of the Angel from Heaven 1902
God Designed the Plans 1914
Right on Time! Prophetic Appointment Revealed! 1924
Case Closed 1937
The Mark of the Beast 1950
America in Bible Prophecy 1965
Another Woman 1980
The Bride of Christ 1992
Does God Guide Astrologers and Psychics? 2003
Do We Trust God 2014
Changing Love 2023
No Turning Back 2035
LET THE READER UNDERSTAND 2049
Rules Related to AUTHORITY in Our Family… 2105
12 RULES FOR RAISING A DELINQUENT CHILD 2107
RAISING A DAUGHTER TO BE A WOMAN OF PROVERBS 31 2196

Other Books:

1. PDF of Swahili Bible Project RYU
2. Nipe Biblia – A Summary of the 66 Books of the Bible
3. Your Health
4. A Woman Who Loves the Lord
5. Who is a Layman? (Especially for Spiritual Leaders)
6. Raising Children
7. Screts of Prayer
8. Foundations of Education
9. Songs of the Great Controversy
10. Testimonies for the Church, Volumes 1-10
11. Bible Commentary, Old Testament and New Testament
12. Foundations of Human Education
13. Ministry to the Needy
14. Ministry of Pastors
15. Ask the Prophet
16. The Broken Blueprint
17. Retirement Life
18. Counsel for Humanity
19. Advanced Counsel on Food and Nutrition
20. The Truth About Angels
21. Counsel on Sex, Adultery, and Divorce
22. Dress that Pleases God
23. Gospel Workers
24. Community Welfare Ministry
25. Camp Meetings (Feast of Tabernacles)
26. Healing Ministry
27. Mission to Cities and Towns
28. Food Ministry
29. Testimonies for Pastors and Gospel Workers

This is the First Edition, edited and reviewed. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to share them with us so that we can work together in this mission. Let us pray for one another so that experienced writers in the Swahili-speaking world may provide life-giving counsel, making many resources available for free or at affordable prices, reaching thousands of Swahili readers worldwide. Please pray for this ministry as we consider writing children's books and finding dedicated individuals with the fear of God to assist in translation and editing into Swahili.
MARANATHA

Acknowledgments:
We cannot claim this book as solely our own—far from it—because we have received much from others beyond ourselves, including me, my husband, our editors, and our children. I have been blessed by our editors—Brethren Bunga Dettu, Daniel Matekere, Emmanuel Mogenge, Stephen Letta, Kwandu Kasiri, Mbusi Mpagalushu, Bettie Magesa-Muasya, Innocent Wayoga, Gerard Nyafanga, Faustin Mkama, Obadiah Murimi, Charles Muraguri, Tabitha William, Bariki Milinje Momadi, and Benard Chikowir—who has recorded the book in audio form available on YouTube under Kesha la Asubuhi (Children & Youth) through the Kijito cha Uvuvio ministry.

I have also had conversations with laypeople, pastors, and various believers who have expressed interest in the concept of this book. It is our hope that this book will be a blessing to all. Our goal is to make it available online for free and to print physical copies as funds become available. Swahili is now recognized as the third most widely spoken language in the Christian world and the tenth globally. It is our prayer to obtain Bible commentaries and lexicons/concordances in Swahili as well. Efforts to translate and publish these resources are ongoing! Please pray for these Gospel efforts in Swahili—online, at home, and abroad!

How can we direct our intentions and overcome temptations?
First, by choosing God—just as Joshua said, "Choose this day whom you will serve." Second, by reading and living according to the Scriptures so that we do not sin (Psalm 119:10). Third, by obeying God and resisting the devil, who will then flee from us (James 4:7). Fourth, by reflecting on Philippians 4:8, which is a filter for our thoughts and actions. Finally, 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." We are called to take every thought captive to obey Christ and to cast down everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Therefore, the Word of God is not just a book for information—it is a book for

transformation, changing our character to reflect that of God, enabling us to give ourselves wholly to Him.

May the Spirit of God help us to consecrate ourselves fully. When we fully dedicate ourselves, we will be able to reach the three billion people who have not yet heard the message of the Remnant—of the living God in heaven. He is our Creator, who died for us on the cross and is coming again to take us to live with Him forever. Life is very short—Scripture says that a thousand years are like a single day to God. This means that Adam, who lived over 900 years, only lived about 20 hours in God's time! Someone who lives 80 years today would only have lived about two hours. This reality compels us to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, keeping His Word before us day and night. The Scriptures reveal God's love and promises, even granting us eternal life.

Character and the people we love are the only things we will take with us to heaven! JESUS is coming soon! The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let everyone who hears this say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let them come and take the water of life freely. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. MARANATHA, beloved of the LORD! Amen.

The Gospel in Swahili; At Home and in the Diaspora
Samaritan Laymen Ministries of Jersey

Bible Teachings for Children
Simplified Bible – 365 Devotions for Children and Youth

Seven Key Principles as We Continue to Study the Bible:

1. Believe in God and confess our sins.

2. Read the Scriptures daily.

3. Pray every day.

4. Attend a fellowship that adheres to the Scriptures.

5. Engage in community service.

6. Share the Good News with others.

7. Live a lifestyle consistent with the Scriptures we read.

INTRODUCTION

When we visited many parts of East Africa, we did not find a children's Bible or Bible stories written in a language that is both simple, goes with the african culture and profound enough for children to understand. This deeply saddened us, and we began to ask a few people to help us write a book that could meet this need. Many of those we approached gave excuses, just as we did initially, until we realized it was best for us to write it ourselves. We prayed and asked God to pour out His Spirit and guide us in writing. We also requested many others to continue praying for us.

We thank God for His power and how He enables and blesses us. There is no other book that provides comfort and brings joy to humanity like the Bible! We live in a world filled with troubles, anxiety, distress, fear, and even deep sorrow, and people are longing to hear the Good News. God has given us the Good News and a message of hope. The Good News is that Jesus was born, lived on earth, died, and rose again so that we may receive salvation. In many ways, God encourages us not to be dismayed or afraid because He loves us more than we love ourselves. He loves those we love even more than we do. Friends, money, entertainment, movies, sports, toys, and even family cannot give you the lasting joy that comes from Almighty God.

Psalm 121:1 says, "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?" Only God's way can help you and give you peace in your heart, contentment in your soul, and meaningful purpose in life. If you are facing problems, sorrow, anxiety, illness, or any other hardship, the Word of God is the only Good News! It is the answer to all your problems. Read it, and you will discover words that bring you joy and eternal purpose. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." Our refuge in parenting and our security is found in the Word of God. The Bible is the voice of God, as if He is speaking to us face to face.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but His Word will never pass away. The Word of God did not come by human will, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21). Scripture is God-breathed and is given to us for the purpose of making us wise for salvation through faith, teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-16). The Word of God is more important than the food we eat.

How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God or that it is true? Every child should know how to answer this question about the hope we have. There are many reasons, but a key reason is this: The lives of millions of people have been transformed from sin to blessings through the power of the Bible. No one has ever read a mathematics textbook and said, "After reading math, my heart has decided to choose righteousness and abandon sin." But many

people have made such decisions after reading and studying the Word of God. Take some time to read Daniel 2 and Daniel 7—parallel prophecies that have been fulfilled. These chapters show that the Bible is a reliable book, and its prophecies are completely true.

The Word of God is our compass and map on earth. The Bible came to us through divine inspiration. God's inspiration guided His servants, including prophets like Moses, Daniel (who was a prime minister), Solomon and David (who were kings), Amos (who was a shepherd), Matthew (who was a tax collector), Luke (who was a physician), and many others. Inspiration was not mechanical dictation where they were told to write word for word, but rather, God inspired their thoughts, and they wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For example, some wrote in poetic form, others as prophecies, and others through stories. The Bible has been proven to be the Word of God. No other book can answer human questions as the Bible does. No other book soothes the longing and loneliness of the human heart like the Bible! The Bible provides the light of knowledge and wisdom, illuminating our minds and purifying us. It is a revelation from the Living God—He is the Light of our lives! God has preserved His Word throughout history for thousands of years. The Bible contains God's instructions, testimonies, laws, and commandments—read Psalm 119.

The Bible contains 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. It took over 1,700 years to write the Bible. However, all approximately 40 authors maintained a unified message and did not contradict one another because they were inspired by the same God. The Bible has 1,189 chapters. The longest chapter is Psalm 119, and the longest book is Jeremiah, followed by Genesis, Psalms, Ezekiel, and Exodus. The shortest books are 3 John, 2 John, Philemon, Obadiah, and Jude. The shortest chapter is Psalm 117, and the middle chapter of the Bible is Psalm 118.

Before the printing press was invented, over 23,000 manuscript copies of the Bible were found worldwide, and they were remarkably consistent with each other—unlike other ancient writings like those of Plato or Socrates, which only had a few copies, sometimes fewer than ten. This shows that the Bible is not a fabricated book. The books of Acts and Luke were examined through historical events, cities, and dates, and they were found to be astonishingly accurate.The Bible can be divided as follows:The first five books (Pentateuch) written by Moses.12 historical books.Five poetic books.Five major prophetic books.13 minor prophetic books.Four Gospel accounts.One book of church history (Acts).14 letters from Paul.Seven letters from other apostles.One book of prophecy (Revelation).According to the Bible, our world is approximately 6,000 years old. The Great Flood occurred around 2348 BC, and Jesus was born between 4 BC and 1 AD. Revelation 12 clearly states that there was a war in heaven, and Satan was cast down to earth, where he deceived our

first parents, Adam and Eve. This is when sin entered the world. Sin is the transgression of God's law. Sin is what brought pain, sorrow, suffering, and death into the world.Sin is what brought pain, sorrow, crying, and death.

The ten longest books of the Bible account for 55% of the Old Testament. The shortest books include Obadiah, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.

No.	**Longest book**	**Numbers of verses**	Graph-unit Hits	Morph-unit Hits	Bytes
1.	Jeremiah	1,364	22,285	30,203	241,209
2.	Genesis	1,533	20,722	28,848	226,894
3.	Psalms	2,527	19,662	25,465	238,562
4.	Ezekiel	1,273	19,053	26,572	214,416
5.	Isaiah	1,291	17,197	23,204	191,777
6.	Exodus	1,213	16,890	23,934	184,372
7.	Numbers	1,289	16,583	23,363	182,945
8.	Deuteronomy	959	14,488	20,329	159,872
9.	2 Chronicles	822	13,520	20,000	154,125
10.	1 Samuel	811	13,506	19,211	147,392

Table No. 1: List of the longest books in the Bible

God is faithful, He forgives us and makes us start a new life, a new creation. The battle between evil and good, or Satan and God, continues and will continue until the last day when Christ will come to take His saints and put an end to sin and the life of sin. This battle is the longest of all. The shortest battles of all were fought in Zanzibar, lasting for 38 minutes, and the Sultan of Oman surrendered, after which the British took control of the island.

In the end, God will wipe away the tears of His people. There will be no more crying, no more sorrow, and no more death. Those who have overcome by the grace of God, who trust in Him, obey Him, and hope in Him, will receive the gift of eternal life. This is the greatest gift beyond anything in the world. Beloved child and youth, trust in the Lord and choose Him every day in your life. Seven important things for every human being are, first, to know God and follow His ways; second, to pray every day; third, to read His Word every day; fourth, to worship with others in fellowship and meetings that follow the Scriptures; fifth, to testify of God's mighty deeds to others; sixth, to help in community service; and seventh, to live a life that reflects Christ, according to the Scriptures.

Strive to understand the difference between sin, iniquity, transgression, and errors (Sin, Iniquity, and Transgression). Sins of knowledge and ignorance, sins of action and thoughts—God forgives all of these, desiring that we begin to live a new life again. Many who have read the Word of God have said, "I

have never seen beauty and sweetness like this." The Bible will continue to shine and be more precious than gold every day you continue to read it. Its sweetness will be extraordinary, and you won't want to stop reading it!

I have witnessed this myself, for I prayed for this request in 1988 when I saw my teacher from England saying that the Word has a wonderful sweetness; he said that if he didn't read it in the morning, he felt he had lost his joy! I too said, "Lord, I pray You give me the taste of the Scriptures that this teacher of mine has!" God has fulfilled this promise for me and many others in my life. The Bible has more than 8,000 promises!

Many who were poor in school have done well by reading the Word. People have learned about future things by reading it. Look at the book of Daniel 2. We do not need astrologers, witches, or any kind of fortune tellers to tell us what is coming because they will fill us with fear without reason. Read the Bible and do not skip the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation. Trust God with all your understanding, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him (The Almighty), and He will guide you in all things. One day you will be in heaven to live with Him forever, and the joy will be immense. On the day of the Lord, you will stand as a conqueror because He will defend you for having chosen Him and His ways. You will have avoided sin and much sorrow indeed. The day of the Lord is mentioned more than 22 times in the Bible, and we are told that every human should prepare for that day.

All humans have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death. But God has provided a way through the sacrifice of His Son, Christ. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For the Son of Man did not come to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:16-17). Beloved child, youth, or adult, we have hope to live forever in heaven with our heavenly Father. Let us take heart, pray that He helps us in this journey, and find good friends who do not have evil motives so that we may win this race.

Disobedience to God brings sorrow to our lives and to others. It is best to obey Him willingly because it will bless us, bless others, and also bless God. We cannot touch heaven without touching people! When we do wrong to others, we have wronged God too; He is our Father. These relationships are inseparable. And when God gives a command saying "do not," it is for our own happiness, as His creations. For example, when He says do not commit adultery, He has no wife, but He gives that command for our own happiness. All of His Ten Commandments are for our own good. Every one of His commands is for our benefit and that of others! You can study each of His commands more!

We also continue to pray for each other. About 170 years ago in Europe, people came up with the false theory of evolution—humans evolving from worms, frogs, monkeys, and then to humans. We know that no one has ever heard on the radio, "Today we welcome new citizens from the jungles of Gombe or Virunga, who have evolved from monkeys and joined us!" These are false, evil, and lies. I think we are not greatly troubled by these theories because many diminish our value as humans, and we live with these creatures in our game reserves without seeing such changes. However, we believe that we were created by God with great purpose.

Should we continue reading the Bible? Many new readers say they don't know where to start. There are many ways to read the Bible. Some have started with Genesis but stopped when they found the books uninteresting or lacking the desire to continue reading. We recommend starting with the Gospels, like Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, then Acts, and returning to Genesis and Exodus. You can also read it by focusing on one person and learning from their life. For example, Stephen, the deacon, who loved God and lived his life for Him. He was a Greek, and he did not have a spirit of revenge, praying for those who were killing him. Others, when they are wronged even a little, react harshly, saying, "Even if I die, don't come to my funeral; you will be cursed for doing this!" These words are very serious. Those who wrong us should be prayed for, and we should ask God to forgive them and keep us from their evil.

You can also make summaries or take notes as we are doing now, which will open your eyes in ways that words cannot explain. Once you get used to it, you will be able to start from the beginning to the end with ease as others do. Read three chapters a day, and by the end of the year, you will have finished it. Or, if you read one chapter a day and reflect on it, you will finish it in three years. Talk to others about how they read it. Strive to read it joyfully and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you before you start. And when you begin reading, pray and pray again! You will be blessed with countless benefits.

Don't set yourself to read too many pages that will make you feel it's a punishment or overwhelming. The Bible is like food. Food should be chewed and digested so you get nourishment. Reading the entire Bible takes about 80 hours. But you need time to pray and reflect on even a single verse, and you will be surprised it may take you two weeks! Don't rush as if you are being pressured or hurried. The Bible has a message for all people: old, young, rich, poor, black, white, short, tall, learned, and ordinary people.

Never fear! The Word says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Truly, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has conceived the things God has prepared for us!

Let us read His Word so we may know His promises and claim them.

The Christian faith does not allow a person to do whatever they want! A believer must submit to God and live according to the Scriptures. Before sin, God spoke to people face to face, but after the fall into sin, He spoke to them through voices, through angels, through prophets, and ultimately through the Scriptures. He started by writing Himself with His own hand and then the inspired writers of the Scriptures, eventually forming the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God. The Word of God is the final authority for God's creatures here on earth, in heaven, and it has a message for everyone. Read it, meditate on it, love it, act on it, and proclaim it. Do not stop others from spreading it or hoarding it. For our mission is to go into all the world and teach people, making them disciples of Jesus. This book is a daily devotional of the Bible for children, from Genesis to Revelation, structured for each day for 366 days.

The Bible tells the history of humanity from when God created man to the fall and rebellion in the Garden of Eden, to the time when God will dwell with His people in the new heaven and new earth. This is the Summary of the Bible- (Creation, Fall, Redemption). There is a Greek term called "Theodicy." In the book of Revelation 12, we are told that Satan lived in heaven and was the first rebel. He persuaded a third of the angels and was cast down here on earth. That became the beginning of the conflict between God and Satan, or good and evil. We are now in this battle, and the book of Job gives us a small glimpse of this conflict. There is a day when this battle will end. According to the Bible, the signs of the times in Daniel 2 and 7 are a prophetic calendar, showing that we are at the end of the world's history.

God will come to judge the world and reward those who have done good by His grace with eternal life; and for those who have done evil, their punishment will be eternal fire. Everyone should read Daniel's chapters and understand what they mean today. This is the summary of the Bible. Genesis 1 and 2 is creation, Genesis 3 is the fall of humanity into sin. The rest of the Bible is God's plan to deal with sin so it never rises again. Nahum 1:9. He sends apostles and prophets to help people prepare, but often they do not listen, and sometimes they kill the servants of God. Finally, God sends His Son, who is born, lives among people for 33 ½ years, teaches them, and eventually is killed, buried, and resurrects, ascending back to heaven, where He continues His priestly ministry, interceding for us. Soon He will come to take those who have chosen to live with Him in heaven, and the wicked will face their judgment.

You and I, whether child or adult, are part of this great battle. Even a little child struggles with denying themselves, or giving up what they want. All battles are in the mind and heart. We hear two voices in our hearts. We must

wear the armor of God and stand firm, as in Ephesians 6 with the seven pieces of armor, be vigilant, and pray that we may not fall into the traps and snares of the evil one. Every day we make choices, either choosing God or Satan. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but when we believe in Jesus and repent, God forgives us and accepts us as His children. God helps us live a new life through His grace.

Let us trust God so we may be confirmed, and trust His prophets so we may prosper. This book has changed the lives of many people. When the colonizers arrived in Papua New Guinea, they laughed at the locals who were reading the Bible and following it. The locals said, "You laugh, but when we didn't have this book, we used to eat people. If you were here, you would have been our meal!" The Lord Jesus said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). By the grace of God, may we one day meet in heaven by the tree of life because we have valued His Word.

Written by:

Grace Momadi-Masaka – Born in Bariadi, Simiyu, Tanzania. A teacher of biology, chemistry, and nursing, with a passion for writing children's books to help them know the loving God who has great plans for their better life and eternal life in heaven. She lives in New Jersey, USA, with her two children, David and Paulo. She encourages daily family worship with children in the morning and evening and Bible reading. She prays for God's mercy and grace for us to walk in the right path and to pray for one another with many tears. This Bible for children and youth will help parents to read it together with their children. She encourages translators of hopeful advice to reach the Swahili-speaking world and connect to translate many treasures for this world with few writings. Email: masakamomadi@aol.com

Daniel Nyangaresi Masaka – Born in Kisii, Kenya. He is an industrial chemist. He encourages fathers to be actively involved in the lives of their children, to know what is going on, and to help them in this life and for eternity. The role of the father as a priest and leader is more valuable than how it is portrayed in our daily lives, especially in today's digital world, after the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us have made mistakes and ask for God's mercy because He is the perfect Father. Westerners say that parenting is one sinner raising another sinner.

Bunga Edward Dettu – A longtime friend of ours whom I met in church when I was in Form Five, and to this day he is a good friend in many things. He has made a significant contribution to this book, which is about the teachings of the Bible. He is also a scholar who holds a Master's in Christian-Muslim relations from Andrews University. His wife is named Theopista, and they have been blessed with three children and three grandchildren. He is a pastor.

David and Paulo Masaka – Children living with their parents. They are primary school students and say, “The Word of God is not just advice or good ideas, but the very voice or breath of God and the final authority for His people on earth.” They have enjoyed learning many truths about the Bible, and it has been life-changing for them! They say this is a gift from God for every child! Mbusi Mpagalushu: He studied medicine and is from Bariadi, Tanzania. He says, we will not be saved by the Law, but by the great sacrifice that God made through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, we will be judged by the Law! Many Jews kept the Law without loving God. But today, there are people who claim to love God but do not care about His Laws. Let us avoid hypocrisy, because that is our trial as human beings. That is, being hypocrites or being people of the world. By grace, let us be people of God.

Kwandu Kasiri: Kwandu studied pharmacy and lives in Kibaha, Tanzania. He says, Do you believe in the Bible, which is the greatest book of all (the Book of books)? Do you read it and let its message speak to your heart? If you do so, you will be a different person. If you did not believe it before, start believing in it today. And if you believe but do not obey it, start obeying it today. And if you believe and obey it, continue growing and bearing fruits worthy of repentance.

Pastor Daniel Matekere: He was a Bible teacher, a physician, and also an editor of books.

Pastor Stephen Letta: He is a Bible teacher, an author, and also an editor of books.

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

HOW DID THE SWAHILI BIBLE REACH US?

Priscilla Owens

Christian Hymns No. 52: Give Me the Bible

Give me the Bible, the star of joy, that travelers may find light;
Nothing can hinder peace, for Jesus has redeemed us.
Give me the Bible, the holy Word,
Its light will guide me;
Laws, promises, and love,
Even to the end, it will continue.

Give me the Bible when I am sorrowful, filling my heart with grace;
Give me the good Word of the Lord Jesus,
To see Jesus, my Savior.

Give me the Bible so I can see the dangers of the world;
The light of His Word, Lord Jesus,
Will shine the way of Truth.

Give me the Bible, the light of life;
The comforter when we are in despair;
Show me the light of heaven,
Let me see the glory of the Lord.

There is a hymn that says even if all the seas were ink, the heavens were paper, and all the trees were pens, they would not be enough to write the good news of the Kingdom of God and His love. We say that we have not even begun to understand God's love, to understand His Word, and who He

is. We have only experienced a glimpse of it, but even that small part we have received, if we take it seriously, will yield good fruit in abundance and then the wonderful promises of eternal life through knowing Him – John 17:3. The Bible is a book to be read with reverence and respect, with prayer and without haste. May God help us to enjoy this excellent and flavorful food above all that is on earth, so we may grow in faith, glorify God, and improve others through our service and words.

Because of many false teachings that degrade humanity, which have passed from generation to generation, no one is safe without the Word of God. All beings, including angels, were created by God. God created Man first, and gave him work in the Garden of Eden (pleasure/luxury). Adam had a relationship with God first, before other relationships. Then He created the woman, who had a relationship with God first, and then her husband was entrusted to her. The command to "be fruitful and multiply" is the first command in the Scriptures! A child is formed in the womb from a seed from the father and an egg from the mother. When these two cells meet, that is when the child becomes a girl or a boy. These cells grow, and thus a child is not simply born as a girl or boy, but is created by God as either a girl or a boy! No one can change their gender, because every cell has either male or female chromosomes. Humans were created in the image of God. Therefore, all genders have meaning before God.

Recently, many theories from various countries have emerged with ideas that have caused much distress. Where I live, for example, when a child is born, they are not allowed to be called a boy or girl; they are told to wait and choose when they grow up. Many times, I also encounter men in the restroom, who say that in their minds, they are women. Such situations cause me fear when I am alone with this man in the restroom. Wouldn't you be fearful if you were a woman? There are many stories like this where I live, but briefly, I will say, God created men and women in His grace. He alone decides who will be a man and who will be a woman, not humans. Humans cannot create. The act of creating is one of the verbs that pertains to God alone. Another verb is forgiving sins, etc.

As creatures, we do not have the choice to decide if we will be male or female, white or black, etc. God has already set all of this in our chromosomes, in every cell (DNA). We were created in a marvelous and awesome way. Therefore, we must know what God created us for because everyone will give their advice, whether true or false, but we and our children must return to God Himself first, who has the instructions for what He created (the Manual). The Bible is that Guide of instructions for men and women. They were created for different purposes, they are equal before God, but their roles are different! (equal with different function)**

HOW THE SWAHILI BIBLE REACHED US

Mary Jones was born in the village of Llanfihangel y Pennant, on the island of Wales (UK) on December 16, 1784. She had a deep love for the Word of God and greatly desired to own her own Bible, though she was poor. At the age of 16, she had already saved up money to buy her own Bible. She received information that in a certain church, she could purchase a Bible, so she walked 40 km to the church where she met Pastor Thomas Charles. The pastor informed her that all the Bibles had been sold, and none were left.

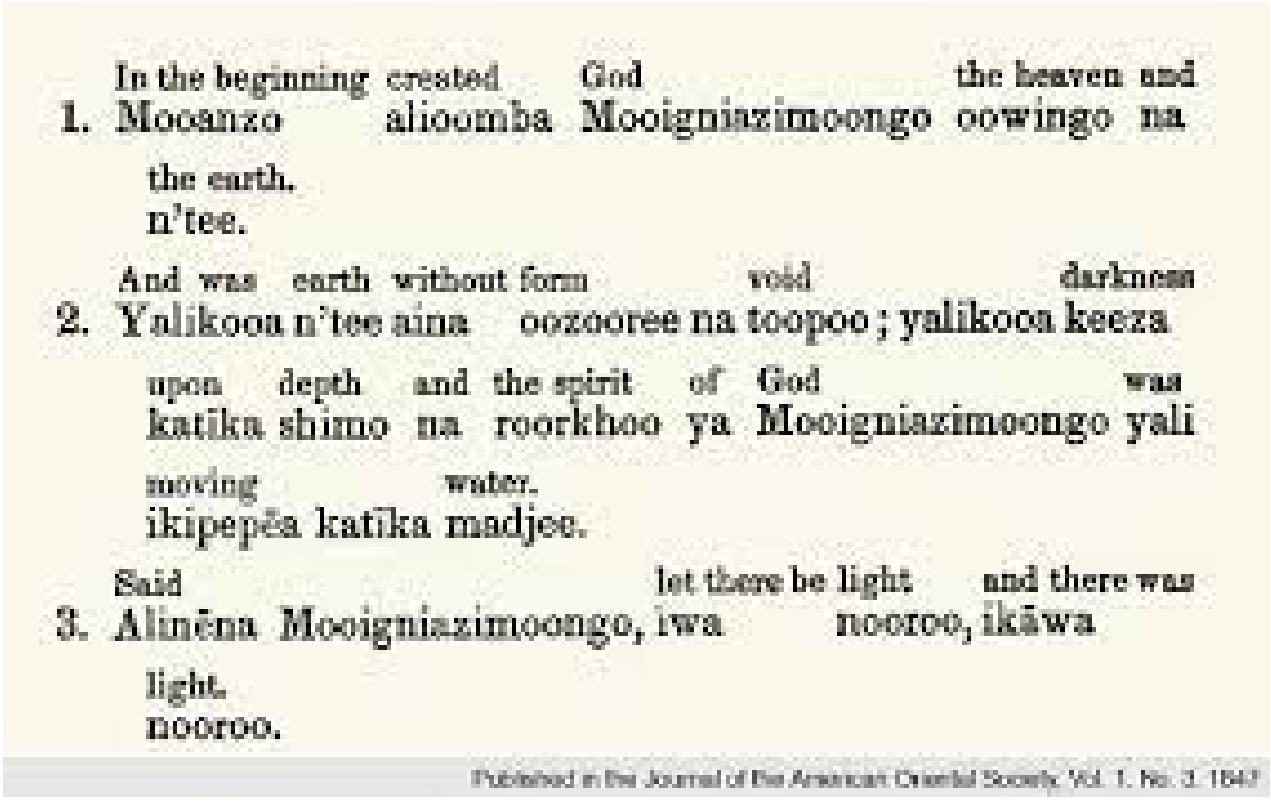
Mary told Pastor Thomas her story, and this moved him so much that he decided to sell her a Bible that had already been paid for by someone else but had been delayed in picking it up. This inspired Pastor Thomas to come up with a plan so that all ordinary people could get Bibles for themselves to read, based on the saying, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

In 1802, Pastor Thomas held a meeting with leaders of the Religious Tract Society, and during the discussions, they agreed to help Wales obtain Bibles. After these decisions, a man named Joseph Hughes questioned: “Why just Wales? What about other countries?” His concerns led to the formation of an association called the British and Foreign Bible Society, on March 7, 1804. Together, they established printing presses; from this society, many Bible societies were born worldwide, including the Kenya Bible Society, the Bible Society of Tanzania, and the American Bible Society. These societies have played a significant role in spreading the Bible widely, often subsidizing its sale and sometimes securing sponsors.

Mary Jones lived for 80 years and was able to witness and enjoy the fruits of her dream. Often, we think that a person can only make a difference in society if they have money or power. Here, we see that this is not true; a dream brings purpose, goals, and, in the end, it can move mountains in a person’s life.

Johannes Ludwig Krapf was born in Germany (1810-1881). He graduated with a degree in Theology from the University of Tübingen in 1874. He traveled to Egypt, where he married and had a child; later, he and his family moved to Rabai, Mombasa, where his wife and child died of malaria. Krapf had a talent for languages, which enabled him to understand Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, and Italian. Krapf was a Lutheran, and in 1844, he began missionary work in East African countries. Upon arrival in 1844, he started learning Kiswahili (the coastal dialect). He wrote the first Kiswahili Dictionary and Grammar of the Kiswahili language. He also began writing the book of Genesis in the Bible, but his language was not well-organized (see the example below). Krapf realized there was a significant need to spread the Word of God to people by enabling them to read the Bible in Kiswahili. However, his attempt failed because he

had only learned the basic conversational Kiswahili, not the more fluent or academic level of the language (see the following excerpts below).



In the beginning created God the heaven and
1. Mooanzo alioomba Mooigniazimoongo oowingo na

the earth.
n'tee.

And was earth without form void darkness
2. Yalikoon n'tee aina oozooree na toopoo; yalikoon keeza

upon depth and the spirit of God was
katika shimo na roorkhoo ya Mooigniazimoongo yali

moving water.
ikipepēa katika madjee.

Said let there be light and there was
3. Alinēna Mooigniazimoongo, iwa nooroo, ikāwa

light.
nooroo.

Published in the Journal of the American Oriental Society Vol. 1, No. 3, 1847

Johann Krapf's 1847 translation of Genesis 1:1-3 into Swahili

Krapf worked with a Muslim judge called Ali Bin Modehin to translate the book of Genesis. In the end, he completed the New Testament during a time of war, though he did not print many copies. His work was later used in the writing of the Kiswahili Bible Southern Version, which was handled by Steer. In 1868, Steer completed the New Testament, and in 1879, the entire Bible was completed, including the Old and New Testaments. Other writers joined and assisted him in completing the Old Testament, including Johannes Rebmann, and Rabai Krapf. Other names include William Taylor, Harry Bins, Edward Steere, Francis Hodgson, and Arthur Madan. By 1895, the entire Kiswahili Bible was available. Krapf's dictionary also helped many in translation work. Krapf also translated the Bible into Kikamba and the Oromo language of Ethiopia.

Edward Steer (1928), an Anglican from England, was ordained a pastor in 1850. He arrived to work in Zanzibar in 1864, and by 1869, with Krapf's press, he had finished translating the New Testament. He worked with a Zanzibari citizen and was funded by the Bible Society. They successfully translated the Bible into Kiswahili. Steer died in 1882.

The translation initiated by Krapf continued to be improved by various people as God used them until 1950. His dictionary helped in Bible translation for Pastor Steer and his colleagues, as well as for translations into other Bantu

languages like Luganda. The first official edition of the Kiswahili Bible (the one we use today) was published in 1952. However, as languages evolve, it is customary to review a book every 50 years. There were also people from Zanzibar who contributed to perfecting the language, especially poets like Mwajuma, Shaban Robert, and Mathias Mnyampala. Their contributions are a treasure for Kiswahili language users.

Therefore, this Bible, which is about 74 years old, may one day have a more detailed or paraphrased version, like the Paraphrase/Devotional Bible. We have begun writing the book of Romans in a devotional/ explanatory version. May God help us and use us to complete this work soon. We desire your prayers. We ask you to remember us in our mission.

The 1950 revisions focused on the importance of having a standardized Kiswahili Bible in East Africa, which led to the birth of the translation we have today (Swahili Union Version).

Other churches have participated in translating the Bible into other East African languages. Some examples include Psalms in Chasu (Kipare), published by Max Poenig Msabato in 1919, the New Testament in Kipare in 1912, and others followed, such as the Old and New Testament (Ilagano la Kale na Ilagano Ipya) in Kisukuma, translated by Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries in Usukuma during World War I and published in Kendu Bay (Kenya). Also, Missionary Rudolph Reider, who was Majita, and Ibrahim Maradufu translated the New Testament into Kijita, called Indagano Inyaaya, after World War I.

Here in Africa, the Bible Society reached Kenya and Ethiopia first, and at that time, Tanzania was served from Kenya until 1978 when the society was established here in Tanzania in Iringa. Between 1979-1980, it was moved to Dodoma, where it has grown and continues to serve the community with the Word of God (especially when the need became apparent).

There is a need for more Bible translations, just as other languages like English have more than 100 translations. Nowadays, we have the modern Kiswahili Bible translation that we are already familiar with! (We have questioned Bible societies as well, but human work often comes with mistakes, but our aim is to share this good news with you, so if there are any corrections, please feel free to contact us. We love to be blessed by you through prayers, advice, and corrections. Thank you).

A very serious prayer request, full of meaning, is this: Pray for yourself and live it, and you will receive revelations that will help you understand the Word, and one day, we will all be in heaven together with HIM forever.

A brief overview of the BIBLE:

The Bible contains the good news of the salvation of every man. Its summary involves the creation of man as recorded in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The fall of man into sin (Gen 3) and the rest of the Bible beginning from Genesis three to Revelation is about God doing everything possible to save man, He sends Christ to come and save us. Since the wages of sin is death, Christ died for us that we may live forever. We do an exchange with Him, as He gives us His goodness, we give Him our sins to cleanse us completely, and make us worthy by His righteousness. This book is wonderful, for whenever anyone relates about his experience or that of his friends, the focus is on the positive aspects. Even someone has implored people to live untainted lives so that "you don't force us to offer flattering praises at your funeral." But the Bible is exceptional, the lives of men are revealed as they really are, even of the beloved of God. None is righteous, not even one, all have fallen short of the glory of God.

The Bible speaks of what the world was, is and will be. No other book contains such truth as this one. This book is different from all others for no other book does the same. "For God saith thus," or "listen to the word of the Lord." A wise man cannot say God doesn't exist but will after investigating find Him. It is a promise that is 100% true.

The first chapter of the Bible speaks of God creating man, and the last chapter of the Bible of Revelation 22 is about God inviting everyone to come and drink of the water of life freely. The Bible reveals God's deep interest in man, His understanding of man and concern for his daily life. His infinite love is revealed in the death of His Son Jesus Christ. The offering of this great sacrifice enables everyone of us to be counted righteous before God for having that simple faith in the merits of Christ. The truth is found in the Scriptures, but because there are so many pages, we have sort of taken a sattelite view to present an interesting summary to wet your appetite to read the Bible every day. God loves His people and deeply cares for them is the message of the Bible in every book. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The Bible is meant to guide us in this life. Therefore, have an organized plan to read your Bible and you will reap much. Our personal goals or needs will guide us. Do we need comfort, or enrich our daily watch with daily study? Many Bibles have similar verses that you need to compare. Some have benefited from a monthly the study of a whole book of the Bible. The sources of studying the Bible is the Bible itself.

How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God or Truth? Every child should know how to answer this question of the hope we have. There are many reasons, but a few we can explain are as follows:

1. The life of Christ has affected history and time so that it is marked as Before Christ (BC) and After Christ (AD), and what was prophesied has occurred.

2. Archaeological discoveries fully agree with the events and history of the Bible. Historical writings from the places of events, such as the appearance of Pharaoh's chariot wheels in the Red Sea, etc.

3. Millions of lives have been changed and blessed because of this Word. No one studies geography and says, "After studying geography, my heart has chosen what is good!" No, it is only after studying the Word of God that people are transformed.

The Word of God is our map and guide on earth. It has come to us through the inspiration of God's servants like prophets such as Moses, who was raised by Pharaoh's family, Luke, the doctor, Daniel, the prime minister, Matthew, the tax collector, Solomon, and David, who were kings, Amos, who was a shepherd and a farmer. Inspiration is not like dictation, where they were told to write word for word, but their thoughts were inspired, and they wrote as they saw it—some wrote in poetry, others as stories. The Bible has proven to be the Word of God. No other book can answer human questions like this one. There is no other book that calms the longing and loneliness of people's hearts, but only the Bible! It contains things for everyone, of all ages and types. The Bible is a light of knowledge and wisdom, knowledge and understanding that enlightens our thoughts and purifies them. It is a revelation from God in heaven. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is our God. God has preserved His Word throughout history for thousands of years. More than 2600 writers have written "Thus says the LORD," especially in the book of Leviticus. The Bible contains instructions, testimonies, laws, and commandments from God.

The Bible consists of 66 books, 39 from the Old Testament and 27 from the New Testament. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. It took over 1500 years to write the Bible, but all the writers, estimated to be 40 in number, shared a common theme (they did not contradict each other because they were inspired by the same God). The Bible contains approximately 407 instances of children. The Bible has 1189 chapters. The longest chapter is Psalm 119, and the longest book is that Psalm. The shortest chapter is Psalm 117. Psalm 118 is the middle chapter.

Do you believe in the Bible, the book greater than all others (The Book of books)? Do you read it and let its message speak to your heart? You will be a different person if you do so. Start believing in it today if you haven't. And if you believe without obeying, start obeying today. And if you believe and obey, continue to grow and bear fruit worthy of repentance. One of our friends, John Bradshaw from New Zealand, told us that while he was driving in a certain town in Tennessee, he saw a house on fire. He wondered if the people inside knew about it. He thought to himself, "This is a foreign land,

and these Western people must know their house is burning. If I go there and knock, they might think I'm crazy." However, he encouraged himself, drove his car up to the house, knocked on the door, and when no one answered, he opened the door and shouted, "Your house is on fire!" The family came out—father, mother, and children—wondering where this crazy person had come from. However, when he explained, they quickly ran out, and by that time, Bradshaw had called the fire department, who arrived and extinguished the fire. But the house was destroyed. Still, lives were saved!

People who have not heard the message of the final judgment of the Savior will also burn in the fire, and they will be gone forever. Are you ashamed to tell people the good news, or do you think you will disturb them? Tell them the good news of the kingdom and let them reject it if they wish. On that day, the books will be opened, and everyone's deeds will be fully revealed, including those deeds that have not been repented for. Do you want your sin to be read by everyone and known by all? I don't, I want to confess my sin now!

The Bible is incomplete without the Old Testament. The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament! The life of Christ makes sense because of the prophecies in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is a shadow of the New Testament. The ministry of Jesus would not be understood without the Old Testament. The Holy Laws of God show how Jesus, who is without sin, would be the Savior. The Old Testament is the foundation of the New Testament; without it, the New Testament would have no foundation. The New Testament is a continuation! Major teachings are found in the Old Testament. The New Testament interprets the Old Testament. It is the bread of life and food for the believer.

For us to have the Bible, many things happened. These were not the days of pens and paper! Many people died so that we could have it. Moses' books can be divided as follows—five books of Moses (5), books of history (12), books of poetry (4), major prophets (5), minor prophets (13), four Gospels (4), the book of Acts (1), letters of Paul (14), and letters of other apostles (7), and lastly, the prophetic book of Revelation (1).

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible while in Midian, and the book of Job is the oldest, believed to have been written before the five books of the Torah. According to the Bible, our world is approximately 6000 years old. The flood occurred around 2348 B.C., and the birth of Jesus was around 4 B.C. The Bible clearly states in Revelation 12 that there was war in heaven, and Satan was cast down to earth to deceive our first parents, Adam and Eve. This is where sin entered the world. Sin is the transgression of God's laws. If we confess and truly repent, God is faithful to forgive us, and we begin a new life.

The battle between evil and good, or Satan and God, continues until that final day when Christ will return and God will wipe away every tear. There will be no more crying, sorrow, or death. Those who have overcome by God's grace, depending on Him, obeying Him, and trusting in Him, will receive the gift of eternal life in heaven (Paradise). This is the greatest gift, far beyond anything the world can offer. Beloved reader, trust in the Lord and choose Him every day in your life. The five essential things for every human being are, first, to know God and follow His way, second, to pray every day, third, to read His Word daily, fourth, to worship in fellowship with others, and fifth, to witness God's great works to others.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew on long papyrus or woolen scrolls. Later it was translated into Greek, called the Septuagint, because 70 Jewish scholars worked on its translation around 285 A.D., except for a few chapters of Daniel which were written in Chaldean. The New Testament was written in Greek. Later, both Testaments were translated into Latin. This language was old and not spoken by many at that time, except by scholars. In 1380, John Wycliffe translated it into English. Translating the Bible at that time was dangerous because the church authorities prohibited ordinary (lay) people from having the Bible. Martin Luther of Germany, during the Reformation, translated it into German and asked, "Why should the Word of God be confined to dead languages?" Others like Tyndale helped make the Bible accessible to the people. Many faithful people were killed while working day and night to make the Bible available to ordinary people. In those days, people copied the Bible by hand, and when they touched their Bibles, tears would flow from their eyes because they knew they were touching something more precious than anything else in the world. Eventually, the time came for freedom, and Bible societies in England and America began publishing many Bibles (English and American Bible Societies). These societies have also helped translate the Bible into Swahili so that people can read the Word of God. Beloved reader, hurry and get your copy of the Bible. Pray to God, and He will help you get a copy of His Word, for He is the Almighty.

Do you have a copy of the Bible where you are? Hold it, look at it carefully. You are holding something more valuable than money, gold, diamonds, or tanzanite. For heaven and earth, and all things will pass away, but the Word of God is eternal. This is your passport to a better life and your passport to heaven, for if you read it, love it, meditate on it, and live it, you will have eternal life. Eternity is more than a trillion years; it is an endless, never-ending period.

The Bible was the first book to be printed in 1456 AD by Johannes Gutenberg's printing press in Germany. Before that, although people had said that printing and paper-making started thousands of years ago in China, people copied the Bible by hand. Gutenberg's purpose for creating the printing press was to

print the German Bible. The Bible is still the best-selling book in the world. The Bible has been translated more than any other book in the world. This book has transformed the lives of many, turning evil people into good. No one has ever said, “I was a thief, and now I am a good person by studying mathematics or chemistry!” Or, “I now know the way to heaven by studying accounting or law.” Besides the fact that all the prophecies in the Bible have come true (hundreds of prophecies), there are many other things that make it the Book of God and unique.

It is only the Word of God that changes our lives and makes us better beings physically, mentally, and morally. Many who have read it say, “I have never seen such beauty and sweetness.” The Bible continues to shine and be more precious than gold every day as you keep reading it. Its sweetness will be extraordinary, and you will never want to stop reading it! Many who had limited ability in school have done well by reading this Word because it improves the mind. Nothing expands the brain like the Word of God. People have learned about the future by reading it and have prepared for events they would never have known without reading God’s Word.

All humans have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death. But God has provided a way through the sacrifice of His Son, Christ. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For the Son of Man did not come to condemn the world, but to save it (John 3:16-17). Beloved reader, we all have hope of living forever in heaven with our Father in heaven. Let us be strong, pray for His help in this journey, and make good friends who do not have the temptations of evil, so that we can win this race.

About 170 years ago in Europe, people began to spread false theories about the origin of humans from worms, frogs, monkeys, and eventually humans. No one ever heard on the radio, “Today we welcome new citizens from the forest of Gombe or Virunga, who have transformed from gorillas or apes to join us!” These are false, evil, and deceptive theories. Evolution is not science; it is a religion because it does not follow the five criteria of science: observation, hypothesis, experiment, data, and conclusion. Darwin, the father of the religion of atheism (evolution), only studied theology, not science, and did not have a degree in science. He studied only a few lessons on plants.

Let us be cautious of people who do not care about the Creator or His creation. We were created by Almighty God with great purposes. But every culture has its own sins, every tribe or society has its own sins! And that is why we all need Jesus. We are not safe at all; there is no one righteous! We have all fallen short and are in need of help! God, in His almighty power, saw no other way to save us except by sending Jesus, and that alone should show us how serious sin is and that it required an urgent and heavy solution.

Some people have a Bible with additional books called the Apocrypha, like Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, and additions to the books of Esther or Daniel. These books are useful for history but are not inspired because they contradict the Canon of Scripture, and the principles of the Word of God are like those of Jewish traditions such as the Talmud. Other books have been lost, like the book of Iddo, Nathan's letter, the letter to Laodicea, 3 Corinthians, and others. These were written by inspired people of God and are mentioned in the Scriptures. What to remember is that the 66 books we have are enough to take us to heaven with our Father. Hallelujah, Maranatha.

The Bible is not advice or opinions but the voice of God. The saying goes, "The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it." That means when the Word of God speaks, we believe it, and it settles all our doubts. Read the Word of God, believe it, meditate on it, memorize it, and live it. This is our guide on this journey while we are here on earth.

How do we read it? Many new readers say they don't know where to begin. There are many ways to read it. Some have started with Genesis and got stuck when they reached Leviticus with all the sacrificial rules. Though Leviticus 16 is the core of human redemption in the Old Testament! We advise starting with the Gospels like Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Then the Acts of the Apostles, and then go back to Genesis and Exodus and follow that flow. You can read it by taking one person and their life. You can also take notes or make a summary, just as we are doing now, which has opened my eyes in ways I can't fully express. And yet I still have many shortcomings! You can read it by topic. Once you become familiar with it, you can easily start from the beginning to the end like many of us who read daily and move forward, asking for help to understand it.

Even if you read a few verses each day and do a thorough study of them, that's enough, more than reading many chapters and not understanding them. The goal is not just to read but to compare the verses related to what you have read throughout the Bible. Before finishing any topic, it's best to see where that topic is mentioned and how often in the Scriptures. Talk with others about how they read it, but read it with joy and pray before you begin. Don't set yourself a goal to read many pages as if it were a punishment, and then end up not understanding what you're reading.

Reading the Bible takes about 70 or 80 hours. One week has 168 hours, so you can finish reading it in a week! But you need time to reflect and meditate even on just one verse—you'll be amazed at what you find! For example, Daniel 8:14 says, "And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'"This can take you months to reflect on and understand, and it relates to hundreds of other verses in the Bible! If you have time, write to us and tell us what you have discovered, and

we will tell you what we have discovered! Don't rush or be under pressure or forced to do it without joy! The Bible has a message for every type of person: the elderly, the young, the educated, the ordinary, the rich, the poor, the short, the tall, the black, the white. We hope you will become a follower of the Almighty God and bring many to Him. Do not get caught up in arguments with people, but tell them the scriptures with love (share). You might win an argument or battle, but lose a precious soul or fail the war. You can win the argument but lose the soul.

The Bible is here to guide us in life. Read the Bible with a plan and you will get more benefits. The purpose or needs will direct us further. Do we want comfort, or to enrich our daily reading time? Many Bibles have verses that are similar; follow those. Some have gained benefits by reading one book of the Bible in a month. The tools for reading the Bible are the Bible itself, similar verses, its notes, maps of Bible events, Geography and history (for example, maps during Abraham's time in Mesopotamia, during the Israelites' inheritance of Canaan, during Jesus' ministry, during the letters and journeys of Paul), Bible dictionaries. Know the meaning of words, know the history, know verses that relate to that subject in the Bible. The purpose of reading should be good, i.e., to communicate with God, to hear His voice, not just to gain knowledge, or to bring competition/arguments about culture, names of cities, etc.

Pray for the Holy Spirit for guidance, so He can lead us all into all Truth, read slowly, reflect, and meditate. A person does not live by bread alone, meaning the Word of God is important to eat, chew, swallow, and it will bring benefit to the body. Let's ask ourselves as we read: What is God saying to me here? Let us be obedient and ready to follow it, so that we can be transformed and become like Him. After a while, it will be our close companion, guiding us, and we will be transformed and empowered by God, and He will use us to change the world or turn it upside down, and lead many to follow His Word, bless many people, and one day be in the Kingdom of God. Let's pray for each other, the end is very near, the signs are telling us and we can see them!

THE BIBLE IS A MAP

The Bible speaks, and I believe, and the problem is solved. This book carries the thoughts of God, the condition of mankind, the way of salvation, the fate of sinners, and the joy of the righteous. Its teachings are holy, its principles last forever, its history is true, and its solution is trustworthy. Read it to gain wisdom, believe it to be safe, and test it to become holy.

It is a light to guide you, food to enable you to improve, and comfort that will fill you with joy. It is a map for travelers, a rod for pilgrims, a compass for sailors, a sword for soldiers, and a covenant for Christians. Here, Paradise is restored, Heaven is revealed, and the gates of hell are closed. Christ is the main figure: our goodness, our design, the glory of God, and the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega. This book must fill the mind, rule the heart, and guide our paths.

Read it slowly, frequently, and with prayer. It is the treasure of wealth, the paradise of glory, and the river of joy. It is given to you in life, will be opened during judgment, and will always be remembered forever. It gives the highest level of responsibility, rewards every good worker, and judges all those who have mishandled the holy things. There is no other book that elevates the mind and increases the ability to think like the Bible.

Believe it to gain wisdom, read it to be safe, test it to become holy. The Bible is not a book to give you information, but a book to change you. It is the voice of God speaking, and it is a voice of supreme authority in Heaven, on Earth, and in all the galaxies. The Lord has exalted His Word above His Name. Heaven and Earth will pass away, but not the Bible. The Bible has overcome every challenge of all times.

Do not be afraid, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God; yes, I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness (Isaiah 41:10). Truly, no eye has seen, nor ear heard what God has prepared for us! Let us read His Word so we may know His promises, over 3,500 of them. When I went to Loma Linda University in California to take medical courses, I found huge textbooks at that time in the nineties, some costing $2,000 for just one! I was amazed at how people read them and completed them and took exams.

We do not advise reading quickly, but one to three chapters a day. And if you have a Bible concordance, you can use it, but prayer and revelation from the Lord should be a priority for proper understanding. The Bible should not be read without praying. This is not an ordinary book; it is a book from heaven, and to understand it, we need the Author to help us. Kneel if you can, pray

for the ability to understand and apply what you read. Claim the promises you read that day and ask God: “What do You want me to understand in what I have read today? And please help me use it in my daily life, especially today.”

The Bible is a map, a light, and a library. How can one book contain all these things? The Bible is a map because it shows us the safe way, and that if we stay on this path, we are sure to reach Jesus, who is on the undefeated side against Satan, our enemy. Jesus is the way. The Bible is the light of our path, shining brightly on the way that leads to eternity. The enemy tried to extinguish that light, but its light continues to show us the safe way.

Look at your Bible and read it. Don’t spend too much time reading books of humans, especially those who do not love God (unbelievers), it will take away the taste of the Bible. No one learns to recognize counterfeit money by studying fake notes, but by studying the real currency. Many people have spent time learning about Greek gods, Roman gods, and other deities of various cultures. Don’t waste time; spend time reading about the God of Heaven—the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, who is our God.

The Bible concerns people, places, and events that happened in the past, present, and even in the future. All its books show us the ongoing struggle between Satan and GOD. Every human chooses which side they want to be on every day. Not choosing is choosing. People, things, and places in the Bible show us this struggle, giving us warnings so that with patience and comfort, we can choose the safe side, the side of God.

The books of the Old Testament were written before Christ was born on earth, and the books of the New Testament were written after Jesus died and resurrected. All the books are important and work together to guide us to know what we should know about God and His plan of salvation. They help us a lot to become like Him. Our choice leads to our destiny!

Why should we read the Bible every day? Give your four reasons! Every reader learns to trust and depend on God, and to know that God does everything to save us from the devil’s tricks to destroy us. Psalms 119:9-11.

There are over 100 reasons to read the Bible, here are just a few!

- ☞ It gives instructions for daily life and protects me – 2 Timothy 3:16,17, Psalms 32:8
- ☞ It teaches me how to pray – Luke 11:1-4
- ☞ It explains how to obtain salvation for every human being – John 3:16
- ☞ It explains how to share the Gospel – Matthew 28:19-20
- ☞ It teaches how to trust in God – Proverbs 3:5-6

- ☞ It shows how God's will is, and renews our minds – Romans 12:1, 2
- ☞ It is full of God's promises and blessings, and therefore, it will bless you! – Deuteronomy 31:8
- ☞ It is the accurate history of humanity and everything on earth – Ephesians 4:31-32, Psalms 78:3-4
- ☞ It teaches us how to forgive – Ephesians 4:31-32
- ☞ Reading the Bible enables us to be sure of what God said. The Bible is our final authority. It is the ultimate truth – John 17:17
- ☞ It asks and answers the big questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? What does it mean to be a good person? – Psalms 10:1
- ☞ It improves your culture, such as not using foul language, not hurting others, dressing modestly, keeping a clean heart, and avoiding sin – Ecclesiastes 1:9
- ☞ It reveals how God loves us – 1 John 4:7-8
- ☞ It gives us eternal life (in heaven) – John 17:3
- ☞ It helps us overcome and flee from sin and be cleansed from sin – Psalms 110:9,10,11 and John 15:3
- ☞ It relieves my mental stress – 1 Samuel 30:6-8
- ☞ It teaches us to imitate God, who is love – Ephesians 5:1
- ☞ It enables us to receive the desires of our hearts – John 5:39-40
- ☞ It helps us bear fruit – Psalms 1:2-3
- ☞ It gives us courage – Joshua 1:8-9
- ☞ It is our food – Matthew 4:4, John 6:63
- ☞ It makes me merciful and loving toward others – Mark 12:30-31
- ☞ It protects you from false teachings and helps you worship God in Spirit and in Truth – John 4:1
- ☞ It encourages you to use your time wisely – Ephesians 5:15-16
- ☞ God gives you guidance because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – Psalms 119:105, John 14:6
- ☞ It helps you avoid temptations, as it is a weapon and protection that keeps you from addiction – Ephesians 6:11
- ☞ It is alive! – John 7:38

- ☞ It gives you freedom – Romans 8:17
- ☞ For healing, refreshing, and sustaining in all aspects – physical, spiritual, mental, social, and economic – 1 Peter 2:24, Matthew 4:4
- ☞ It helps me solve all problems – James 1:5
- ☞ It fills me with joy and peace that surpasses understanding.

Four facts about the Bible:

1. No book is loved by people so much tha they are ready to die for it, like the Bible.

2. No book is hated like this, and many have sought to destroy it.

3. No book is owned by so many people even if they don't read it.

4. No book do people say they believe in, yet they don't know much about it.

5.Which of these groups do you belong to?

The books of the Bible are divided into ten groups:

The Five Books of Moses (Pentateuch): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Job (possibly written by Moses).

Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

Acts of the Apostles.

Paul's Epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews.

Other Letters: James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

Prophecy: Revelation, Daniel.

Why did God give us the Bible? The purpose is to know Him, the Creator and our Savior, and to understand His ways. In the beginning, when God created, He spoke directly to Adam and Eve, but after sin, we have been distanced from Him and needed prophets (those who speak on God's behalf). Christianity does not allow people to live as they wish. A believer must submit to God and live according to the Scriptures, or the Word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. A believer must love God with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love their neighbor as themselves. Love is incredibly important, a mystery, and an amazing secret! Cruelty to others or sinning against people or God is sin.

Before the fall in Eden, God spoke face to face with people, but now He uses the Scriptures to speak to us after the fall of man. The Bible is the voice of God, but it is written in human words. It was not dictated. God's people were given the message and had the freedom to write it down. The Gospels are a good example of this. All four Gospels speak of the Messiah, but each has its own focus, personality, theology, and historical background of the writer. The Bible is the Word of God. The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek word for "Library." The Bible is a library of 66 books. Humans were inspired to write it.

The Bible was written over a period of about 1500 years, by around 40 different people. From the Old to the New Testament, there are about 400 years. The Bible has 1189 chapters. It was written in Hebrew and Greek. The Bible contains more than 3500 promises for humanity, let us know them and claim them! 365 times, the Bible says "Do not be afraid!" The Word of God is the final authority on earth and in heaven, and it has a message for every kind of person. Read it, meditate on it, love it, practice it, and proclaim it.

The Bible will give you purpose in life. Never feel insignificant, because you will know your true value as bestowed by your Creator when He made you. You will live a life of purpose and meaning, and ultimately be granted eternal life, that is, everlasting life. It doesn't matter if you grow old because your old age will be filled with hope and joy as you see the things that lie ahead.

The first five books and Job were written by the prophet Moses in 1500 BC, and the last book was written by John around 100 AD. The book we have written, "Give Me the Bible," is a summary of the Bible, starting from Genesis to Revelation, as a daily devotional for 365 days. The Bible mentions approximately 182 women and 1188 men.

The Bible tells the history of humanity from creation by God to the fall and rebellion of humanity in the Garden of Eden, then to the solution. In Revelation 12, we are told that Satan lived in heaven and was the first to rebel. He convinced one-third of the angels to join him, and they were cast

down to earth. This marked the beginning of the conflict between God and Satan, or good and evil. This battle is not fought with guns, missiles, or swords, because our battle is not against flesh and blood, and the Messiah told Peter to put away his sword, not to fight. We fight with the Word of God (Ephesians 6). We are currently in this battle. The books of Job, Isaiah 14, and Ezekiel 28 give us glimpses of this battle. There will be a day when this conflict will end.

According to the Bible, the signs of the times in Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9 are a sufficient prophetic calendar that shows where we are, and everyone should read them. God will come to judge the world and reward those who have done good by His grace, granting them the reward of eternal life, and those who have done evil will face punishment. Everyone should read those chapters in Daniel and understand their meaning today. Genesis 1 & 2 describe creation, Genesis 3 is the fall of humanity, and the rest of the Bible is about the redemption of sin to prevent it from rising again – Nahum 1:9, until we reach Revelation 19, where judgment will be given, and people will receive eternal life, and Revelation 22, where they will live forever with God, face to face, in eternal life.

There will be no sorrow, crying, death, or sickness. You, me, children, youth, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, cousins, we are all in this great struggle. Even a child of a few months experiences struggles with self-denial and desiring everything to go their way. All the battles are in the mind and heart, we hear two voices. We must put on the armor of God and stay alert, praying so that we do not fall into the trap of the evil one. Every day, we choose God or Satan (Ephesians 6, 2 Corinthians 10:5). All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but God forgives us when we ask for forgiveness with true repentance.

All evils, whether pride, anger, jealousy, hatred, greed, unforgiveness, impure thoughts, despising others, hypocrisy, or the lusts of the eyes and the flesh, should be left behind as time passes. We should bear the fruit of the Spirit, which helps us live a new life by God's grace. Our main prayer is that we may be filled with His Holy Spirit, to love Him with all our souls, strength, minds, and hearts, and to have deep compassion when we see others lost, striving to reach them so that we all may be in Christ and He in us, the True Vine.

The first chapters of Genesis, one to three, are mirrored by Revelation, chapters 3 to 20 (reverse). Satan wanted the image of God or the likeness of God to be lost from humanity and become like an animal or beast. But Jesus came to restore that image, and Satan rejoiced that he had made God descend and suffer. He tried hard from the beginning of His mission to thwart it. But thank God, the mission was successful, and through Him, we are reconciled and counted righteous. Since Eden, God has always tried to reach us so that we may have salvation and restore our relationship with Him

until Revelation 19.

The perfection of heaven failed because Satan rebelled in heaven, and the perfection of humanity failed in Eden because we chose to do things our way. Today, we receive God's gift of grace through faith, receiving a new heart, mindset, and mind. This new life is called walking with God, being born again into God's family (believers) and then becoming disciples of Jesus, and ultimately apostles who share the good news.

The Bible has been burned or destroyed many times, starting with the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36 & 38). People have buried it, and it has resurrected. People have erased its traces and twisted it, but they have not succeeded. Tyndale, John Huss, Stefano, and many others have died for this Word, because some hate the counsel of God's Word and kill or burn the servants. The secret to eternal life is in knowing and obeying the Word of God through His grace – John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Eternal life is not living many years, but knowing the Almighty God!

Let us remember that millions of people have died for God's Word to be in our hands today. Read it, believe it, meditate on it, memorize it, love it, and do it. Trust in God, and we will be established. Trust His apostles, and we will succeed. There is no greater joy than the Word of God. Various people wrote the Bible: prophets like Moses, kings like David, fishermen like Peter, farmers like Jeremiah, priests like Samuel, etc. They all did not live together. The Bible is God's holy book because everything it prophesied, like the book of Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, has come true. Archaeological evidence supports the history of this book in a significant way. Above all, this book has transformed the lives of many people.

In Papua New Guinea, when colonizers went there, they laughed at the people reading the Bible and following it. Those people from Papua New Guinea said, "You laugh, but when we did not have this book, we were eating people! You would have been our meat!" No wicked person has changed and said, "I read Chemistry, and it changed my bad behavior." The Word of God is His breath with teachings that correct us so we can align with His path. Never say you know His Word and stop reading it! Christ helped the prophets write what He knew inside and out. He was called the Word, but He read and paid attention to it, saying, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

A summary of the Bible in three words is Creation, Fall, and Restoration. Let us meet in heaven by the

Tree of Life through His grace one day because we have treasured His Word, and in it is life! John 17.

OLD TESTAMENT

DAY ONE (January 1)

Topic: Creation or Beginning

Genesis 1 and 2
(Genesis – Written by Moses around 1500 BC)



Have you ever wondered where everything in the world came from? Or where your parents came from? Perhaps you answered that they came from your grandparents. And where did your grandparents come from? Eventually, where did the very first ancestors come from? Or, what came first, the chicken or the egg? Maybe you've heard that plants came from seeds, and seeds came from flowers. The cycle continues like this. And what about mountains? Rivers, seas, and oceans—were they always there, or did they have a beginning? From elementary school, we learn science and marvel at how the eye, brain, leg, or computer works. These didn't just happen by chance; there was an engineer who invented and initiated them.

Our world is very old. If we calculate based on the years of people in God's Word, it is estimated to be about 6,000 years old. No one knows for

sure the exact day, hour, or date the world was created. However, what's important is that God created the world, the sun, the moon, and everything in it. God existed. God has always existed. He has no beginning or end, just as we humans have a beginning and an end. This is something difficult for the human mind to understand. But God is greater than the laws of science, such as time, space, or matter because He is the One who created them. God's Word creates. When He speaks, things happen instantly! It takes no time at all! He was, He is, and He will continue to be. For a human mind, which has a beginning and an end, this is hard to comprehend. But God is eternal, the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega.



The Word of God clearly states that, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1. It's an understandable concept. Our ancestors understood this, even if they worshipped other things, they knew they were created by Almighty God. The first chapter of the Bible resembles the one in John 1, which says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Nothing was made without Him.

We are told that, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. Perhaps the waters were gushing. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters, and God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness He called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. The Lord created the first day with evening and morning, then evening again, 24 hours! Thus, the days that God created began in the evening and ended in the evening. When the Romans ruled the world, they changed the way we measure the day, making it start at midnight and end at midnight.

In the Book of Genesis, the first day of the week was not explicitly mentioned. However, in the Gospels, we are told that Jesus rose on the first day of the week. Therefore, the light was created on the first day of the week, which is Sunday in our Kiswahili calendar. God created by His Word, and things came into being. It didn't take time as it does for us to create something, or to take someone else's material to create something! If we want to make a chair, we need nails and wood. He has all power, strength, and knowledge. By just

speaking, things happened, as it was during creation. He created without using anything else. It is said that someone once claimed they could create. They said, “I will take the dust and begin to create man,” but were told, “No, the dust belongs to God, start with your own raw materials!”

With just a word, darkness disappeared, and light appeared, but the sky was not created until the second day. God continued to create, with great plans to make a dwelling place for man, whom He loves. God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. God called the vault “sky.” On the third day, God separated the waters and dry land appeared, and God called the dry land “earth” and the gathered waters “seas.” God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. God saw that it was good. The sky contains the air that all living creatures, plants, and animals breathe.



On the fourth day, God created two great lights: the sun and the moon, and He also created the stars. He said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years.” These lights were made to give light to the earth. The large light, the sun, became for the day, and the smaller light, the moon, became for the night. The sun is 150 million kilometers away from the earth, but it takes eight minutes for sunlight to reach us. The hydrogen in the sun helps it burn like fire. The sun is 1.3 million times larger than the earth. God created the moon to revolve around the earth in 28 days, and the earth revolves around the sun in 365 days. Many scientists now discover that some of the stars we see are actually other planets, and there are billions of them. Those who have tried to count the stars with the naked eye, on clear nights, have reached about 5,000! Truly, our God is amazing. God wasn’t in a hurry; He could have created everything in one second, but He did not. The

earth began to show its magnificent beauty, with the sunset turning orange and the stars appearing at night. God created the world to be everlasting. He created it with wonderful beauty.

On the fifth day, there was the sound of trees swaying, but no sounds of cats or elephants crying! God said, "Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems, and every winged bird according to its kind. The waters were filled with living creatures, and every bird flew above the earth. God saw that it was good. On the sixth day, God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. The fifth and sixth days were marvelous as millions of different animals with various shapes and colors appeared. I've had the opportunity to visit a fish farm and see beautiful fish that I did not want to leave. Perhaps you've seen the colors of birds and butterflies, and even the huge animals that people come from all over the world to see. Starting with the Big Four—elephant, lion, giraffe, and rhino!

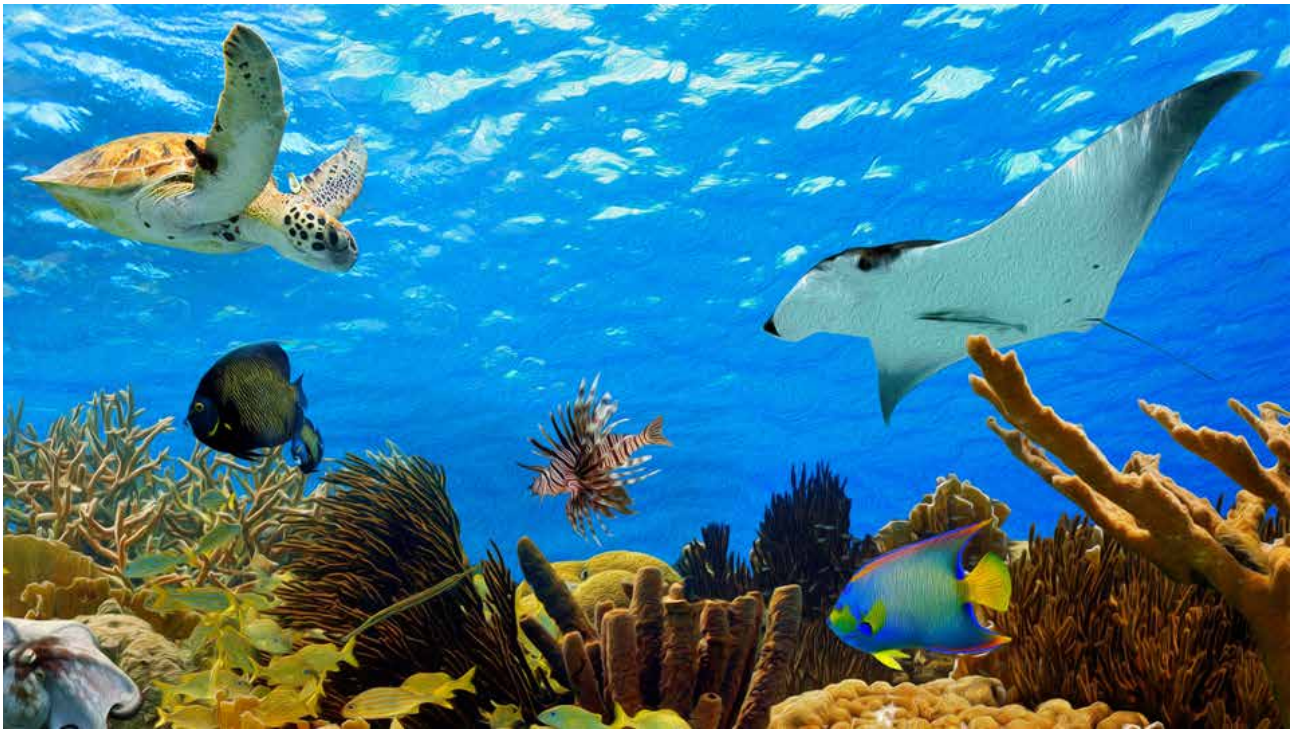


Elephants, lions, giraffes, rhinos, buffalo, hyenas, hippopotamuses, crocodiles, and others were created on the sixth day. There are even smaller creatures like mice, and others that are enormous. There are millions of different kinds of insects, not to mention other animals! Birds began to sing and praise their Creator, flying here and there. Gorillas appeared, swinging joyfully in the trees. Truly, our God is amazing. Undoubtedly, the animals looked at each other, marveling at how different their shapes were. Perhaps the giraffe looked at the tortoise and wondered, "What kind of animal is this, walking so slowly?" Animals lived together without fear, it was one community. No one hunted or ate another. Others had large ears, others had big noses or trunks, and some had horns like the rhino. God was happy to see these animals and saw that everything was good.

Picture a procession of animals walking to a certain place. We can draw animals on paper, but we cannot create them. Only God alone has the power to create, and that's why every creature has great value. Do not strike a cat, dog, donkey, or cow without reason because they are God's creations! Even destroying plants or trees without cause is not good. It is good stewardship

to take care of the things we've been given by the Lord. I encourage you to read God's Word every day; it will help you develop good character and also answer all the questions you have in your heart, making you a good steward. It is hard to describe in human words the beauty of creation—its flavors, sounds, smells, sensations, etc.

🎁Everything you learn from your parents, teachers, and personal reading helps you become a better person. Decide today to study God's Word daily. During family worship, let the children participate. Let everyone bring their Bibles and each person read one or two verses. Then, sing a familiar hymn or song, followed by prayer. For this, Christ has set an example. The Lord's Prayer was not meant to be recited as a form or tradition, but as an example of how our prayers should be—simple, earnest, and deep. In a simple prayer, tell the Lord your needs and express gratitude for His mercy. By doing so, you welcome Jesus as a guest in your home and heart. In a family, long prayers about distant things should not exist. They make prayer time tiresome when it should be a delightful and blessed time. Make the season pleasant and enjoyable.



🎁 Questions: What was there before God created the world, the sun, or the stars? What was created on the third and fourth days? What did God create on the fifth and sixth days? Do the things that God created on the first to sixth days still exist today? List them according to the days they were created. What lesson do you learn from this?

God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Genesis 2:4

[4] a. This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for creating for us a beautiful place to live in. Help us to take good care of our environment. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Look outside at the environment surrounding you and draw some of the plants and animals you see. Mention the trees you know, the flowers you know, the birds you know, the animals you know, the insects you know, etc.

DAY TWO (January 2)

Topic: Creation of Man

(Genesis 1 and 2)



Before the sixth day was over, the Lord created man in His image. In His image, God created them, male and female He created them. God said, "Let us make man in our image, to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and the animals, and over all the creatures that move on the ground." (Genesis 1:27) God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." This was the first commandment written in the Bible! God gave mankind every plant that yields seed and every tree that bears fruit with seed in it as food for them.

After the flood, things changed. All animals were in harmony, and none hunted, trapped, or preyed on another. In the new heaven and the new earth, the situation will return to how it was at first. No one will die! In other words, all creatures will revert to the diet mentioned in Genesis 1:29. No creature will kill another to eat. We will have beautiful food! From today, plan your strategy for heaven! I am planning too! Adam was given work to do even before he was given a wife. Work is very important!

After God created everything, He then created mankind. During the first five days, God was preparing gifts for man, his sustenance, and his joy. God prepared our resources before He created us. He gave mankind precious gifts



like gold, silver, and iron. The gift of food, the gift of animals, and beautiful things to enjoy while walking in the Garden of Eden. God gave man amazing gifts. Some people think that God doesn't like adornments made of precious stones! Not at all! God is the Creator of beauty and all good things! The problem is that we humans use the things we've been given for the purpose of showing off or pride, to display them for our glory instead of glorifying the Creator.

🎁In the past, there was no need for someone to build a fence, as humans did not need to create barriers to keep others out. There were no thorns, and there was no need for a house.

🎁The Garden of Eden was more beautiful than words can describe, and there was no harm in it. Eden means pleasure. There was no rain because dew provided enough water for the plants. There was no need for beds, as the surroundings that God placed man in surpassed the beauty of anything humans can make. Man lay in the garden amidst flowers. When he wanted to eat, he picked fruit and placed it on leaves as plates and ate. He didn't have to wash dishes or use soap afterward because there were no germs or viruses. Perhaps all the food simply melted into nourishment in his body. Maybe God thought, "Without a doubt, man will enjoy these wonderful dwellings I have created for him, and he will love me as I love him, and we will have pleasant fellowship."

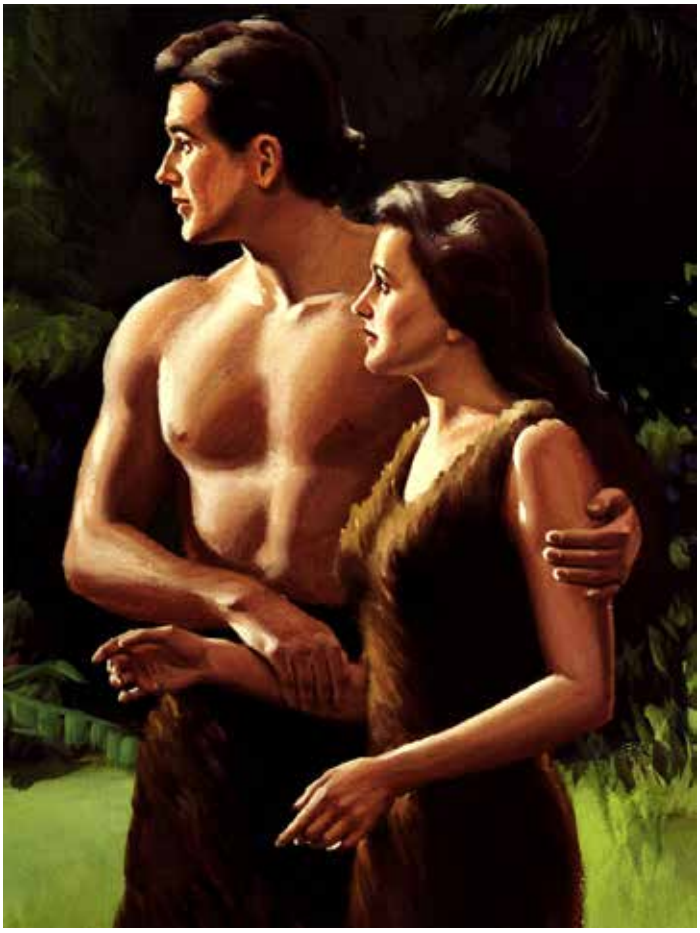
🎁When creating, God made everything by speaking. When He spoke, things came into existence. But when He created man, the Bible says He took the dust and shaped it into man. He created the head, face, and body. He made

man capable of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, and smelling—having a higher will than all other creatures. Then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Without the breath of life, he would just be a body without life, but after God breathed into him, he became a living being. So, man is made of dust combined with God's breath of life.

Man has done many things, but he cannot create. Only God alone is the Creator. He placed the tree of life in the middle of the Garden of Eden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He also placed four rivers to water the garden, called Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates. God gave Adam and Eve the job of cultivating the garden and keeping it. He told them they could eat the fruit from any tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If they ate from it, they would surely die.

God created Adam first, but He saw that there was no one suitable to help him. This left Adam lonely and made him appreciate Eve when she was created. Indeed, all creatures were friends, and when called, they likely responded, but they couldn't speak. Perhaps they would shake their tails or fly. Then God said, "It is not good God brought animals to Adam to see and give them names. Adam gave names to all the domestic animals. Adam felt a deep sleep coming on. The hand with all power touched him and took one of Adam's ribs, and everything was restored without a wound.

When Adam woke up, he saw another being resembling him and said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man." Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. What God has joined together, let not man separate. Adam and Eve were given a special garment; they were clothed in God's glory. Our human images cannot show the true form because people have often drawn them without clothes, which is not the truth! But who can draw the garment of God's glory? God created Eve to be a helper, not taking a piece of



the head to show she should rule over her husband, nor a piece of the foot to show she should be a servant to her husband.

According to the Scriptures, the husband is the one given authority over the home, and the wife is the helper. God created one man and one woman—Adam and Eve, not Adam, Eve, and Neema (meaning "peers" or others). Not Adam and Yusufu (meaning "homosexuality"). This shows that it is not God's plan for a man to have more than one partner or to have same-sex marriages. He blessed them with the blessing of marriage, showing that marriage is between a man and a woman, not a woman and a woman or a man and a man. The husband and wife complete the image of God. They are the ones who could fulfill the first command, which said, "Be fruitful and multiply." Every creature was full of joy and peace. No creature wanted to devour another; each one praised God and brought joy to the other. As a parent, God had created many things to bring joy to His creatures. Job 38:7 says that after creation, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Mankind was meant to bear the image of God, both outwardly and in character. Christ alone is the 'express image' (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; however, mankind was created in the image of God. His nature was one of harmony with God's will. His mind had the ability to understand the things of the Lord. His will was pure, and his desires and passions were under the control of the mind. He was holy, joyful, and bore the image of God in perfect obedience to all His will. Man was created perfect and without guilt, given the choice to choose; he was not a robot or a machine forced to do everything!

The woman is to be like the church, and the man like Christ .A man is commanded by God to love his wife, and the wife is commanded to obey her husband. This is God's command, and there is no debate about it. The husband must do everything necessary to make his marriage thrive, and the wife must do everything necessary to make her marriage thrive. This will make our homes like small heavens on earth. Everyone in marriage must learn how to live in marriage and in family life! We are not born knowing what to do. Research among Baptists in America has shown that 50% of marriages end in divorce, but those who pray together, with sincere and diligent prayers (not fake), have only one divorce in 1,023 marriages!

🎁 Parents have brought children into a world where they had no voice or choice regarding their existence. You have taken on great responsibility for their future happiness and eternal well-being. The responsibility is on you, whether you feel this or not, to teach and raise these children for GOD, to care for them diligently with jealousy the moment the crafty enemy shows

up and takes his first step, and then be ready to raise your standard against him. Build a fortress of prayer and faith over your children, and strive to stay vigilant in it. You are not safe at all from the attacks of Satan.

🎁Questions:

Why did God create man?

What was the name of the first man?

What was the name of the first woman?

What was the name of the garden they lived in?

List ten things that make a marriage great.

God bless you abundantly, child and youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦.

Memory Verse: Genesis 2:7

[7] The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

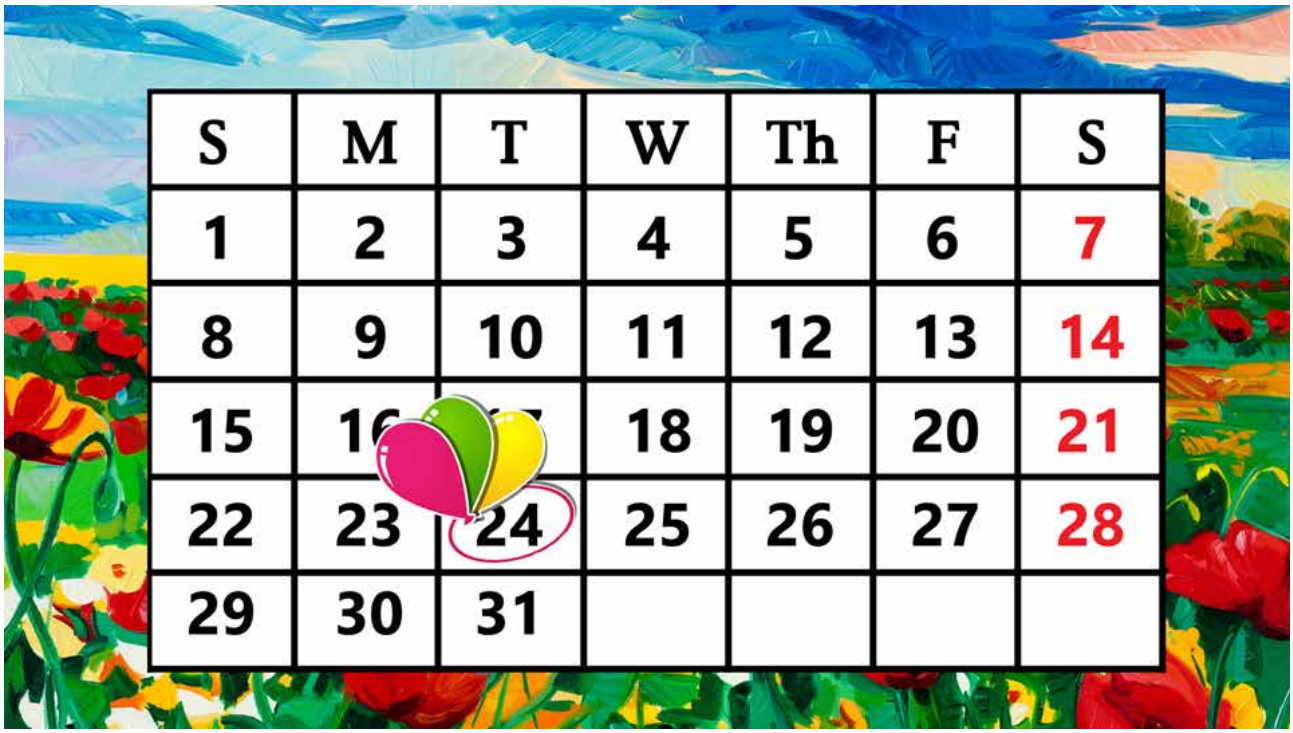
Prayer: Thank You Lord for the breath of life. Thank You for creating us in Your image. Help us today to resemble You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: List all the parts of the body you know together with their functions.

DAY 3 (January 3)

Lesson: The Seventh Day and Rest for Man

(Genesis 2)



Parents often think about how to bring joy and peace to their children. God established rest for humans to give them joy and peace. On the seventh day, God ceased His work and rested. In Hebrew, this is called Sabbath, which means a day of rest. We get 365 days in a year from the Earth orbiting the Sun, and 28 days from the Moon orbiting the Earth. However, seven days make a week, meaning one week consists of seven days. Six days are for work, and the seventh day is for rest. The seventh day is a reminder of creation, that we are creatures and have a Creator. This helps us avoid the theory of evolution where creatures supposedly evolved from simple organisms into complex systems. On this seventh day, God rested, blessed it, and sanctified it. He would later tell Adam and Eve about this day, calling it holy (set apart).

This day was given to be a day of rest and communication with God. God does not grow tired, but it is said He rested! Adam and Eve were not tired since they had not worked yet, but He gave them this day to formally communicate with Him. He took time to speak to them. They talked with God face to face! They did not only observe the Sabbath but celebrated it. They might have discussed creation, perhaps even the science of how

crocodiles breathe or how bees make honey. They learned directly from their Creator. God said He made the Sabbath for man. In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve work to do, marriage, and rest on the seventh day, the Sabbath. Even today, after 6,000 years, people are blessed by keeping the holy Sabbath. Everything created in the six days—light, the sky, plants, stars, the sun, moon, animals, and humans—still exists. Likewise, the Sabbath still exists; God did not remove it.



When God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, He gave them the Ten Commandments, reminding them about the Sabbath in the Fourth Commandment, which says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. On it, you shall not do any work.” This commandment is unique in that it says, “Remember.” God knew that many would be so busy that they might forget the day meant for communication with Him. The Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between God and humanity. We are taught to observe the Sabbath as instructed in Isaiah 58, meaning to refrain from our pleasures and help those in need. God has given us six days to work and handle our affairs. This means we should not be lazy but diligent in our work during those six days. When Christ came to Earth, He also observed the Sabbath—Luke 4:16. Do not continue with your usual daily activities. God has given you six days, but the seventh is His, dedicated to worship and communication with Him. Even in heaven, people will celebrate this day (Isaiah 66).

God created large trees, and animals were created at the age of an adult. Adam and his wife were also created as adults. The garden was beautiful, and they walked in it, enjoying it and speaking with their Creator on the



seventh day. I think they remembered their lives before the fall. It was a day to rejoice in creation. God did not build them a palace, even though Adam was the king of the Earth, and his wife was the queen. He gave them a garden, not an apartment or an electric-powered house. The walls of their house were beautiful trees, and the carpets were lovely grass. There was no need to protect themselves from falling objects, thieves, or rain. They slept outside, enjoying the sweet songs of birds. They didn't need plates to hold fruit! It was pure joy. There was no need to cook or run a kitchen factory. I eagerly await this in heaven! I know they did not eat out of greed or all day long; they set aside specific times to eat. They talked together. Perhaps Eve said, "Adam, look at this beautiful flower." Adam might have replied, "Eve, look at the lion." Perhaps they visited the two trees in the middle of the garden: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

God had instructed them that they could eat from all the trees in the garden, except for the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and they should not touch it, lest they die. Die? Surely they wondered what that meant because they had never seen anyone die. Perhaps they wondered why God had created that tree. They continued walking and enjoying creation. God had made man in His image, and the Sabbath was for communion with Him. As the sun set, they rejoiced—creation was complete, and God had

fulfilled His goal of love. Even today, set aside that day for the Lord to have communion with Him, leaving aside your usual daily tasks, for these do not end, especially in today's world! Whether cooking, cleaning shoes, sewing buttons, etc., the person wears out. Improve and restore your health on this one day of the week.

The Sabbath would have been kept as God intended after creation and in the Scriptures, such as Isaiah 58. The day would not have been forgotten by anyone, for everyone would have remembered it as a special day of relationship with God, the Creator who made them. It was a celebration of God's creation. Many have said it is for the Jews, but this is not true because the Sabbath was established 2,300 years before the Jews existed. The first Jews were the grandchildren of Abraham. The enemy does not want us to remember that we are creatures created by God. He prefers us to forget, and for many years, he has caused confusion to make people forget the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a sign between us and God, reminding us that He is the One who sanctifies us and that He is the Lord and our Creator. God later wrote His Commandments on stone, not sand. The Ten Commandments were written by His own hand, and it says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." He knew humans would forget.

Let parents seek God for guidance in their work. When they kneel before Him, they will gain true understanding of their primary responsibility, and there they can hand over their children to the One who never errs in advice and teaching.

Questions: Why did God create a day of rest? Which day of the week was it? What did God do on that day? How do you prepare to meet your Creator on this day? Why doesn't Satan want us to remember the Sabbath? How will you know for sure which day of the week it is? Can you say you were born on Sunday when it was actually Saturday? God gave four gifts during creation; what were they?

May God greatly bless you, child, and youth of Jesus.

Gift of the Morning to Children and Youth.

Memory Verse: Genesis 2:3

[3] God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which He had created and made.

Prayer: Thank You for the Sabbath, Lord. On this day we rejoice to rest and to fellowship with others in worship. Help us to do good things today. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 4 (January 4)

LESSON: The Fall of Man – Sin Entering the World

(Genesis 3)



Genesis chapters 1 and 2 describe the creation. Genesis 3 tells of the fall, and the remaining part of the Bible talks about restoration after the fall. As a loving Father above all, surely God had clearly explained to them about obedience, eternal life, rebellion, and death. His commandments are incredibly important, especially to us! You might not like someone who breaks God's commandments. They might kill people, hit you, lie to you, and the list of evils can go on! But God gave man a choice, and this helps man mature well, to have genuine love, not to be like a robot. When a person succeeds by choosing well, they can have a very close relationship with God, as they are free to make their own choices.

Certainly, the days that Adam and his wife lived in the Garden of Eden were full of great joy. The whole kingdom was theirs. They walked like a king and queen, owning everything! They had no problems or worries. There was no sorrow, crying, pain, or death. Picture a day in your mind without toothaches, quarrels, hunger, death, or sickness. Their life was of unparalleled quality. Tending to the garden didn't tire them out, but brought joy and physical exercise. There were no thorns or weeds to weed out. But disobedience ruined all of that in just one day.

One day, while Adam and Eve were busy in the garden, Eve wanted to check out the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This amazing tree was in the garden. She started questioning why God gave them that command. What does knowing good and evil really mean? Why couldn't they eat from it? God had given them everything else, except for that specific tree, and His instructions were clear. They were allowed to eat from the fruits of millions of trees! These trees could be compared to tithes or anything dedicated to the LORD. Things dedicated to the LORD must not be used for anything other than what He has ordered or commanded.

Looking closely, this temptation could have been avoided, because there were millions of other trees they could visit without any trouble. It seems that when Satan was thrown out of heaven, he was only allowed to walk around this tree in the garden! This was God's mercy. And even if man had chosen to go there, he shouldn't have stayed and answered questions from someone he didn't know well or who had doubts about him. Moreover, even if he spoke with Satan, he had the ability to refuse the fruit. So, even today we ask ourselves: What evils can we avoid by having wisdom and praying to God to help us avoid such temptations?

So, as Eve turned to walk, she was surprised to see that a creature was speaking to her. All creatures, except for humans, didn't speak. She looked and saw a serpent with an enticing voice and a display of friendliness that Westerners call "frenemy." Instead of running away, she stood there, more curious. Little did she know, it was Satan deceiving the whole world. He was first known as Lucifer, the angel of light, but was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12), filled with hatred and anger, wanting to get revenge by ruining the joy of God's children. Eve didn't know this, otherwise, she wouldn't have fallen into the trap, but she had the choice to believe God's Word or do her own thing.



The serpent asked Eve, "Did God really say you can't eat from any tree in the garden?" The woman began to argue with the serpent

without caution. She said, “We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” The serpent answered, “You will not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and though she had never eaten its fruit before, her eyes were deceived, but not just her eyes—she chose to disobey God. She saw that she could do whatever she wanted without obeying the Creator and the loving God who had given them everything. She ate the fruit and then gave it to her husband Adam, who also ate it. Their eyes were both opened, and they realized they were naked. They ran and hid themselves, sewing fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. Then they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

God called to Adam and said, “Where are you?” And today, He calls us where we hide; it is He who seeks us, not we who seek Him! Adam answered, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.” God asked him, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” Adam blamed God and his wife, saying, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” When God asked the woman what she had done, she blamed the serpent, saying, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” It seems that Adam sinned knowingly. Perhaps he loved his wife more than God and lacked faith in realizing that God could give him another helper or remove the evil his wife had done. Sin is rebellion against the law. Adam and Eve rebelled against God’s law. Adam, who before had no fear but loved God, speaking to Him face to face, began to fear from that day onward. Their relationship with God was wounded. Their relationship as husband and wife was also damaged, and many marriages today face challenges because of this, but we must return to God to heal our families. God had warned them about the wicked enemy, the deceiver, who had been cast out of heaven, but they chose not to listen to the voice of their Creator.

Thus, the war that began in heaven has come down to earth. After coming here, Satan could no longer reside in heaven, as he was cast down here. But he is here tormenting or disturbing people in various ways. It is possible that he went on to disturb the inhabitants of every planet with living creatures, and they overcame him. We are told that the shortest war on record took place in Zanzibar, lasting just 38 minutes in 1896 between Britain and the Sultan of Oman. The Sultan of Oman surrendered, and the British took control of the island. But the longest war of all time has been between Satan and God, which has continued for about 6,000 years. You and I, along with every human being, are involved. This war is very close to ending. We are advised to put



on the seven pieces of armor in Ephesians 6 to win this battle. Please read the Holy Scriptures, and if you can find a book called “The Great Controversy between God and Satan,” read it to help you win this battle, with God’s help.

Isn’t it a tragic disaster that despite everything we have gone through under Satan’s influence, people still remain in his bondage? But there is a need for us to tell them this issue. This means preaching the gospel. Every Christian is a messenger of God, blessed to hear this good news. Let us do this work quickly, as it deserves. Satan is a liar. Through his deceit, humanity was plunged into suffering and pain. God has been very merciful to us, giving us a second chance to choose life. God requires our obedience and surrender to Him; He doesn’t need our opinions! If He says that the tithe is ten percent, or that the Sabbath is to be observed, then that is what He means! If we consider the opinions of everyone, how do you think our lives would be? For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Through sincere and diligent prayers, parents should protect their children. They should pray with complete faith that GOD will be with them, and that His holy angels will protect them and their children from the wicked forces of Satan.

Questions: How many trees were there in the garden? What was the name of the tree they were forbidden to eat from? How was the serpent cunning and how did it deceive Eve? How did Adam know he was naked? What would have happened if they had not listened to the serpent? How do you think Adam and Eve felt? How do you think God felt? Why should humans wear proper clothing today? What does this lesson teach us about obedience today?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 3:23

[23] Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Prayer: Holy Father, thank You for putting enmity between us and Satan. Help us to resist him so that he may flee. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of Adam and Eve inside the Garden of Eden. Then draw Eve speaking with the serpent and later eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

DAY 5 (January 5)

LESSON: Satan Falls From Heaven

(Revelation 12, Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14, John 3:14-20, and Job 1).



The Word of God tells us that Satan was an angel in heaven, his name was Lucifer before sin, or the morning star, the son of the morning. Lucifer was the originator of sin.His names changed to Iblis, the Accuser of the brethren, the Serpent, and others which you may have heard of. The book of Ezekiel compares Satan to the King of Tyre. He was in the Garden of Eden, the garden of God, and every precious stone was his covering: gold, diamond, sapphire, beryl, and others. The work of his timbrels and pipes was within him, and in the day he was created, they were prepared. He was the anointed cherub that covered. God placed him on the holy mountain of God. Satan appeared perfect in his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him. He was filled with violence and sinned, and because of this, God cast him out with force from heaven and threw him down. His glory was humbled, and the sound of his harps was brought low.

Satan's heart was lifted up with pride because of his beauty; he said, "I will ascend to heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit on the mount of assembly, on the heights of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." He wanted to be like Him Who is above, that is, God, and wanted to be worshiped, with

creatures following his commands. But he was brought down. The beauty of appearance should not build pride within us, lest we sin. It also seems that he was a great singer, and all of this caused him to become proud, disregarding God's commandments and rebelling in heaven. May God help us so that when we have talents, they do not bring pride but instead, we thank God with humility, giving Him glory because He is the giver of everything. Even in adornment, we should be cautious. All precious stones were created by God for humans. But man has taken these stones and adorned himself with them to show off or bring pride. This enemy is now like a roaring lion seeking people to devour.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. As humans, sin has entered into us all through our ancestors. Adam and Eve kept asking themselves the meaning of God's words: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." They did not know that these words were a blessing so that they would not love Satan too much and be taken directly. God gave them hope that one day they would find a redeemer. They perhaps thought their firstborn (the woman's offspring) would save them from this predicament. When God said the offspring of the woman in Eden, He meant Immanuel, or God with us, or that Christ would come to save. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Wherever the world is, place your name. Even if it were just you, God would come to save you. God is love; He loves people. God did not want to discourage them by telling them it would take thousands of years.

Many people today play with Satan as Eve did. For example: by reading books on witchcraft like Harry Potter or Wicca. Others believe that Satan does not exist. If you do not know your enemy, you have lost the battle. Satan exists; the Word of God makes this clear. Some nations have days to celebrate witches, thinking it is a game, that there are good and bad witches. This is a mistake. Satan is a creature created as an angel of light, but he rebelled and has no good. He is now waiting for his punishment on the last day, but he wants to deceive humans so that they perish with him. The punishment of Hell was not meant for humans but for Satan and his angels. Let us pray to God to give us strength to escape the snares of Satan and find Paradise, that is, to go to heaven.

The important thing to understand is that we are in a fierce battle between good and evil or Satan and God. We ask ourselves, why don't we see missiles being thrown or guns firing? Ah! These battles are in the mind! Two voices are

heard every minute, choose this or that. The voice of the angel of God and the voice of the angel of Satan. The Spirit of God speaks to our conscience every minute. So what should we do? Read Ephesians 6 carefully. It tells us to put on the armor of God to stand against the schemes of Satan and his armies, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We should fasten the belt of truth around our waist, put on the breastplate of righteousness, wear the shoes of the readiness of the gospel of peace, take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying at all times with all prayer and supplication. We should meditate on God's Word day and night as Jesus overcame temptations while on earth. Read more in Matthew 4.



The book of Job gives us a picture that in the past Satan was allowed to walk in heaven representing the world, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." This book also tells us that bad things happen to good people. Perhaps these visits stopped when Jesus overcame and became our representative! You can look more into the internet about Theodicy of Love by John Peckham about the goodness of God, and why He allows people to continue suffering. In short, God also suffers as His children continue to do evil to each other, and that our enemy Satan wants to hurt God through His

children. Therefore, all believers have been made a spectacle to the world, to angels and men. God wants to use us, and Satan wants to use us. Satan forces by power, but God gives choice.

Parents, are you working tirelessly and patiently for the sake of your children? The God of heaven sees your care, your hard work, your watchfulness at all times. He hears your prayers. Teach your children with patience and gentleness for the Lord. All heaven is pleased with your work. The angels of light will join you as you strive to guide your children to heaven. God will join you, crowning your efforts with success. Christ delights in honoring the Christian family because such a family is a reflection of the family in heaven.

Questions: Where is Satan now? Who was the first sinner? Name six names of Satan that you know. How many angels fell with Satan when he was cast down from heaven? What does the book of Job help us understand?

God Bless You, Child and Young One of Jesus

Memory Verse: Luke 10:18

[18] He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Prayer: Father, keep us from the deception of Lucifer. Create in us clean hearts, forgive our sins, and help us not to be proud. In the Name of Jesus Christ.

Activity: Discuss sins that can separate you from God, then pray and tell God to help you completely turn away from sin and bad deeds.

Day 6 (January 6)

LESSON: The consequences of rebellion

(Genesis 3)



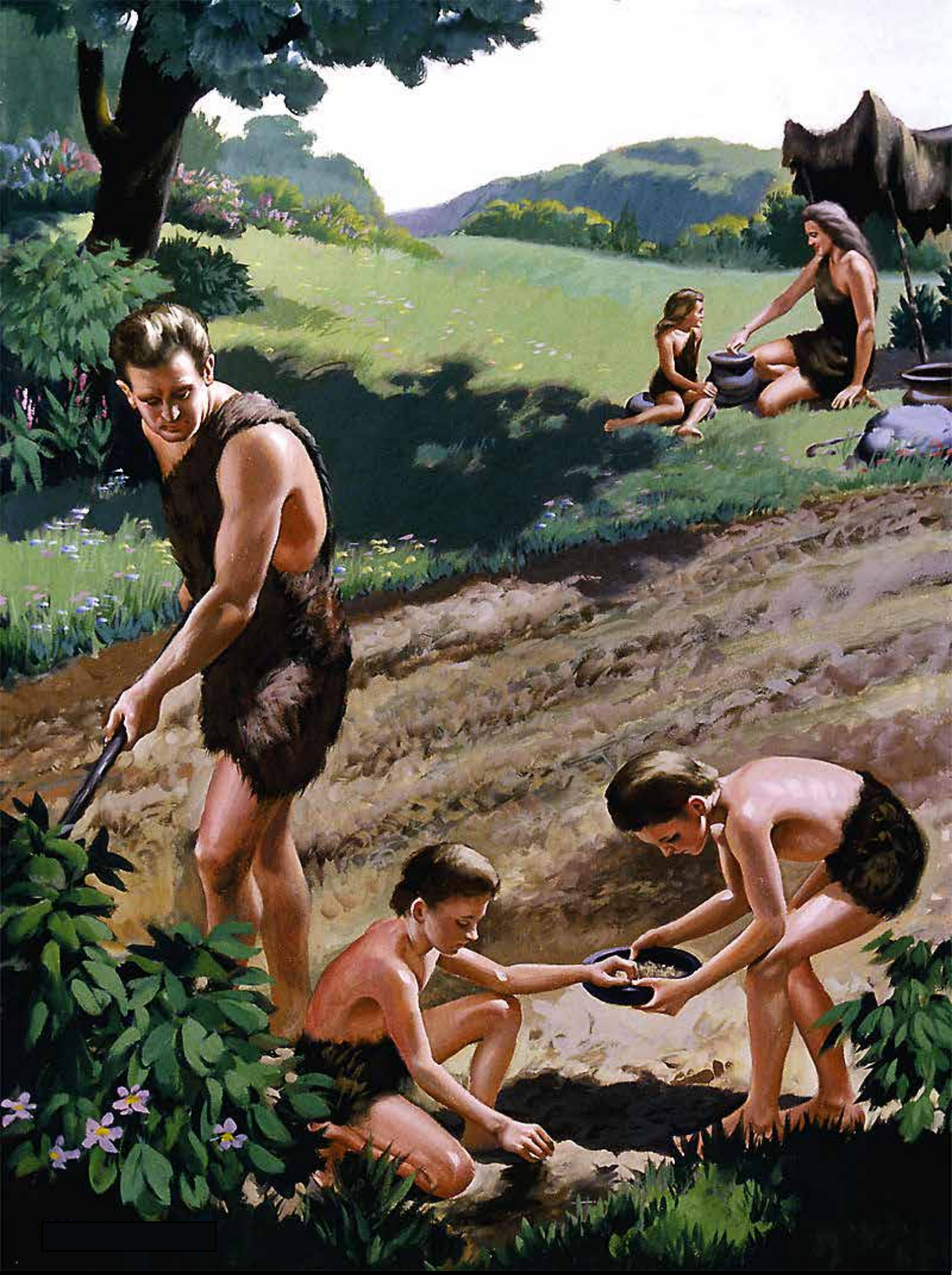
Adam and his wife failed the test or trial. They sinned, and just like us today, we are tested every day and can either fall into sin or overcome it. We must pray to God every day to help us overcome. And when we sin, we should ask for forgiveness and, with true repentance, make amends. We must learn to adopt God's character. The enemy, Satan, comes with various temptations through hearing, acting, speaking, and thinking. It could be pride, evil desires, despair, hypocrisy, hatred, jealousy, being worldly and loving pleasures, or being an atheist who says there is no God. Was God cruel to Adam and Eve? No! Far from it. He gave them the choice to follow the law and live in peace and joy, or to rebel and live in sorrow. Can you discuss with your parents what problems arise in a lawless country? What would happen if you don't obey natural laws?

God gave them garments made of lambskin, instead of the fig leaves that only partially covered their nakedness. Perhaps this was the first sacrifice, to clothe them in God's righteousness. This also shows that it's not proper to wear clothes that are insufficient in covering, because God gave us clothes to cover ourselves properly—to shield against shame, cold, and heat. Do not



be deceived by wearing half-naked clothes like fig leaves, saying they are in fashion. If God wanted us to dress like that, He wouldn't have made Adam and Eve garments of respect to cover their nakedness. Then the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than all the beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." From that day on, the serpent became the enemy of mankind. When we see it, we kill it, and when it strikes us, it bites, and it slithers on its belly, not walking. God's placing enmity between us and Satan is a good thing because it is a unique promise and a great grace; otherwise, Satan would have been our friend and would have led us astray in a very bad way.

🎁Then the Lord God said to the woman, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Relations between husband and wife also became difficult. Thus, men who do not love their wives, and those who have been given dominion by the Creator, began to oppress and abuse their wives, children, and all those under their authority, like animals. Childbearing was not meant to be painful, but many mothers share the pain



of childbirth, and some have been cut open, others have died during delivery. One mother said that in her tribe, they say when a woman is pregnant, one leg is on earth and the other in the grave. All of this is humanity's punishment for disobeying God's commands. Many say that Eve has put us into trouble, but even today, we are given the same choice. Will we choose God and His ways, or will we choose Satan? Do we doubt God and do what we want?

God said to Adam, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." There are two kinds of wisdom, human wisdom and God's wisdom. God's wisdom has no regrets, and we find it in His Word. We may not initially see it, but later we can make big mistakes and regret the consequences. For example, human wisdom says that humans evolved, and thus good behavior is not important because we have no value; we are just like monkeys, or if a woman does not want to give birth to a child, she can terminate the pregnancy. For instance, 25% of pregnancies are terminated, which is like one million children every year. However, if this child had lived, his or her destiny could have been a help to the parent or the nation, as God had already invested in this child, but it was killed.

God is the Creator, and no one should destroy what He has created unless it harms life, such as mosquitoes or ants. Wisdom from above helps us in life more than any other wisdom, in solving our problems and those of others. We have seen this in Daniel, Joseph, and others! This wisdom is also full of mercy, compassion, and good fruits, and does not deceive others. The second wisdom is that of the enemy, the wisdom that Satan gives, and it is of man! This is the wisdom every human has claimed and used at some point, leading them to sin. This is the wisdom that Eve and Adam used to question what God had told them, and thus they brought misfortune upon themselves and their descendants to this day. Anyone lacking wisdom is encouraged to seek the Lord, and He will give it. The wisdom of the enemy is like a car without brakes, leading to great sorrow. Samson is one example; although he had the Spirit of God, he lacked the wisdom to follow it. May God always help us to seek His wisdom and live by it.

Lo! It was the saddest day that has ever been on earth. I think they were terrified and shaken with fear. Sin brings great fear. Instead of working happily and easily, work became hard, sorrowful, and sometimes without any harvest due to drought or other difficulties caused by sin. I think when

they saw the leaves turning yellow, dying, and falling, they wept. They saw animals chasing and eating each other. We have all stepped on thorns, and we know the pain they cause. Sin brought sorrow in heaven, and now it brought sorrow to earth. God Himself also had great sorrow, as the darkness of sin had entered. Night was coming, and they wondered where to go. The angels also mourned because heaven had already experienced the problem of sin, and now it had entered the world. Even the animals might have felt this fear and sorrow when they saw Adam and Eve crying.

They were driven out of the Garden of Eden, and Cherubim (angels) were placed to guard the garden with a flaming sword that turned in all directions, to guard the way to the tree of life. God loved them and had mercy on them. He did not want them to eat from the tree of life and live forever in sin. Instead, they were cast out with great sorrow. They turned to look at their once joyful dwelling, but the garden was fenced, and the gate was shut. Sin has a great cost that is unmatched. Adam lived for 930 years before he died. Perhaps he walked around and showed his descendants the garden from which he had been driven. He pleaded with them to obey God, telling them about the joy they had before sin. However, many people do not learn from others' experiences. They want to experience their own punishments, so they engage in actions that lead to sorrow. It is said that this Garden of Eden was located in Iraq. It is possible that God took it before the flood, which occurred around 2348 BC.

You may ask today, how did these humans start by eating the forbidden fruit and then progress to killing others? God's laws are interconnected; they are like a glass. If one piece breaks, all of them are broken. Truly explaining sin is offering excuses for it. Sin has no reason to occur and no explanation—it is a great mystery, especially when considering that God has all the love for us. It was not only Cain who killed Abel; Lamech also killed a young man. The details of these murders have not been revealed, but they were deemed worthy of punishment, ten times more than Cain's punishment. Thus, we see subsequent generations of humanity becoming worse.These days, heavy missiles are targeting millions of people in a short time! Indeed, we are nearing home. God revealed to them the plan of salvation, and how the Garden of Eden or Paradise will be restored again through the death of His Son. Let us learn to trust and obey Jesus so that we may be in the new paradise. A 90-year-old mother, named Gloria, in my Bible class, advised me that we Africans have truly suffered greatly, from slavery, colonization, neo-colonialism, and then being discriminated against, despised, and oppressed among the nations of the world. If we don't make it to heaven, it will be a great regret and foolishness, for we will have lost here on earth and lost there in heaven as well. I have sat and tried to carefully reflect on her words.

A father, or in his absence, a mother, should lead worship, selecting a part of the Scriptures that is appealing and easy to understand. The service should be short. When long chapters are read and long prayers are made, the service becomes tedious (wearisome), and at its conclusion, a sense of relief is felt. GOD is dishonored and disrespected when the worship hour is made dry and irritating (disturbing the hearts of the family), when it becomes too heavy a task, lacking zeal, to the point where even the children fear it just thinking about it before they are called to participate. The influence of a mother who prays for the fear of GOD will last forever. She may die, but her work will endure.

Questions: What punishment did Adam, Eve, and the Serpent receive? Why did God expel them from the garden? Who guarded the garden? Why does sin bring sorrow? Why do people not listen when you warn them not to repeat a bad action?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Young One of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 3:23

[23] Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Prayer: Thank You so much our Heavenly Father. We are grateful that You have placed enmity between You and Satan so that he may not deceive us or hinder us from receiving Your blessings. Help us to one day see the Garden of Eden again in heaven. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: List some of the consequences that sin has brought into the world, especially in your community and in news reports. Draw the angels God placed to guard the Garden of Eden and the flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the tree of life.

DAY 7 (January 7)

LESSON: The First Child and the First Death, truly, anger is a very bad thing.

(Genesis 4)

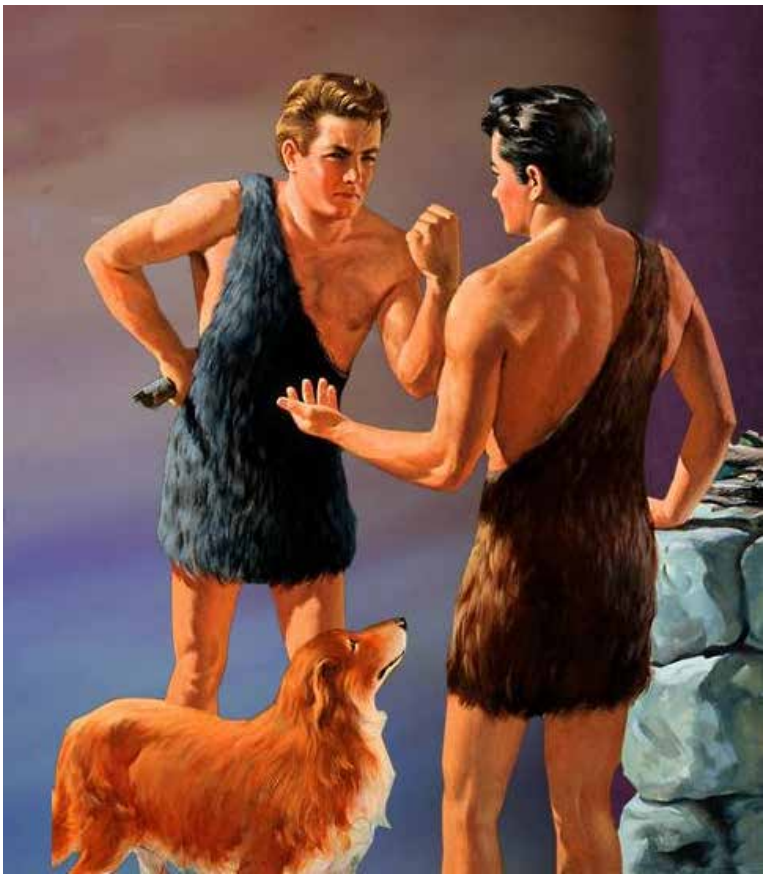


When Adam and Eve sewed themselves clothes from fig leaves, God came and gave them clothes made from lamb's skin, which cover nakedness and provide comfort. These days, some people want to walk around in small, short, or inappropriate clothes. We have all lost the glory of God and need complete clothing to cover us. Here they began to understand, to some extent, the meaning of death and how to offer a sacrifice when they sin and seek forgiveness. The sacrifice represented Christ, the Lamb of God, who would come in the future. They were instructed clearly on how to offer this sacrifice—not from farm produce but from livestock. Blood had to be shed, for without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (Romans 6:23). They continued to slaughter lambs and offer sacrifices for many years until Christ was born and died around 31 AD.

Adam and Eve were blessed with their first child, whom they named Cain. Perhaps they thought he would be the Redeemer. They then had a second child, whom they named Abel. God gave them complete instructions on how to offer sacrifices for their sins. The man was to offer sacrifices for his family. He would confess his sins and then slay a lamb, symbolizing the death of Jesus, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Cain was a farmer, and his younger brother, Abel, was a shepherd. Both brought their sacrifices, but Cain brought the produce of the land. He did not want to listen to God's instructions and offer the required sacrifice, whereas Abel brought the firstborn of his flock. God accepted Abel's sacrifice by consuming it with fire, but Cain's offering of produce remained on the altar. Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. The Lord asked him why he was doing this. Even today, God sees when we become angry and filled with jealousy or hatred like Cain. He reminded him that if he did well, he would be accepted, but if not, sin is crouching at the door and must be overcome. Instead of asking his brother for a lamb to correct his mistake, Cain, in his pride, became angrier and added more evil.

Cain told his brother Abel to go with him into the field, and there, he rose up and killed him. We do not know what weapon Cain used or how their parents learned of it. The Bible is written concisely, and if it recorded everything, the paper would not suffice, ink would run out, or even people wouldn't be able to handle it! It seems Cain had some evil ways. Then they ran to the field to find their son's lifeless body. They did not understand what death meant, but when they called out to Abel, there was no answer. This was when they began to understand, even remotely, the meaning of death, and that their sin as parents had serious consequences, even for their children. They wept deeply, as David wept for Absalom, saying, "My son Abel!" It would have been better if I had died in your place, my son Abel. I realized that this was a time when there was no television or great evil. How did he get such filthy thoughts? I realized that the heart is deceitful and has the disease of death. We should always surrender to God, for if we do not, we may end up doing horrible things that surprise us. Therefore, let us fall at God's feet and humble ourselves so that He may support us with His mighty hand. God knew that Cain was angry, and He gave him a warning to repent, but he did not listen. It is possible that even Cain was shocked when he saw that Abel was not rising or breathing.



The Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain responded arrogantly, “I don’t know; am I my brother’s keeper?” or it’s like saying, “Don’t bother me, I’m not his nanny.” God knew what he had done, and said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” Cain was punished so that when he tilled the ground, it would no longer yield crops for him. He would become a wanderer with no settled place on earth. Cain begged God to lessen his punishment because he thought it was too severe. He feared saying, “I will be driven from Your presence, and I will be a wanderer and a vagabond on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

The Lord replied, “Whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over,” and He placed a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. It was as if Adam and Eve had lost both their children. It was a day of great sorrow for Adam and Eve when they saw that their son had killed his brother. Truly, first-born children are deeply loved by their parents, but Cain became the source of their sorrow. Their good son became the first murderer. Cain had broken the sixth commandment, “You shall not murder,” and with his arrogance and anger, he broke all the other nine commandments. The mark placed on him reminded his children or wife, and they saw the bitter consequences of sin so that they would not follow his example. The parents lost both of their children because Cain rebelled against God and went to live far from them.

Cain wanted to oppose God’s Law. He did not want to offer the prescribed sacrifice to show he was a sinner. He wanted to show the work of his hands and perhaps his ability to save himself. This chapter describes the terrible consequences of uncontrolled anger. Cain’s uncontrolled emotions led him to kill his brother Abel. There are great consequences when our emotions are not under control. Cain left his home and became a wanderer and a fugitive, going from place to place. His life suddenly changed. A bad choice, uncontrolled emotions, and negative attitudes lead to bad consequences. Alcohol can also contribute to making our thoughts uncontrollable. A good choice, emotions under control, and positive feelings lead to good outcome.

Life under the control of the Holy Spirit is prepared to face any situation that arises in life with a peaceful perspective in the main purpose of God. May the Lord help us to pray for our brothers and sisters, for we are their guardians!

🎁Cain married, had a son whom he named Enoch. Enoch had a son whom he named Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. Lamech was the first person to have two wives, Ada and Zillah. They gave birth to children who were shepherds, musicians, and metalworkers. I think that when Adam and Eve remembered their life in the garden before they sinned, they wept in great sorrow, knowing that they were the ones who brought these calamities to their children and humanity. You can only imagine the sadness and tears that flowed as they remembered and told others these events. We do not need to make our own mistakes to learn; we can learn from those who went before us and live lives of dependence on and obedience to God. Even if they had not sinned, all humans would still have the choice to obey God or disobey Him.

🎁If mothers understood the importance of their mission, they would overcome in secret prayer, bringing their children to Jesus, asking for His blessings upon them, and praying for wisdom to properly carry out their sacred duties. Let the mother make the most of every opportunity to shape and build the character, habits, and personalities of her children. Let her carefully observe the growth of their character, correcting the behaviors that appear in large forms, and encouraging those who are lacking. Let her make her own life a pure and good example of valuable leadership.

🎁Questions: Why is it not good to walk naked or wear clothes that lack respect? What sin did Cain commit? Why was he given a mark? How can you live with your brothers, sisters, or parents without hatred, jealousy, or quarrels? We are not responsible for the choices of our brothers, but we are responsible for the influence we have on them, discuss this!

God Bless You So Much, the Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👨‍👧‍👧

Memory Verse: Genesis 4:8

[8] Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father, protect us from anger and bad choices. Give us love for people and love for You. Help us not to clothe ourselves with our own works like Adam and Eve sewed garments for themselves. Cover us Lord with Your glory. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

*Activity: What is anger? Discuss. Genesis 4 speaks about the story of Cain and Abel, teaching both children and adults about uncontrolled anger, jealousy,

worship, sin, and consequences. Activities may include: making drawings or boards with faces that show emotions like joy and anger. Or, do research on what the priests' garments looked like (Exodus 28:42-43). According to your gender, list clothes that cover you properly and make you look presentable. Then discuss why people dress the way they do today, and the original reason for clothing.*

DAY 8 (January 8)

TOPIC: The Life of Enoch

(Genesis 5:8)



Adam had another son and named him Seth. The Bible does not mention the names of daughters, but Adam and Eve had daughters. Adam had Seth when he was 130 years old, and in those days, people gave birth at an old age and lived for many years. Adam was created by God to live forever, but because of sin, he lived only 930 years. He was created as an adult. For many years, they did not know sickness, and Adam saw his descendants up to the sixth generation before he died. Seth lived 912 years and fathered Enosh, who lived 905 years.

Genealogies may not be the most exciting to read in the Bible, but they contain much for a diligent student of the Scriptures. We see people living long lives. This reveals an important truth about God. Our Creator intended for humans to live forever. He created us with a certain power, which, even after many centuries following sin, remained. We do not know how long the women lived, but perhaps they lived longer than their husbands, as many do today. The second woman mentioned by name is Sarai, the wife of Abraham, and then Milcah, the wife of Nahor (Genesis 11:29). Then we see genealogies introduced by Lamech from the lineage of Cain. Their names are Adah—meaning to adorn oneself—and Zillah—meaning musical instruments or a famous dancer! Another thing we learn is how old this world is by reading genealogies! Our world is about 6,000 years old.

We also know that Jesus came from which genealogy by studying these genealogies! And indeed, all of us came from Adam and Eve. We are all cousins from the same ancestor! And the same Creator! This should compel us to treat one another with kindness, meaning we should avoid any form of evil.



We must follow the map of our lives, which is the Scriptures, so we do not lose our way on our journey. Even up to Noah, we pass through an unbroken chain of narrative history passed down from generation to generation. Their minds were certainly sharp because they were able to preserve information accurately even as they grew old. From all this, we can see that we have a true historical record in the Bible—a history we can trust that aligns with the history of our world, because there is no history in books before Mesopotamia.

Enosh fathered Kenan, who lived 910 years, and Kenan fathered Mahalalel, who lived 895 years. Mahalalel fathered Jared, who lived 962 years. The person who lived the longest was Methuselah, who lived 969 years. Lamech lived 777 years, and Noah lived 950 years. All this information is in Genesis

5. If you draw a chart, you will find that the nine ancestors mentioned lived at the same time as Adam, meaning Adam saw his grandchildren and great-grandchildren of many generations. Only Noah did not see Adam. This means that all these generations knew about creation from Adam and saw the Garden of Eden! They did not need books because they had good memory. Surely, Adam told them about their struggles and their fall. Undoubtedly, he told them about the hope of the Redeemer who would come. If you draw a chart of the years of these elders, you will see that one line is short—this is the line of Enoch, whose father was Jared, who lived 962 years, and his son was Methuselah, who lived 969 years. He himself lived only 365 years. This is because he was taken by God to heaven. Children are of great value to parents, and in heaven, they will no longer be our children, but our brothers and sisters!

We can ask why God took him. I believe he loved God and spoke to Him. Thus, he loved God deeply with his heart and mind. Day and night, he thought about his Heavenly Father. He was not selfish, nor was he angry or thinking evil thoughts. Evil thoughts are bad for God's children. I believe God saw someone who reflected His character. He recognized the vastness of God's love after having his first child. Many parents know the vastness of God's love when they have children. Enoch knew the joy of walking and talking with God, and he knew God's plans for the future! Enoch was shown things of the future, saying, "Behold, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones" (Jude 1:14). In Hebrews 11:5, it says he was commended as one who pleased God. This is a remarkable record for someone to leave for their children. His friendship with God continued to grow, until one day, God said, "Come, my friend, so we can sit together and have sweet conversation because you and I are so close!" Do you want to walk with God in your thoughts, actions, and words? Let the Holy Spirit live and reign in your heart. If we do this, we know that we will continue walking with Him to heaven.

The sad thing is that while Enoch walked with God, many of Adam's descendants did not. They were wicked and selfish, forgetting God. They fought and killed one another, just as Cain killed his brother. People continued to do evil, following the devil, who is like a roaring lion. Perhaps Adam and Eve warned them, but they thought the old people were annoying, and even though they themselves failed, who then could have succeeded? Adam saw the world, created well and peacefully, turn into a place of terror. This made him regret his sin. It is difficult to understand how things turned so badly so quickly after creation. Truly, humans are forgetful, and it is easy to fall into sin if we do not pay attention to God. We do not have our own goodness; rather, we must ask God to give us true goodness of heart.

All the names had meanings, for example: Adam: “man or human,” Seth: “appointed,” Enosh: “mortal” or “weak,” Kenan: “sorrow,” Mahalalel: “Blessed be God,” Jared: “shall come down,” Enoch: “beginning” or “teaching,” Methuselah: “when he dies, it will happen,” Lamech: “despair” or “mourning,” Noah: “rest” or “comfort.”

The sons of God are not angels but humans who love God. It is a tactic of Satan to bring down God’s children by making them marry unbelievers. Does Satan still use this tactic as we approach the end of the world? No! He has not stopped. God’s warning is as important today as it was in the past: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

A mother should start her work with confidence and strength, continually relying on the Lord’s help in all her efforts. She should never rest content until she sees in her children the development of an upward character that is evident, with a higher goal in life than just seeking their own pleasure.

Questions: What is the lesson from this story? What was Adam’s third son called? How many years did Enoch live? Where did he go? Who was his son? Who was his father? What does Methuselah’s name mean?

God Bless You So Much, the Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 5:24

[24] Enoch walked with God, and then he was no more, because God took him away.

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for giving us another day. Grant us lives like Enoch’s, to walk with You always, and one day to live with You in heaven like Enoch. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a chart showing three generations back from you until your birth. Mention the names of the first ten generations, from Adam to Noah.*

DAY 9 (January 9)

TOPIC: Noah, the Ark, and the Flood

(Genesis 6:8)



As human beings multiplied on the earth, evil also increased. Even though generation after generation had passed down the story of salvation, telling that one day they would return to Eden if they accepted salvation, people took wives of their choice, contrary to God's plan, eating and drinking. Perhaps they ate in gluttony, they abused wealth, they neglected the hungry, and they ate foods or drank beverages that we should not use, such as alcoholic drinks or certain foods. It seems that as people lived together in cities, they taught each other great evil. The Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is flesh." Thus, the days of man were shortened to 120 years, and even his lifespan was reduced. Every thought of man was evil continually.

The LORD regretted that He had made mankind. It is the saddest thing to think that our Creator regretted making us. The LORD said, "I will wipe mankind whom I have created from the face of the earth, along with the animals, the birds, and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked

faithfully with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth." God told Noah to build an ark of cypress woodInstructions for Building the Ark

The dimensions were 600 x 100 x 60 feet. The size of this ark was similar to modern ships (for example, the USA Pride of Merchant ship is 990 x 101 x 122 feet, has 12 floors, 1,000 crew members, and can carry 14,000 soldiers).

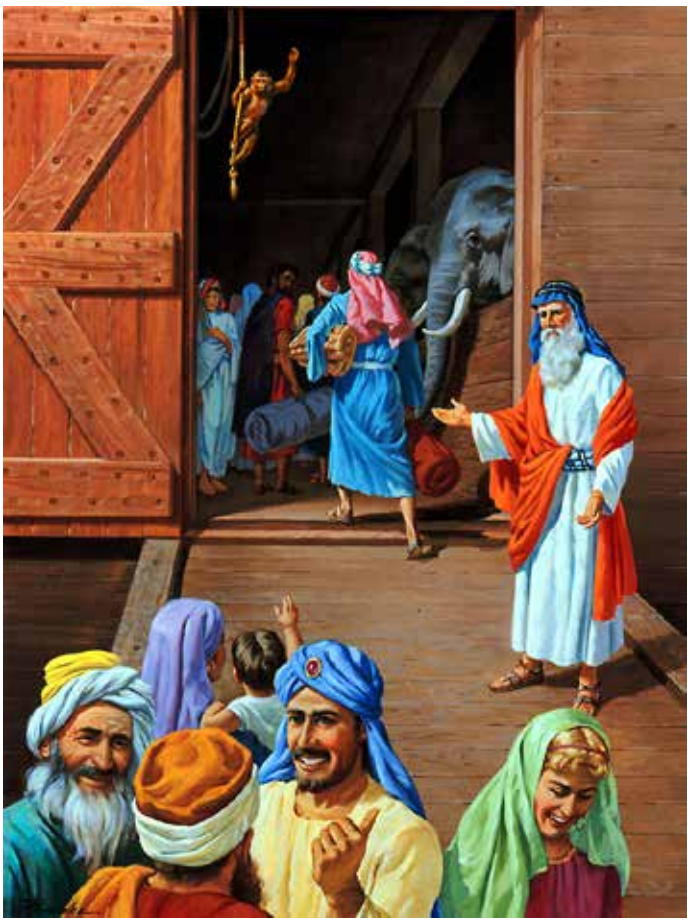
It seems that people knew all this because Noah preached for 120 years about this, and every hammer strike during the ark's construction was a sermon. Moreover, a child was born and named Methuselah, meaning "when he dies, the flood will come," and indeed, the year Methuselah died was the year of the flood. God gave every warning, but they ignored it. However, it is possible that others who believed may have died before the flood. People helped Noah build the ark, perhaps for a reward or out of kindness; they heard this message again and again, hardening their hearts.

The LORD told Noah that He would bring a flood to destroy everything with breath and flesh on the earth. He told Noah, his sons, and their wives to enter the ark. The ark seemed to have only one window, and it was at the top of the roof, so they looked to heaven for their salvation! God told Noah to gather food for them and the animals, as they would stay in the ark nearly a year. God gave Noah instructions on which animals would enter the ark—unclean animals would enter two by two, male and female, and clean animals seven by seven. For example, pigs would enter two, and goats or chickens seven. For these 120 years, Noah witnessed much wickedness. People lacked compassion and killed each other, and there was much pain. They mocked old Noah, saying he was building a huge boat because he said water would fall from above. During this time, it had never rained, as plants grew through dew. By mocking Noah, they were also mocking God, because Noah was merely a messenger following God's instructions. When you are mocked for following God, remember Noah.

After finishing the ark, God told Noah that after seven days, He would bring rain, which would fall for 40 days and nights, and everything with life would perish.

Noah was 600 years old when he entered the ark, along with his wife, three sons, and their wives—only eight people in total. These sons and daughters-

in-law fully committed themselves because their parents were left behind! When they saw the animals entering the ark two by two or seven by seven, they were undoubtedly a little shocked, but they continued their lives. I think it was sin and pride that blinded them. They mocked Noah for staying in a boat that wasn't afloat because the land was dry. Then the rain began, and the storm was fierce. People ran and begged Noah to open the door, but Noah tried and failed, telling them that it was God who had shut the door. Perhaps they climbed tall trees, but the waters continued to rise and covered the trees and mountains. All living creatures perished, and everything with breath died. The flood occurred around 2348 BC, and it changed the face of the earth, diminishing its beauty.



Another important element of this story is that God announced that "He would establish His covenant" with His people. God's covenant is His promise of faithfulness and salvation. In the midst of the storm, God prepared the ark for safety. Jesus is our refuge in times of storm, our ark of safety, our refuge in times of trouble. What wonderful good news—God's covenant is His eternal guarantee of our safety in the ark of His grace. God loves to uphold His covenant, so let us draw near to Him and seek to know His will today.

God remembered Noah and his family in the ark, sent a wind, and caused the waters to recede. The peaks of the mountains began to appear. Noah opened the ark's window and sent out a raven, which went back and forth. Then he sent out a dove, but it could find nowhere to land and returned to the ark. Noah sent the dove out again after seven days; it came back with a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. Noah knew the waters had receded, and after another seven days, he sent the dove again, and it did not return. A year passed while they were in the ark, and the waters dried up. Noah opened the ark, and God told him to come out with his animals. It was a marvelous sight to see the animals leaping or running out of the ark. Noah built an altar to God and offered a burnt offering in thanksgiving to the Lord.

God blessed Noah and commanded him to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Before the flood, humans were only permitted to eat plant food (Genesis 1:29), but now, due to scarcity, they were allowed to eat clean animals, though they were forbidden to eat blood or fat (Leviticus 11). Today, due to pollution, it is proven that eating plant-based food is safer, so it is better to cultivate food that God originally provided for humans. Isaiah 65 shows that in the new earth, the lamb and the lion will lie together, and so humans and animals will return to the diet God first gave, one that does not kill other creatures.

After blessing Noah, God said He would never again curse the earth with a flood. Indeed, it was sorrowful to see the desolation and destruction of the land, where beautiful buildings once stood. He said He was setting His rainbow in the sky as a sign of the covenant between Him and the earth, that the waters would never again become a flood. Then the Lord brought the rainbow with seven beautiful colors for the first time to give them hope.

In 1975, archaeologists discovered remnants of the ark in Turkey! Indeed, this



is one of the things that strengthens our faith in the Scriptures, affirming their truth. When God's Word says something, we should believe and obey. God did not let Noah perish with the corrupt and arrogant people. He told Noah exactly what to do to be saved. Similarly, we know what is coming to the world soon, and we have been told how to prepare. These preparations also include strengthening our minds through God's Word and having a place to farm, and



if possible, moving to rural areas. Many large cities will not be safe and will be full of wickedness. In addition to protecting ourselves, we should warn others about what is coming to the world.

Jesus said that just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the end. Therefore, let us be wise and prepare ourselves so that we do not perish. God's invitation to Noah, "Enter the ark," was an invitation to salvation, security, and redemption. It was a promise of His care for today, tomorrow, and forever. It gave Noah hope in the midst of the chaos of this world. The Lord's invitation gives us hope too. In the ark of His safety, we find salvation, security, and redemption. This is the confidence I have in Him, that if I ask anything according to His will, He hears me. And if I know that He hears me, whatever I ask, I know that I have what I have asked of Him.

It is absolutely impossible to estimate the power of the influence of a father or mother who prays. They acknowledge GOD in all their ways. They take their children before the throne of grace and commit them to Jesus, asking for His blessings upon them. The influence of such prayers is "a wellspring of life" for those children. These prayers, offered in faith, are the help and strength of a Christian mother. Neglecting the duty of praying with our children is to lose one of the greatest blessings we have close to us, one of the greatest weapons in the midst of life's struggles, anxieties, and burdens of our daily work.

Questions:

How many days did the flood rain?
Who was the second bird sent to check the land?
When was man allowed to eat meat?
What is the meaning of the rainbow?
Why did Noah offer a sacrifice?
In a few sentences, explain how you find security in Jesus, the ark of safety?

God bless you greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 6:6

[6] The LORD regretted that He had made human beings on the earth, and His heart was deeply troubled.

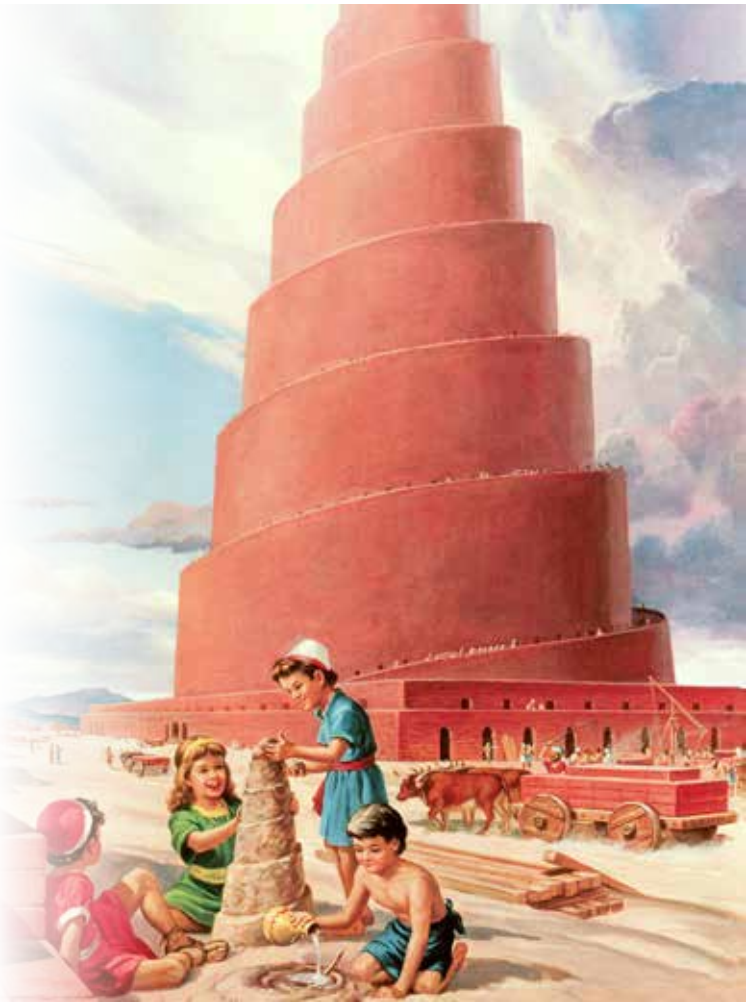
Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your patience with us human beings. Forgive our sins, and create in us new hearts of repentance. We ask to have love like Yours. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a rainbow showing all the seven colors.

DAY 10 (January 10)

TOPIC: Tower of Babel

(Genesis 9-11)



Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These are the ones who gave birth to and populated the entire world we know. Noah began as a farmer, planted vineyards, and started drinking wine. He got drunk and was naked in his tent. Ham, the father of the Canaanites, saw his father naked and told his brothers. Shem and Japheth walked in backward, covering their father's nakedness, their faces turned the other way. When Noah woke from his drunkenness, he knew what his younger son had done, and he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." Noah sinned by getting drunk, but we believe he repented. God's Word says that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Some people today think walking around without clothes is a good thing, but that is not good. It is wrong to walk without clothes or wear shameful attire.

After the flood, Noah lived for 350 years and died. His sons continued to have children, and the whole world spoke one language. Around 2242 BC, people, led by Nimrod the hunter, decided to build a tower whose top would reach to heaven, so they would not be scattered across the face of the earth as God had commanded. They also said the tower would help them in case another flood came, even though God had promised never to destroy the earth with water again, using the rainbow as a sign. But they did not listen. (All the people lived near the rivers Tigris and Euphrates).

🎁 Surely, they would not have succeeded. Scientists today say the sun is about 150 million kilometers away, and the moon is 280,000 kilometers away. Would they really have reached heaven? Our sun is one of the closest stars, but others are billions of miles away, and even rockets traveling 20,000 miles per hour would take millions of years to reach them. This was rebellion, that is, trying to challenge God's commands. The Lord came down to see, and He said, "Behold, the people are one, and they have one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. Now nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them." The Lord confused their language so that they could not understand one another. When one sent another for an axe, they brought a plow, and anger rose among them, leading to confusion. The Lord scattered them across the earth, and they stopped building the city/tower.



🎁 This is when the Lord introduced different languages to the world. It was sad; children were separating, trying to say goodbye, but they found themselves speaking strange words that their companions did not understand. If you count the years, it seems that Noah experienced two significant events: the flood, from which he and his sons were saved, and the Tower of Babel, where he saw his grandchildren engaging in another rebellion. Perhaps he warned them, but they did not listen. Indeed, the thoughts of man's heart are evil from his youth (Genesis 6:11). It is only by God's grace that we are helped to avoid evil. Beloved reader, let us not rely on our own goodness. We must accept that God will give us His goodness and clothe us with His righteousness so that we can be healed.

🎁 As Shem's descendants continued over many years, Nahor was born, and Nahor fathered Terah, who lived in Haran. Terah had three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

🎁 God saw that Abram worshiped Him in truth, as Noah did. Abram married Sarai, who was his half-sister. Sarai was barren and had no children. Terah took his son Abram, his wife Sarai, and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran who had died, and they traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan. When they arrived at Haran, Terah died at the age of 205.

🎁 The Lord appeared to Abram while he was there and said, "Go from your country, from your people, and from your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Around 1922 BC, Abram obeyed God as He commanded, for he had learned to recognize His voice. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and his possessions. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran and traveled to Shechem. The distance was about 1,500 kilometers, without cars, only donkeys or camels. The Canaanites lived there, and the Lord told Abram that He would give him that land and his descendants. Abram built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him and called on the name of the Lord. He continued traveling.

🎁 There was a famine in the land, so Abram traveled to Egypt, where he stayed because the Nile River helped irrigate the land. Jews, Christians, and Muslims all regard Abram as the father of their faiths. God has plans for you today just as He did for Abram! For we are a holy nation to the Lord our God; the Lord our God has chosen us to be His people, His treasured possession, more than all the peoples on the face of the earth (Deuteronomy 7:6). These words were spoken by Christ on the cloud pillar in the wilderness, and Moses received them for the chosen people of God. The Lord has not left the world without a testimony. He has faithful people today, just like in Abram's time, who are chosen by Him. They do not make this world their home, but they are here to witness for God, and as long as His grace endures, a living testimony will be given by His faithful messengers. Would you like to enroll today in this great army?

🎁 The prayers of Christian fathers and mothers are not ignored by the Father of all, He who sent His Son into the world to redeem people for Himself. He will not reject your prayers and will not leave you and your own in the darts of Satan on that great and final day of battle. It is up to you to work diligently and faithfully, and the Lord will strengthen the work of your hands.

🎁 Questions: Why was Ham cursed? Why is drinking alcohol a sin? What does Babel mean? What promise did God give Abram when He appeared to him? The three major religions claim that Abram is the father of their faiths; which ones are they? How many languages will there be in heaven? Are you ready to move like Abraham did?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Young One of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Genesis 11:4

[4] They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be a stubborn and arrogant person, one who wants to do things my own way. Help me and my parents to be people who listen to Your voice and not selfish. Help the gospel to reach every language, tribe, and nation in the world. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: How many languages are spoken in the world today? List some of those languages. Mention the languages that already have the Bible and those that still do not. List the four tallest buildings in the world.

DAY 11 (January 11)

LESSON: Abram – Father of the Faithful

(Genesis 13-14)



Abram lived about 100 years after the Flood. People spread to many places. Abram lived in Ur, and others spread across Africa, India, Siberia, China, and Europe. People engaged in various activities, and many museums contain items used by craftsmen, jewelry, or ships.

God saw that before the world fell into another great evil, He needed to find a person to uphold His Truth, someone who would love Him and be obedient to Him, teaching their children to keep God's Laws. Abram had a significant task because his relatives worshiped foreign gods, including his father. God looked at Abram and saw that he was a young man who pleased His heart. Even today, God looks at young people who do not shame Him. He reveals His secrets to them and what will happen in the history of the world and in the end times, how He will save His people. God appeared to Abram through dreams and visions. Abram became a blessing to mankind. At that time, there was no modern transportation, and people from the same family

lived together, helping each other. It was difficult to leave without knowing where you were going. Surely, neighbors asked him, and some even laughed, saying, “You’re just going without knowing where you’re going?” But Abram obeyed God. That is how we should act today. We are to obey God when He tells us something and keep His Commandments.

While in Egypt, Abram told his wife Sarai that since she was beautiful, the Egyptians would kill him and let her live. He asked her to say she was his sister, so that his life might be spared for her sake. This was half-truth and half-lie, for she was indeed his wife, although it was true that Sarai was his half-sister (same father, different mothers). He lacked faith and tried to protect himself, forgetting that God is the one who protects. When they arrived in Egypt, Pharaoh saw that Sarai was very beautiful, and took her into his palace, treating Abram well because of her. God struck Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because of Sarai, and Pharaoh called Abram to ask, “What have you done to me? Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? You said she is your sister!” Pharaoh ordered Abram to take his wife and leave, and told his servants to escort them with all their possessions: gold, silver, livestock, tents, etc. Abram is the first person recorded as a prophet in the Holy Scriptures.

Abram went south to Bethel. It was a large caravan of many people, perhaps even thousands, with livestock and wealth. His army alone had 318 men. He built an altar and offered sacrifices, calling on the Name of the Lord. He was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:16). Lot, his nephew, had herds of cattle, sheep, and tents, and they were both very wealthy. A dispute arose between Abram’s herders and Lot’s over grazing land in the land of Canaan. Abram told Lot that it was not good for there to be strife between them or their herders since they were brothers. As the older relative,



he acted as a peacemaker and a good example for God. He said, “The whole land is before you. Please separate from me. If you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left.” Lot saw the plain of Jordan was well-watered, and chose it for himself, and they parted ways.

Abram settled in Canaan, while Lot moved near the city of Sodom. Over time, Lot moved closer to Sodom, and eventually lived in the city. The people of Sodom were wicked and sinners against the Lord. This is a problem we still face today: we often choose to live in cities for the benefits like good schools, water, and roads. More than fifty percent of people live in cities. Many cities are filled with evil, making it easy for children to be led astray. We must pray a lot because God still loves cities, and there is still hope for them. Lot, though a righteous man, ended up in a bad situation. Sometimes we make decisions about where to live, what work to do, and who to marry based on what we see with our eyes. What seems right to us may not be good before God. Abraham’s humble spirit led to even greater blessings. He was told to look around and was given all the land, even the area that Lot had chosen. What may seem like a loss when we choose God’s path turns out to be gain in the end. What Lot chose became a disaster for his family. After parting with Lot, God told Abram, “To your offspring, I will give this land forever, and I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can count the dust, then your offspring can also be counted.”

Being in partnership with God is never a loss! Abram settled near Mamre’s oak trees and built an altar to the Lord. The kings of neighboring countries fought and even attacked Sodom and Gomorrah, taking Lot and his possessions. A survivor escaped and informed Abram. Upon hearing that his nephew was taken captive, Abram took his army of 318 men to rescue Lot. Remember, in those days there was no police or someone to call for help. He did this operation at night, and God blessed him, helping him defeat his enemies and return Lot, his people, and all their goods. The king of Sodom thanked Abram for his help. Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek, the king of Salem, and priest of God Most High. He said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Abram gave him a tenth of everything. Melchizedek had no known father or mother, and he was a type of Christ. There is no record of his birth or death, because he has no beginning or end, just as Christ does. We too should learn to give our tithe faithfully from our income, the tenth part.

The king of Sodom told Abram to take all the goods but to give him the people he had rescued. Abram said, “I will not take anything from you, not even a thread or a sandal strap, so that you will not say, ‘I made Abram rich.’” He took only the food eaten by his men and let others take their share. This

spirit of generosity, without greed, is one of the qualities that made Abram the father of the faithful. Family prayers are important, but other types of prayer are also necessary. Private prayer is very important; in solitude, the soul is revealed and exposed before God's eye, and every intention is closely examined. Private prayers are extremely valuable! The soul communicates with God! Private prayers should be heard only by God, who listens to such prayers. No curious ear can receive the burden of such prayers.

🎁Questions: Why did Lot go to live in Sodom? How many people did Abram take to rescue Lot? If God told you to go without knowing where you are going, would you go? Why was Abram chosen by God? What is the importance of tithing? What made Abram prosper? Who is Melchizedek, king of Salem? Why is Abraham's example of not being bitter good for every believer? Today, there are people who are taken captive by addictions, sinful relationships, and bad friends. What are you doing to rescue them?

May God bless you, Child and Young One of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Genesis 13:15

[15] All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your gifts from generation to generation. Help me to see that partnering with You is not a loss but a gain, forgive me for the sin of fear and unbelief in Your promises. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Have you ever gone to a place where you were a stranger? Discuss with your parent/guardian how it was.*

DAY 12 (January 12)

LESSON: The Birth of Ishmael and the Promise of Isaac's Birth

(Genesis 15-17)



God appeared again to Abram in a vision and said, "I am your shield, your very great reward." Abram asked, "O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless, and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" God told him, "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." He reiterated that Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars, uncountable. Even today, no child can count the stars! They say on a clear night, people can count up to 5,000 stars, but there are billions of stars, and it continues to be discovered that these stars are planets, other suns, or stars. Abram believed the Lord, and because of his faith, the Lord credited him with righteousness and reminded him that He was the God who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give him the land as an inheritance. God told him to offer a sacrifice to confirm that

he would inherit the land. Abram sacrificed a calf, goat, sheep, and dove, cutting them in half and placing each half opposite the other. A fire passed between the halves, and that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, giving his descendants the land of Canaan, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. He also told him that his descendants would be enslaved for over 400 years. This came to pass, as they were in Egypt for 430 years, but the actual period of slavery was 400 years.

Just as Abram kept watch over the sacrifices to protect them from vultures, we need to be diligent in prayer to ensure that Satan does not destroy us. Here, circumcision was commanded. Today, we look forward to a different kind of circumcision in the new covenant with God, which is the circumcision of our hearts: “Circumcise your hearts, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God, serve Him, hold fast to Him, and take oaths in His name. He is your praise, He is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes” (Deuteronomy 10:16-21).

When Sarai saw that she had not yet borne a child, she took her Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, and told Abram to have a child with her to build a family through her. Here, Sarai followed pagan customs, which was a mistake of unbelief. God wanted to give Abram a child through Sarai, not through anyone else. Mothers should be careful with the advice they give. Fathers should stand firm and not accept bad advice when they have heard God’s voice. Hagar was just a young girl who trusted these elders as her parents, but they made a plan that they thought was suitable, which led to her being wronged. This was a mistake, and it shows us that everyone needs God’s forgiveness, as no one is perfect, but we should repent as soon as we realize our mistakes.

Though Abram made this mistake, for every human has weaknesses, he later corrected himself, letting go of Hagar, and his overall direction in life was to love God greatly, even being called a friend of God.Abram and Lot Separated: Abram settled in Canaan and Lot settled near the city of Sodom, eventually living in Sodom itself. The people of Sodom were wicked and sinned greatly against the Lord. This is still a challenge today as many of us prefer to live in urban areas for better services like schools, water, or roads. Over fifty percent of people live in cities, many of which have a lot of evil, which can be easy for children to get involved in. We must pray earnestly because God loves cities, and there is still hope in them. Although Lot was a righteous man,



he ended up in a bad situation. Ideally, people's homes should be spaced out to avoid overcrowding, allowing people to farm and work with their hands. Without something to do, evil thoughts easily enter the heart. Sometimes, we make decisions about where to live, work, and choose spouses based on our own eyes. What seems right to us may not be good in God's eyes. Abraham's humble spirit led him to a better reward. He was told to look around, and he was given all the land, including the eastern part where Lot had gone. God was even giving him the land that Lot had chosen. What might appear as loss when we follow God's way turns out to be gain in the end. What Lot chose became a disaster for his family. After separating from Lot, God spoke to Abram again, saying, "This land I will give you and your descendants forever, and I will make your descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth—your descendants will not be counted."

God's Partnership is Never a Loss! Abram lived near the oak trees of Mamre, and he built an altar to the Lord. Then kings from neighboring lands fought a battle and attacked Sodom and Gomorrah, taking Lot and his possessions. A man escaped and informed Abram. When Abram heard that his nephew was captured, he took an army of 318 men to rescue Lot. Remember, back then there were no police or phone calls. Abram carried out this operation at night, and God blessed him, defeating the enemy, rescuing Lot, and returning all his people and possessions. The king of Sodom thanked Abram for his help. Abram gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High. Melchizedek blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by

God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. Praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram gave him a tenth (tithe) of everything. Melchizedek had no known father or mother, and he was a type of Christ. There is no record of his birth or death, just like Christ, who has no beginning or end. We also learn to faithfully give tithes from our income.

Giving Tithes is Important! The king of Sodom told Abram to take all the goods, but only give back the people he rescued. Abram refused, saying, "I will not take anything from you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'" He only took what his men had eaten and allowed the others to take their portion. Abram's selflessness is one of the qualities that made him the father of the faithful.

The Importance of Family Prayer: Family or public prayers are not enough; secret prayers are very important. In solitude, the soul is revealed, and every intention is examined closely by God, who searches the heart. Secret prayers are very precious as they communicate directly with God, and only He hears them.

Questions:

1. Why did Lot choose to live in Sodom?

2. How many people did Abram take to rescue Lot?

3. If God told you to go without knowing where, would you go?

4. Why was Abram chosen by God?

5. What is the significance of returning tithes?

6. What helped Abram to prosper?

7. Who is Melchizedek, king of Salem?

8. Why is Abram's example of forgiveness important for every believer?

9. Today, many people are taken captive by addiction, immoral relationships, and bad company. What are you doing to rescue them?

May God Bless You, the Child and Young One of Jesus.

Memory Verse: Genesis 15:6

[6] Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

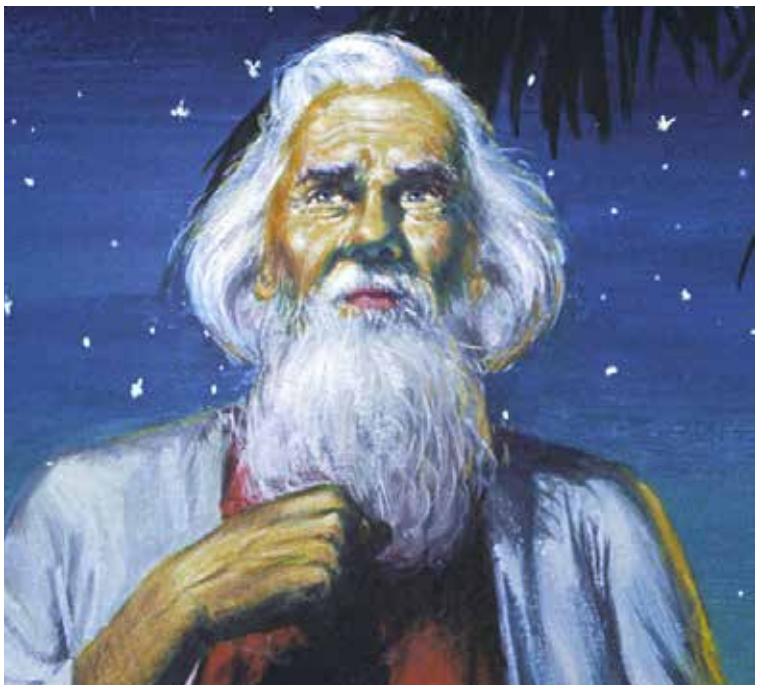
Prayer: Dear Father, help us to learn and apply this lesson in our own experiences. Grant us patience to wait upon You always, because as we wait on You we will be more blessed, and we will also have peace of mind and unity with those around us. Thank You Lord for hearing and answering our prayer, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Activity: When the night sky is clear, count the stars and see how many you can count. Do this with your parent/guardian. People have been able to count up to 5,000 stars.

DAY 13 (January 13)

LESSON: Abraham Speaks with God and the Fire of Judgment

(Genesis 18 and 19)



One day in the afternoon, Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the plains of Mamre when he saw three men approaching. Abraham ran to meet them. When he reached them, he bowed and said, "My Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant." He invited them to wash their feet, eat, and rest so they could continue on their journey. The visitors accepted his invitation. We don't know how Abraham recognized that one of the visitors was the Lord and the other two were angels, but we see a good example of generosity to strangers. Many have entertained angels without knowing it because of their hospitality.

The visitors asked Abraham, "Where is Sarah, your wife?" He replied, "She is in the tent." They told him, "This time next year, Sarah will have a son." When Sarah heard this, since both she and Abraham were old, she laughed. We can say that her laughter was a mixture of sadness and disbelief. She said, "Shall I have pleasure, my lord being old?" The Lord asked, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I really have a child now that I am old?'" The Lord reminded Sarah, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Reader, read and claim this promise. There is nothing too difficult for God. If you are facing challenges, whether it's about food, clothing, friends, or school, give your burdens to God, and He will help you. Nothing is too hard for Him. Kneel down, pray in faith, and tell Him your needs. Sarah was afraid because she realized that the visitors knew everything, and she denied laughing, but the Lord said, "You did laugh."

The visitors then turned towards Sodom, and Abraham accompanied them. The Lord said to the angels, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.” Truly, Abraham is a model for fathers, teaching their children to obey God and honor people. The Lord told Abraham that the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah had become so great, and their sin was so grave that He was going to see for Himself what to do. Abraham began to plead with the Lord not to destroy the city if there were fifty righteous people in it, then he asked about forty-five, then forty, and so on until he reached ten. The Lord promised that He would not destroy the city for the sake of ten righteous people. So, the Lord went to Sodom, and Abraham returned home.

As evening came, Lot was sitting at the gate of the city, and he saw two men approaching Sodom. He went to meet them. It appears that Lot learned the hospitality from his uncle Abraham. The angels said they would stay in the open square overnight, but Lot urged them to stay at his house. He prepared a meal for them. Before they could sleep, the men of Sodom surrounded Lot’s house and demanded that he bring out the visitors so they could harm them. These men were wicked and engaged in sinful acts of homosexuality. Lot tried to reason with them, saying that this was evil and offered his daughters instead. But the men rejected him, saying, “You are an outsider, and now you want to judge us?” They tried to break down the door. At that point, the angels struck the men with blindness so they could not find the door. What God despised yesterday, He still despises today, for He says, “I am the Lord; I do not change” (Malachi 3:6). Just because the world has passed laws allowing men to marry men and women to marry women, does not mean God’s Word has changed. The angels told Lot to take his wife and daughters and flee because the Lord was going to destroy the city. Lot hesitated, and the angels seized his hand and took him out of the city in mercy, possibly even lifting him up!

Lot was told to flee to the mountains and not look back, but he asked to go to Zoar, a small city. It seems he still preferred to stay in a city, even though he said it was because he was tired. The angels agreed to spare Zoar for Lot’s sake. Lot chose the city as his dwelling place, but it led to his downfall, and all his wealth and the place he



had chosen were consumed by fire that day. God's judgments are a sign of the great and terrifying day to come. Let us not continue in sin, for just as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, so will the world be in the end.



🎁 Lot's wife looked back, possibly remembering her children or possessions, and she turned into a pillar of salt. God then rained burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby cities. God's fire descends from above, while man's fire rises from below. The sins of Sodom were not just homosexuality, but also pride, arrogance, greed, laziness, and neglect of the poor (Ezekiel 16:49, 50). We are living in the last days, and the world will be destroyed again. Are you preparing to go to heaven? Abraham rejoiced that his nephew was saved. Lot was saved along with his two daughters. The eldest daughter gave birth to a son who became the father of the Moabites, and the younger daughter gave birth to a son who became the father of the Ammonites. Peter tells us that Lot was a righteous man, but the wickedness of Sodom led him into sin. We, too, must be careful in choosing where we live, our friends, so we do not fall into wickedness.

🎁 Private prayers, family prayers, and prayers in public gatherings for worshiping God are all important, and we must live according to our prayers. We should share in Christ's work.

Questions:

Who came to speak to Abraham? What do you learn about Abraham and Sarah's hospitality? Why was the Lord going to Sodom and Gomorrah? Why did Abraham plead for Sodom not to be destroyed? Why did Lot flee to Zoar? How can greed and neglecting the poor be sins? (2 Peter 2:7, 8) What does this verse mean? Is there anything that is impossible for God? Who said these words?

God bless you abundantly, child and servant of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Genesis 18:3

[3]And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, I pray You help me to be generous, a person who welcomes guests as You have commanded this. Forgive me my sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Plan a Menu and invite your friends to eat, or even fruits and something small like drinking water! Or cook food and give to the needy or take it to church!

DAY 14 (January 14)

LESSON: The Birth of Isaac

(Genesis 20 and 21)



Abraham traveled through the land of King Abimelech and again told Sarah, his wife, to say that she was his sister. He did this because Sarah was very beautiful, and the king might kill him and take her as his wife. Abraham faced this test a second time! God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him that the woman he had taken was someone else's wife. Abimelech narrowly escaped death, and God forgave him because he did not know she was someone else's wife. The king was told to return Sarah to Abraham, and that Abraham, being a prophet, would pray for him so that he would live. Abimelech was also warned that if he did not return Sarah, he would die along with all his people. Kings of the past, and even wealthy or powerful people today, often have evil desires and covet other people's wives simply because of their beauty.

Abimelech woke up in the morning and was greatly afraid. He confronted Abraham, saying, "What have you done to us? You have brought great sin upon me and my kingdom!" Abraham explained that he acted out of fear. Abimelech gave Abraham land and gifts as a peace offering. Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servants, who had been barren because of taking Sarah.

This lesson teaches us not to lie and not to covet someone else's spouse. We also learn that God works even in the lives of unbelievers to save them.

We must be careful not to judge, as they are valuable in God's eyes and may sometimes be more righteous than us.

🎁 Abraham moved to Gerar near the Philistines, and there Sarah bore him a son. They named him Isaac, which means "laughter." His laughter was one of disbelief that she could have a child in her old age. Ishmael did not like Isaac and began to mock or tease him. This upset Sarah, and she told Abraham to send Hagar and her son away because the son of the servant woman would not share the inheritance with her son Isaac. Abraham did not like this, but God told him to listen to Sarah because Isaac was the child of promise. Abraham gave Hagar bread and water and sent her away. Ishmael was about 14 years old. The water ran out, and Hagar thought they were going to die, so she moved away from Ishmael and wept.

🎁 Then God heard her cries and told her not to be afraid. When she opened her eyes, she saw a well of water and gave it to Ishmael. God made Ishmael into a great nation in the wilderness, and he married an Egyptian woman. To this day, the descendants of Ishmael live in the Arabian desert. The descendants of Isaac, the Israelites, live in Israel and other parts of the world. Truly, nothing is impossible for our God.

🎁 Not everything in the Scriptures is fully explained, but we are encouraged to trust in this amazing God who has revealed many things but still leaves much for us to learn. Do I have enough faith and courage to trust in this God who claims to be my Father? Indeed, we are empowered to do so! If we had all the details, we wouldn't need to have faith or trust in God (Deuteronomy 29:29). In our worship meetings or when consecrating ourselves to God, our voices should express our prayers and praises to God, so everyone knows that we worship Him in sincerity and truth.

Questions:

How old was Abraham when he had the promised child? Why was the child named Isaac? Why do you think Ishmael mocked Isaac? Why did God allow Ishmael to leave? What happened to Ishmael and Hagar in the wilderness? Are you a descendant of Abraham? What is lying? (Writers and Prophets, p. 309) Why did God tell Abraham to pray for Abimelech?

God bless you greatly, child and servant of Jesus

Key Verse: Genesis 21:3

[3] And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for Your promises that come true every day. I thank You for answering our prayers. Help me not to mock other children. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Mention the Arab nations you know. What is the capital city of the nation of Israel called? Why do people of the Middle East still fight to this day? How does this show the authenticity of the Scriptures?

DAY 15 (January 15)

LESSON: A Great Test for Abraham

(Genesis 22-24)

God gave Abraham a test when Isaac reached the age of youth. It was a test of obedience. God does not allow humans to offer another human as a sacrifice, but this was a test to see if Abraham loved God. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and rebellion is like witchcraft, as the prophet Samuel said. The Lord told Abraham, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah; offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you." Abraham rose early in the morning to fulfill this command. He took a donkey, two young men, and wood for the sacrifice and went to the place he was told. He was about 115 years old.

He told his young men to wait at the foot of the mountain while he and Isaac went to worship. He took Isaac up, prepared the wood, fire, and knife. Isaac asked, "Father, look, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" His father replied, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." Abraham built the altar, arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar. Abraham stretched out his hand to take the knife to sacrifice his son, but then the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven saying, "Abraham, Abraham!" and he answered, "Here I am."

The angel said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He went, took the ram, and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son. Abraham called the place "The Lord Will Provide" (Yahweh Yireh), because on the mountain of the Lord it shall be provided. God knew that Abraham had not withheld his only son from Him. God blessed Abraham further, telling him that He would multiply his descendants as the sand on the seashore, and that nations would be blessed because Abraham obeyed God's voice. Indeed, Abraham had passed the test. One person said, "If we are not changed by grace, then we are not saved by grace."

Truly, children who love to obey God's voice are blessed. Even Isaac, the child, obeyed, for he could have run away and refused to be bound by his elderly father, but he wanted to obey both God and his father. Obedience is


Clyde Provonsha

the first important lesson we must learn in our lives. The story of Abraham and Isaac teaches us that God is the provider, and also, God's sacrifice of giving His only Son, Jesus Christ, for our sins. It was on this mountain of Moriah that Solomon's temple was built. We may not always know God's plan for us, but the most important thing is to trust and obey Him. It is always better to be obedient. The mountain of Moriah is believed by some to be the place where Solomon's temple was built.

Sarah died at the age of 127, and she is the only woman in the Bible whose age is mentioned. Abraham mourned and wept for Sarah. He bought the Cave of Machpelah to bury her, and it became the family burial place for Abraham's descendants.

After his mourning, Isaac remembered his mother. He was 40 years old, and Abraham sent his servant Eliezer 1300 kilometers to Haran (modern-day Iraq) to find a wife for Isaac from his relative, Laban. Eliezer swore an oath by placing his hand under Abraham's thigh to seek a wife for Isaac. Abraham told him not to take Isaac back to his relatives since they worshipped other gods, not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nevertheless, he went to Canaan, as God had promised Abraham that He would give his descendants that land.

Eliezer took ten camels and went to Mesopotamia, where he made the camels kneel by a well to drink water. Women would normally come to draw water for the animals. Eliezer prayed to God for a sign. This is the first prayer recorded in the Bible! He prayed, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if You will indeed prosper the way I am going, behold, I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink,' let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac."

It is a tough job to find a good wife for someone. Nowadays, many young people try to find their own spouse without proper investigation, and they end up in many problems. It is said that half of marriages today end in divorce. So, before Eliezer finished praying, behold, a woman named Rebekah appeared, who was a relative of Abraham's brother Nahor.

Even you, when it is time to choose a life partner, entrust God to choose for you and lead your family.

Indeed, a faithful servant becomes like a child in the family! On his long journey, he could have run away with the servants and jewels, but he was faithful to his master. He went and returned, diligently fulfilling his duty. Let

not our pride make us forget that even when we have wealth, everything belongs to the Lord, and we are His servants forever. Thus, one day, like Eliezer, our greatest reward will be to fulfill our mission: to reflect the character of our Lord and be obedient to Him. Before he had finished praying, he was answered! “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3). “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22). “Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Proverbs 19:14). Counsel from experienced elders should be sought in matters of marriage; if ever the Bible is needed as counsel, it is now! If any guidance from the Lord can be sought through prayer, it is before making the decision to unite two people in marriage! One way to ensure that our children choose good Christian spouses is for them to be good Christians themselves.

🎁Prepare for eternity with a zeal and diligence that you have never shown before in your whole life. Teach your mind to love the Bible, love prayer meetings, love the time of meditation, and most of all, the time when your soul communicates with GOD. Keep heavenly thoughts, knowing that one day you will join the heavenly choir in the high mansions.

Questions: Why did God test Abraham? What did God do to stop Abraham from sacrificing Isaac? Why did Abraham not want Isaac to marry just any woman? Why did Eliezer pray? Is it good to marry anyone? Why?

God bless you so much, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Genesis 22:12

[12]And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.

Prayer: Lord thank You for this day for You have given me all my needs. I pray You increase my faith like Abraham so that I do what You want, Help me to be obedient, for obedience is better than sacrifice. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 16 (January 16)

LESSON: A Wife for Isaac

(Genesis 24)



Eliezer hurried to meet Rebekah, and she was a beautiful young woman. Rebekah was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor. Eliezer asked her to draw some water from the well for him to drink, and when she finished giving him water, she said she would also water his camels. One camel can drink about 30 liters of water. Rebekah was hardworking, generous, and respectful to the elderly. Rebekah drew water for the camels without knowing the blessings that awaited her. Eliezer began to wonder in his heart if this was the woman God had appointed for Isaac. He gave her a gold ring and bracelets, then asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" When she told him, Eliezer realized she was a relative of Abraham. He then asked if there was room for him to stay at her home. Rebekah welcomed him, saying they had plenty of food for the animals.

Eliezer thanked God for His kindness in making his journey successful. Rebekah went to tell her brother Laban, and they welcomed Eliezer into

their home, providing a place for his camels. They prepared food for him, but Eliezer refused to eat until he explained his mission. He told them that he was Abraham's servant and had been sent to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham's son. He explained how God had blessed Abraham and wanted Isaac to marry from his family.

Laban and his father agreed that Rebekah should marry Isaac, and Eliezer paid a dowry for her. The next day, Eliezer left, but Rebekah's family asked him to stay for ten days. Eliezer urged them not to delay, as everything had been made clear by God. Rebekah agreed to go with Eliezer to marry Isaac. They blessed her, saying, "May you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands." Rebekah left with her maids, riding camels to follow Eliezer.

Isaac saw them approaching while he was out in the field meditating in the evening. When Rebekah saw him, she took her veil and covered herself. Eliezer explained everything to Isaac, and Isaac took Rebekah as his wife. He loved her, and she comforted him after the death of his mother.

Marriage is God's plan, and both sides should talk and not just live together without the plans of marriage. Let us pray that we follow God's plans. This is a lesson for both young women and young men. Sometimes, our blessings come in unexpected ways like Rebekah's. She had heard about Abraham's faith and wealth, but she never expected to marry his son. If she had grumbled, rebelled, or resisted when asked to do something, how different would her story have been? Now, she is one of the women mentioned in the history of the world.

Isaac was a man of love and peace. He did not like quarrels, even though he was wealthy. He dug wells several times, and when people claimed them, he moved to dig new ones. He called for Ishmael to mourn their father without grudges. Indeed, the best way to overcome evil is with good. Finally, he dug a well at Beersheba, which was not contested. God appeared to Isaac, blessing him with many descendants and confirming the promises made to his father, Abraham.

After Sarah's death, Abraham married another woman, Keturah, who bore him six children. Isaac was the firstborn heir to Abraham. Abraham lived 175 years, dying in a good old age. Isaac and Ishmael, along with their families, came to mourn for him, and he was buried in the Cave of Machpelah. Ishmael lived 137 years and died as the father of a great nation.

The interactions between the people of the land and Abraham are interesting, especially when he bought the burial plot for his wife. They called him "Prince

of God," showing great respect for him as a servant of God. Though they offered the land for free, Abraham insisted on paying for it. Death is not the end for us. Wherever we are buried, even if our ashes are scattered, it is not the end. We have the assurance of a blessed resurrection when Jesus returns in glory. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) We will have the opportunity to meet Abraham, Sarah, and many other people from the Bible who were saved by God's grace.

There is no need to spend a lot of money on a tomb; that is not the end of us. The new heaven and earth will be our dwelling place! Best of all, God Himself will be with us and will be our God, and He will wipe away every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain! "Truly, the time is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." "For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end." "Death will be swallowed up forever." Then the Lord God will wipe away every tear from all faces."

Abraham was likely comforted by this thought, as the Bible says about him and other heroes of faith, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). Let this thought continue to comfort and encourage widows and orphans

Questions: Why was Rebekah willing to go with Eliezer? What was Rebekah's brother's name? Who is Keturah? Can a child's goodness also bless the parent? How? How many years did Abraham live? What good example did Rebekah set for girls today? How did Rebekah's parents and relatives respond when Eliezer told them about the mission he was following? What example does Isaac give us about maintaining peace with our friends and neighbors?

God bless you greatly, Child and Young One of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 24:58

[58]And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Prayer: Lord God I pray You grant me to be a child and youth who is obedient, generous, and with faith that pleases You. But also I thank You for the promise that death is not the end, but I will live with You in the new world forever and ever. In the Name of Jesus I believe, Amen.

Activity: A play of Eliezer when he went to look for a wife for Isaac. What is marriage and who are involved, How should people live in this institution which God has given them. Bake a cake, decorate it, and draw a picture of the groom and the bride. Or you may choose to explain the death of Sarah using the example of John 11 of Lazarus. And explain that when a person dies he does not go to heaven immediately or receive punishment right away.

DAY 17 (January 17)

LESSON: The Struggle of the Twins and the Birthright

(Genesis 25)



Isaac prayed to God for his wife. Rebekah was barren, without children, and the Lord answered him and took her pregnancy. She had twin babies in her womb, and they struggled; she became discouraged and said, "Why is this happening to me?" When she asked God, she was told that two nations were in her womb, and two peoples would separate from her body; one nation would be stronger than the other, and the older would serve the younger. When the time for her to give birth came, the first twin came out, and he was red; he was named Esau or Edom (meaning red). His brother came out holding Esau's heel and was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the children were born. The children grew up. Esau loved to hunt wild animals in the wilderness, while Jacob was quiet and stayed among the tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate the wild game he brought, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Favoring one child over the other is a bad thing for a parent because it causes the children to be divided. It seems that there were two kitchens: the father eating with Esau, and the mother cooking and eating with Jacob.

One day, Jacob cooked a stew of lentils. Esau came in from the wilderness exhausted and hungry, and asked Jacob to give him some of the red stew he was making, saying that he was about to die from hunger. Jacob deceitfully told him to sell his birthright as the firstborn in exchange for the food. Esau,

without thinking, sold his birthright for a bowl of soup, saying, “Look, I am about to die; what good is the birthright to me?” Jacob told Esau to swear an oath, and he swore. Esau ate, drank, and then left. This is how Esau despised his birthright. He sold a great inheritance for a mere bowl of food. This is what happened to Eve; she sold everything for a piece of fruit. Similarly, many people today sell themselves or degrade themselves for passing pleasures. Let us take care not to sell our salvation, just as Esau did with his birthright.

🎁 Esau took two wives, one named Judith and the other Basemath, both Hittites. These wives brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Later, Esau took a third wife, a daughter of Ishmael, his father’s brother. It seems that Esau married non-believers, while his father had set an example of marrying one wife. Esau’s multiple marriages brought much strife, which was contrary to God’s plan. Why did Isaac take time to have children, but Ishmael continued to have children? Why do the righteous suffer? I must admit I do not have an answer. However, if you are a child of God and face a problem that others do not, know that you are not the first child of God to be in this situation. Whether you believe it or not, this is absolutely true: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28). Only in heaven will we fully understand this truth. Continue trusting God!

🎁 The presence of God makes times of prayer and public worship sacred. True worship of God is stirred by a sense of His infinite greatness and an awareness of His presence. Every child should be deeply drawn to this presence. The time and place of prayer and public worship should be seen as holy because God is there. As awe and reverence are shown in attitude and behavior, the sense of His presence will grow stronger.

🎁 Questions: How did Esau and Jacob differ? Why was the birthright important? Why did Esau not value his birthright? What advice would you give to parents who show favoritism to one child? How should we go about choosing a spouse?

God bless you greatly, Child and Young One of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 25:22

[22]And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

Prayer: Our Holy God, thank You for the life and health You have given me. Teach me to value the things that please You and not to love the things of this

world which pass away. In the Name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

Activity: Make a play of how Esau lost the birthright because of food or just lentil stew. The birthright relates to both physical and spiritual matters, explain these in depth.

DAY 18 (January 18)

LESSON: Jacob Takes Esau's Blessing

(Genesis 27 and 28)



When Isaac became old and his eyes were dim, he called his eldest son Esau and told him, "I am old and do not know the day of my death. Take your weapons and go out to the field to hunt me some game. Make me some delicious food, as I like, and bring it to me so that I may eat and bless you before I die." Rebekah overheard this and told Jacob, her younger son, what she had heard. She instructed him to go to the flock and bring her two young goats so that she could prepare a meal as his father liked. Then Jacob was to take the food to Isaac so that he could receive the blessing before his death.

Rebekah told Jacob, "My son, listen to my voice and do as I command. Go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats. I will make your father's favorite dish, and you will take it to him so that he may bless you before he

dies." Jacob replied that his father might feel him and realize he was not Esau because he was smooth-skinned while Esau was hairy. He feared that his father would curse him instead of blessing him. Rebekah reassured him, saying, "Let the curse fall on me, my son. Just obey my voice and go bring them to me."

🎁 Jacob did as his mother instructed. He made the food the way his father liked it, and Rebekah dressed him in Esau's clothes and covered his hands and neck with goat skins to mimic Esau's hairiness. She then gave him the food to take to Isaac. Jacob went to his father and said, "My father." Isaac replied, "Here I am, who are you, my son?" Jacob lied, saying, "I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat the game so that you may bless me." Isaac wondered how he had found the game so quickly. Jacob deceitfully said that the Lord had provided it for him. Isaac still had doubts and asked Jacob to come closer so he could touch him. When Isaac felt Jacob's hands, he said, "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's.

Isaac discovered that it was Jacob's hands, covered with goat's hair. So, he blessed him and asked again, "Are you really my son Esau?" Jacob answered, "I am." He asked for game to be brought to him so that his soul could bless him. Jacob brought the food to his father, and he ate and drank wine. After finishing, he called Jacob and kissed him. As he drew near and smelled the scent of his clothes, he blessed him, saying, "The scent of my son is like the scent of the field that the Lord has blessed. May God give you the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let nations serve you, and let peoples bow down to you. Be the master of your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you."

🎁As soon as Jacob was blessed by his father Isaac and left his presence, Esau entered with his game, cooked the tasty food, and told his father to sit and eat so that his soul could bless him. Isaac was greatly startled and asked, "Who are you?" Esau replied, "I am your son Esau, your firstborn." Isaac trembled violently and asked, "Then who was it that brought me game and I ate it all before you came, and I blessed him?" The blessing had already been given to Jacob.

🎁When Esau heard this, he let out a loud and bitter cry and realized that his younger brother had deceived him. Esau cried and pleaded with his father, asking if there was any blessing left for him. Isaac responded that he had made Jacob his master and that all his brothers would serve him. Isaac concluded,

“Behold, the fatness of the earth will be your dwelling, and the dew of heaven from above. By your sword, you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless, you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing he had received, and he began to plan in his heart that when their father died, he would take revenge by killing his brother Jacob. When Rebekah heard about this, she called Jacob and told him that Esau was planning to kill him. She advised him to flee immediately to her brother Laban in Haran until Esau’s anger had passed and he had forgotten the harm Jacob had done. Rebekah said, “Why should I lose both of you in one day?” Truly, parents can bring hatred between their children. Even today, there are parents like Rebekah who cause siblings to hate each other, even to the point of murder.

Rebekah shows two different behaviors before and after marriage. One might think she was a good, godly woman when she met Abraham’s servant! As a woman, this made me reflect on how we, as women, sometimes want to take charge and feel like we know best in helping our children, even more than God does. Eve thought this way about the fruit, Sarah thought this way concerning Hagar despite God’s promise to her, and Rebekah deceived Isaac because of favoritism and wanting to hasten God’s promise to Jacob as the firstborn of the family.

These actions caused a significant impact on the behavior of future generations. Even though Jacob received the blessing he wanted, the consequences were severe, as he never saw his mother or father again, and his brother wanted to kill him. He was deceived by his uncle, and his whole family fell apart. The cost of following our own way is immense. Deception is truly destructive. One wonders why deception and lies persist in our families today! We must rely on the Lord at all times, not on our beauty or our deeds! The Bible is the only source of truth! It does not glorify those who sin or cover their transgressions. Every human in the Bible had flaws, except for JESUS. Today, we have many flaws, but let us remember Romans 5, that while we were yet sinners, the Messiah came to us as Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). The ladder Jacob saw represents Jesus (John 1:51) and the relationship between God and sinful humanity. The human family may be lonely, fearful, and tired, but God has not forsaken us. Indeed, He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all people struggling with troubled families. Lord, please change our hearts. Amen.

In those days, the firstborn inherited double the wealth. This continues in other places, and daughters usually do not inherit unless they marry.

Rebekah told Isaac that she was sending Jacob to Mesopotamia, where he came from, to find a wife from her brother Laban's family. Isaac called Jacob, blessed him, and told him not to marry a Canaanite woman but to go to his mother's family to take a wife. He said, "May the Lord bless you, increase you, and multiply you that you may become a company of peoples. May He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your offspring, that you may inherit the land in which you dwell, the land God gave to Abraham."

Instead of a grand caravan like Eliezer's when he went to find a wife for Isaac, Jacob left as a refugee. God had said the younger would rule over the elder, so Jacob would let God fulfill His plan, instead of becoming a deceiver.



Jacob fled from his brother's anger, leaving Beer-Sheba and heading toward Haran. As he traveled, he stopped at a certain place and slept there, using a stone for a pillow. He had a dream in which he saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it. This dream showed that God had set up a ladder, and the angels were messengers connecting heaven and humanity. He saw the Lord standing above the ladder and saying, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as the dust of the earth, and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will

not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

Truly, God is merciful. If we repent and seek forgiveness for any sin, big or small, He forgives us and gives us hope. Jacob was fleeing from the deceit he had conspired in with his mother, but God loved him and continued to show him His love. When Jacob woke up from his sleep, he was afraid and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." He realized that it was a fearful place, and he called it Bethel, which means "house of God." The next morning, Jacob took the stone he had slept on and set it up as a pillar. He made a vow that if God would be with him, protect him, provide for him with food and clothing, and bring him safely back to his father's house, then the Lord would be his God, and he would give a tenth (tithe) of all that God gave him.

Essentially, Jacob was a wolf in sheep's clothing. By doing this, he disguised himself as Esau, but his voice remained that of Jacob. Isn't this what happens in the world today? People have religious feelings, but their actions are deceitful? They call themselves believers but deny the foundational teachings of the Bible. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, refers to those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. The devil doesn't care if we go to church or call ourselves Christians as long as our worship is outward and we speak deceitfully to our brethren. He loves to attack our weaknesses. We have not been abandoned. God's angels are ascending and descending to help us. Jacob, who was deceived, was reborn after going through difficult times. Esau, on the other hand, despised his birthright. We see him weeping in regret that he did not receive the blessings associated with being the firstborn. But the truth is, he was not interested in the responsibilities of the birthright, he just wanted the blessing. This is like someone who claims to be a Christian but does not want to do God's will; they just want to be blessed financially, socially, and physically. Denying oneself and building God's kingdom is not their goal.

God has given us the examples of faith heroes in the Bible, who we are sure were saved in the end, to assure us that even with our past lives, we too are saved if we repent. Because we have been forgiven by God for our past sins, let us forgive ourselves and stop questioning if God accepts us. He never rejects anyone who comes to Him (John 6:37)! God has given us today a ladder that reaches to Him, from earth to heaven. On top of this ladder is God, watching us as we climb, and when we weaken, He sends help. Let us speak words full of joy and hope, for all the examples in the Bible are teachings for us. No one who perseveres in climbing the ladder will fail to find the door to enter the heavenly city.

Millions today sell their birthright for the pleasures of the world. Health is sacrificed, mental abilities are weakened, and heaven is lost—all for a fleeting pleasure that weakens and degrades character. Just as Esau woke up and realized the foolishness of trading his birthright so hastily, it was too late for him to recover his loss. So it will be on the day of the Lord for those who have traded their heavenly inheritance for temporary enjoyment.

Whether prayers are offered in public meetings, family altars, or secretly, they always place a person directly before GOD. Through persistent prayer, young people can find firm principles that are so strong that even the most powerful temptations will not pull them away from their faith in God.

Questions: Why did Rebekah want Jacob to receive the firstborn's blessing? Did Rebekah and Jacob do what was right? Why did Isaac doubt that it was Esau? Why did Esau hate Jacob? Why was Jacob blessed even though he was deceitful? What does Bethel mean? What is a tithe?

May God bless you abundantly, Child and Young One of Jesus

Memory Verse: Genesis 27:35

[35]And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing.

Prayer: Thank You Almighty God for loving me and forgiving my sins as You did for Jacob. Help me to be a truthful child without deceit, serving You with a willing heart. In the Name of Jesus Amen.

Activity: A play of Jacob's deceit. Or Jacob's journey to his father, and when he was fleeing from his brother.

DAY 19 (January 19)

TOPIC: The Family of Jacob

(Genesis 29-31)



Jacob traveled a distance of 730 km to Haran. God assures humanity that when we travel and serve Him, He is always with us. He says, "I am with you to the end of the age." When Jacob arrived, he waited near a well, which was where Eliezer had seen his mother, Rebecca. While waiting, he saw three flocks of sheep resting, with a large stone covering the well. People would gather to roll the stone away and water their flocks. Jacob spoke to them and asked, "Brothers, where are you from?" They said, "We are from Haran." He then asked if they knew Laban, his uncle. They confirmed they knew him and showed him Rachel, Laban's daughter, who was coming to water the sheep. Upon seeing her, Jacob rolled the stone away and helped Rachel water her uncle's flocks. He introduced himself and told her he was the son of Rebecca, her relative. When Laban heard this, he went to meet Jacob and said, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh." Jacob stayed with him for a month. Laban

then told him that he should be paid for his work. Laban had two daughters, the older one was Leah, and the younger one was Rachel.

Jacob loved Rachel and said, “I will serve you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.” Laban agreed. After seven years, Laban held a feast, and in the evening, he gave Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel. In the morning, Jacob discovered he had been given Leah. The deception Jacob had done to Esau was now done to him. He was angry with Laban, but it didn’t help. He was told that the older sister must marry first. Jacob loved Rachel and thought Leah was not as beautiful. Laban then told him that after a week of the wedding, he could marry Rachel, and Jacob would serve him another seven years as the dowry for Rachel. Jacob, who had been a fugitive, had no wealth to pay a dowry. Thus, Jacob ended up marrying two sisters in a week, at the age of about 84. Leah came with her maidservant Zilpah, and Rachel with her maidservant Bilhah. God saw that Leah was unloved and opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah gave birth to her first son, Reuben, then Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Rachel became angry and said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I will die.”

Jacob was angered and replied, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld children from you?” The home was filled with tension. Rachel gave her maidservant Bilhah to Jacob, and she bore him two sons, Dan and Naphtali. Leah also gave Jacob her maidservant Zilpah, who bore him two more sons, Gad and Asher. The rivalry between the two sisters continued as Jacob openly favored Rachel. God blessed Leah again, and she gave birth to two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and a daughter, Dinah. Later, God remembered Rachel, opened her womb, and she bore Joseph, saying, “May the Lord add another son to me.” Before her death, she bore Benjamin.

Jacob served Laban for another six years to earn wealth, making it a total of 20 years. Marrying two wives is bad, and marrying two sisters is worse. The sisters continued to quarrel, but Jacob and their father could have prevented it. Jacob noticed that Laban was cheating him by changing his wages ten times. Laban saw that God was blessing Jacob, and his wealth, though modest, grew considerably under Jacob’s management. Laban was a tough man, yet Jacob was now counted as one of his sons, as both of his daughters were married to Jacob. They made an agreement that any animals born with speckled or striped coats would belong to Jacob, and the rest would belong to Laban. God blessed Jacob’s livestock, and his sheep, donkeys, camels, and even servants increased.

Laban and his sons began to say, “Jacob has taken all the wealth of our father, and from what belongs to our father, he has gained glory.” Jacob

noticed that his father-in-law no longer regarded him favorably. Then God told Jacob to return to his father's house in Beer-sheba, promising to be with him. Jacob sent a message to his wives, telling them that their father no longer treated him well. "But the God of my father has been with me," he said. "You know how hard I have worked for your father. He has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God has not allowed him to harm me." God commanded Jacob to return to the land of his birth. Rachel and Leah agreed, saying that their father had sold them, and taken the money that belonged to them and their children. They agreed to follow God's instructions. They left without saying goodbye to Laban, their family, or their servants. Jacob took his wages in livestock with him. Rachel stole her father's idols.

Three days later, Laban was told that Jacob had fled, and he pursued him for seven days. God warned Laban in a dream, telling him, "Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or bad." When Laban reached Jacob, he accused him of deceit, saying, "Why did you deceive me and take my daughters as captives? Why did you flee secretly and not let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren?" Jacob responded by explaining the unfair treatment he had received from Laban and how, if it weren't for God, he would have left empty-handed. Laban admitted that his daughters were his, and the animals were his, but they made an agreement to part ways and called the place Mizpah, which means "May the Lord watch between me and you when we are absent from one another." They ate a meal together and then Laban returned home. Rachel gave birth to Benjamin, but died in childbirth.



This family went through a lot of conflict, jealousy, competition, polygamy, quarrels, leadership struggles, and anger—among other issues. Jacob had deceived others, and now the tables were turned. When we trust God to meet our needs, we find the peace and joy that cannot be found by manipulating or controlling others. Our true identity and happiness come from the Lord, not from people. Jacob encountered the Angel of God, who said, “This is God’s army.”

Fearing his brother Esau, Jacob sent messengers to the land of Seir to inform Esau that he had been living with Laban and had acquired livestock, servants, and wealth. He sent these gifts in hopes of finding favor in Esau’s eyes. Upon hearing the news, Esau came to meet Jacob with 400 men. Jacob was greatly afraid, so he divided his people into two groups, hoping that if Esau attacked one, the other might escape.

Jacob prayed, acknowledging God’s promises and asking for protection from Esau. He then prepared a generous gift for Esau and sent it ahead with his servants. As night came, Jacob was left alone and wrestled with a man until daybreak. The man touched Jacob’s hip and dislocated it, but Jacob refused to let go unless he was blessed. The man renamed him Israel, saying, “You have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Jacob called the place Peniel, meaning, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Jacob walked away limping because of the injury to his hip. From then on, the Israelites did not eat the tendon of the hip.

The next day, Jacob saw Esau approaching with his 400 men. Jacob bowed seven times before Esau. Esau embraced him, kissed him, and they wept. The two brothers reconciled. God had forgiven Jacob, and Esau forgave him as well. Jacob introduced his wives and children, and Esau inquired about the gift. Jacob begged Esau to accept it. The brothers, after 20 years of separation, were now at peace.

Esau wanted them to travel together, but Jacob declined, saying his children and livestock needed to be cared for slowly. Esau returned to Seir, while Jacob continued to Succoth and eventually reached Shechem. There, he dug a well, which later became the site where the Samaritan woman encountered Jesus. Jacob and Esau met again during the funeral of their father, Isaac. Esau continued to live in Edom. Even today, when there is strife with a brother or sister, we must ask for forgiveness and forgive, because no one is perfect; we all have weaknesses.

Two reasons made Jacob’s prayer powerful: First, he asked God for mercy. Jesus says those who come to God pleading, “Have mercy on me, a sinner!”

are justified, as opposed to those who come claiming their own righteousness (Luke 18:10-14). Secondly, Jacob based his prayer on God's promises (Genesis 32:10-12). Our prayers should be based on God's promises. The honor of God's throne is established by the fulfillment of His Word. We should not focus on the faults of others but examine our own hearts, taking our Bibles and praying sincerely to God, asking Him to reveal our weaknesses, sins, and ignorance, with eternity in mind. Let's not rest until we have a testimony of victory. God can even turn our enemies into friends, so let us not give up in prayer.

🎁 Jesus' prayer is simple, clear, and inclusive, but it is not long and dry like many public prayers that lack spiritual life. Such prayers should not be spoken, as they fail to bless or build.

Questions:

1. Who did Jacob wrestle with?

2. Why did God change Jacob's name?

3. Describe how the twins reconciled.

4. Where did Esau live?

5. Why is reconciliation after conflict important?

6. I've noticed some of these issues in my family—what should we do when we see such issues in our families?

7. What struggles are you facing today?

8. Can someone's struggles bring blessings?

9. If the things displayed on the shelves in a museum represent God's grace, how can this be seen in Jacob's life?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus. 👥

Key Verse: Genesis 31:42, 43.

[42,43]Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight. And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

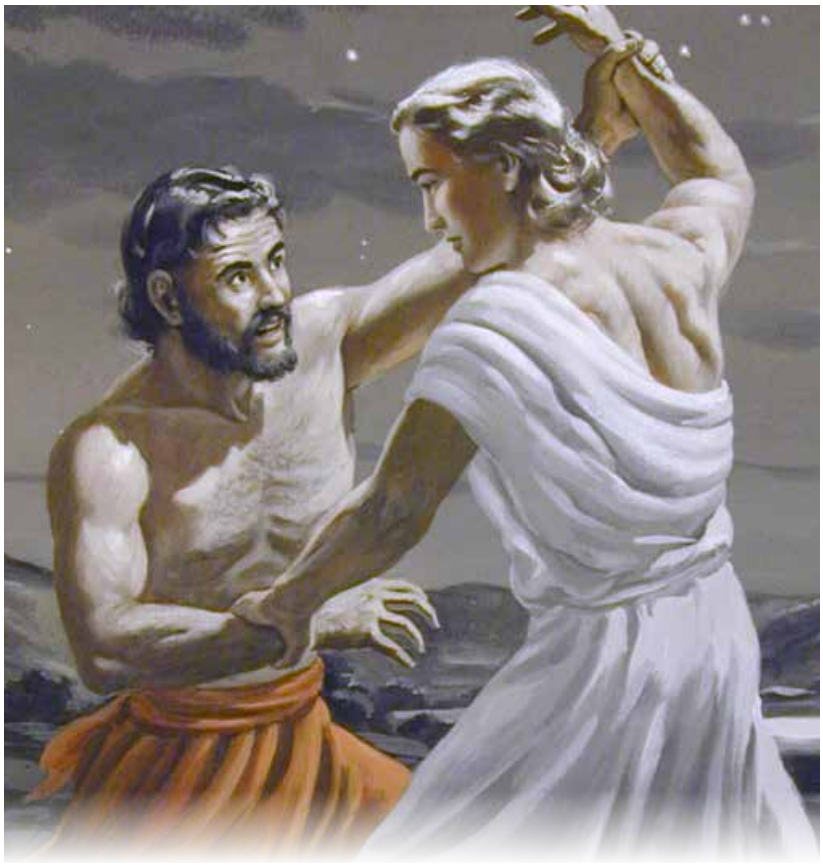
Prayer: Lord thank You for Your blessings. Although many times we sin against You, You protect us from people who want to cheat or oppress us. Thank You for Your favor Lord. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of the 13 children eating at the table. Talk about how many siblings each of you has. And how they should relate with their siblings.

DAY 20 (January 20)

TOPIC: The Struggle of the Night

(Genesis 31-33)



🎁 Jacob did not know that Rachel had taken her father's idols. When Laban entered Rachel's tent, she had hidden the idols in the camel's saddle and sat on them. Laban could not find them, and Rachel lied, saying she could not rise before him because she was having her period. Jacob became angry with Laban and said, "What is my sin that you have pursued me so? You have searched through all my belongings, what have you found of your household goods?" Jacob then elaborated on the deceitfulness of Laban's dealings with him over the years, stating that he had worked faithfully for Laban for 20 years, through the harsh heat and cold. He emphasized that if it weren't for the God of Abraham and Isaac, Laban would have sent him away empty-handed. Laban admitted that his daughters were his daughters and that the animals were his, and they made a covenant at Mizpah, meaning "May God watch between me and you when we are apart." He warned Jacob not to mistreat his daughters. They made a sacrifice on the mountain, shared a meal, and then Laban kissed his daughters and returned home. Rachel, who was pregnant with Benjamin, Jacob's 12th son, died during childbirth.

🎁 This family faced many struggles, including sibling rivalry, polygamy, jealousy, quarrels, and authority struggles. Jacob had deceived others, but now the tables had turned. When we trust God to meet our needs, we find peace of heart and joy that cannot be found by using or controlling others. Our true identity, which brings joy, should be rooted in God, not in human

approval. Jacob continued on his journey, and the angels of God met him. He said, “This is God’s camp.” Fearing his brother Esau, Jacob sent a message to the land of Seir, the region of Edom, saying, “This is what your servant Jacob says: I have been staying with Laban and have remained there until now. I have cattle, donkeys, sheep, servants, and maids. I am sending this message to inform you and to find favor in your eyes.” Upon receiving the message, Esau came with 400 men. Jacob was very afraid and distressed. He divided the people with him into two groups, thinking if Esau attacks one group, the other will escape.

🎁 His favorite wife, Rachel, was placed last, and the others were placed in front. This indeed shows the division caused by polygamy and clear favoritism. Jacob then withdrew to pray, saying to God, “You told me to return to my country and my relatives, and you promised to do me good. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies you have shown me, but if you protect me from my brother Esau, I will be safe.” Jacob sent ahead of him gifts for Esau: 220 goats, 220 sheep, 30 camels with their young, 50 cattle, and 30 donkeys. Jacob crossed the Jabbok River with his family and remained alone overnight. A man wrestled with him until dawn. When the man saw that he could not overpower Jacob, he touched his hip, and Jacob’s hip was dislocated. The man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak,” but Jacob refused to let him go unless he blessed him. The man then told him, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

🎁 To win means never giving up! Jacob, now named Israel, is the father of the nation of Israel. When Jacob asked the man his name, he was told, “Why do you ask my name?” Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning “I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is spared.” As dawn broke, Jacob limped away because of his dislocated hip. From that day, the Israelites did not eat the meat around the hip joint.

🎁 Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. Jacob bowed seven times before Esau, who ran to him, embraced him, kissed him, and both wept. The two brothers were reconciled. God says, “Come, let us reason together; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Jacob had been forgiven by God and by his brother. Esau asked who the children and wives were, and Jacob replied, “These are the children God has graciously given your servant.” The family bowed before Esau. Esau asked about the gifts, and Jacob urged him to accept them. The two brothers reconciled after 20 years apart. Their mother was dead, and Jacob regretted the wrongs he had done. Despite the hardships he had faced while working for Laban, he returned home with great wealth. God is merciful and forgives sins, but we

must listen to His voice, change our ways, confess our sins, and seek true repentance.

🎁 Esau wanted them to travel together, but Jacob explained that his children and livestock needed to travel slowly. Esau returned to Seir, while Jacob continued to Succoth and then to Shechem. There, he dug a well, the same one that the Samaritan woman came to draw water from in John 4. Jacob and Esau met again at the burial of their father Isaac. Esau continued to live in Edom. Even today, if you have a conflict with your sibling, ask for forgiveness and reconcile, for no one is perfect, and we all have weaknesses.

🎁 Two reasons why Jacob's prayer was powerful: He asked for God's mercy. Jesus says that those who come to God saying, "Have mercy on me, a sinner!" are justified, unlike those who come demanding "justice" because of their "good deeds" (Luke 18:10-14). The second reason is that Jacob based his prayer on God's promises (Genesis 32:10-12). Our prayers are grounded in God's promises. The glory of God's throne is upheld by the fulfillment of His Word. We have no time to dwell on the mistakes of Jacob or others; instead, we must wake up and examine our own hearts. Let us take our Bibles, come to God in sincere prayer, ask Him to help us understand our weaknesses, sins, and ignorance, and consider eternity. Let us ask Him to show us where we stand before Him. This is a personal task. Let us not rest, day or night, until we have the testimony of victory. Indeed, God can turn even our enemies into friends; let us not give up in prayer.

🎁 Jesus' prayer is simple, clear, and profound, encompassing everything without being too long to lose spiritual warmth like dry prayers often offered publicly. Prayers without spirit are better left unsaid, for they do not bless or build, and are merely empty rituals.

QUESTIONS: Who did Jacob wrestle with? Why did God change Jacob's name? Describe how the twins were reconciled. Where did Esau live? Why is reconciliation after a conflict important? I have seen some of these issues in my family, what should we do when we see such issues in our families? What struggles are you facing today? Can the struggles a person faces lead to blessings? If things displayed outside in a museum are a symbol of God's grace in the life of Jacob, can you explain this?

God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus.👧👦

Key Verse: Genesis 32:28-32

[28-31]And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

Prayer: |Thank You Heavenly Father for goodness, protection and favor. Help us to see You one day face to face, give us new names so that we may live new lives. Help us to continue wrestling the wrestling of prayer. We thank You for Your love toward us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 21 (January 21)

TOPIC: Joseph and His Brothers

(Genesis 35-39)



When Jacob arrived in Canaan, it was at Bethlehem that Benjamin was born, and his mother Rachel died immediately after giving birth. Jacob now had 12 sons and one daughter. This daughter, Dinah, went out to visit the women of the land of Shechem, and the son of the ruler of that land took her and slept with her (though not much is elaborated, we can say she was raped). He loved Dinah and was willing to marry her, but started with an improper step. Wanting to marry her does not justify going against the path of sin. One sin often leads to another, as many men of that city were killed. We must remember that girls and even boys are at risk when they go into cities of those who do not fear God without their parents. The prince of that city eventually told his father to give Dinah as his wife.

Jacob heard about this, and when his sons came home, they were upset and angry. Shechem said that he was willing to marry Dinah, share with them in business, and live in peace. He was even ready to pay a bride price. However, Jacob's sons deceitfully said they would only give Dinah to him if all the men of the city were circumcised. They agreed, and while they were still in pain from the circumcision, Simeon and Levi attacked them with swords, killed all the men, and took Dinah away, showing their anger over what had been done to their sister. Jacob feared the repercussions and told Simeon and Levi that they had brought trouble upon him and made him odious among the people of the land. Jacob knew the value of forgiveness after committing his own sins, but his sons had not yet learned. Jacob would later repeat this event while blessing his children. Indeed, uncontrolled anger is dangerous!

God spoke to Jacob, telling him to move to Bethel. Jacob instructed his household to remove their foreign gods and go to Bethel to make an altar to God. They gave him all their jewelry, including rings, bracelets, and earrings. God appeared to Jacob again and promised that his descendants would grow, and nations would come from him. Jacob made a sacrifice and called the place Bethel.

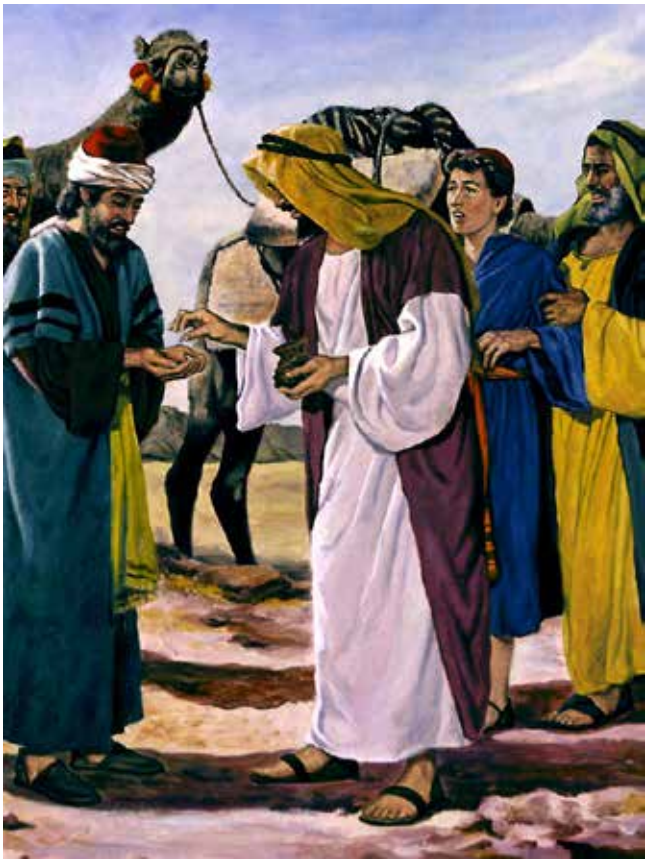


Joseph was one of Jacob's sons, and his father loved him greatly. Jacob showed favor to Joseph by making him a richly ornamented coat, and his brothers grew jealous. They hated him because their father loved him more than them. Joseph, being obedient, also brought a bad report about his brothers to his father, which made them even more angry. Jacob (Israel) made Joseph a richly ornamented coat, and his brothers saw that their father loved him more than them, and they hated him. They could not even speak to him peacefully.

Jacob also made a mistake by showing favoritism, just as his parents did to him. Joseph had two dreams, one where his brothers' sheaves of grain bowed down to his, and another where the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him. His brothers mocked him, saying, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" They hated him even more because of his dreams.

Jacob, who had experienced the rivalry between Rachel and Leah, now witnessed this jealousy against Joseph. His brothers went to tend sheep in Shechem, about 75 km away. Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers and bring back a report. He traveled around asking, and someone told him they were in Dothan, about 22 km away. When his brothers saw him approaching, they plotted to kill him and throw him into a pit, saying that a wild animal had devoured him. Reuben, the eldest, overheard their plan and suggested they not kill him but throw him into a cistern to save him later. They stripped Joseph of his coat and threw him into the dry pit.

As they ate, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelite traders on their way to Egypt. Judah suggested they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites instead of killing him, and they agreed. They sold Joseph for 20 pieces of silver, and he was taken to Egypt. Reuben returned to the pit and found that Joseph was gone. He tore his clothes and was distressed, asking what to tell their father. They took Joseph's coat, slaughtered a goat, and smeared the blood on the coat, presenting it to their father, who immediately recognized it and thought that a wild animal had killed Joseph.



Jacob tore his clothes and mourned for his son for many days. His sons tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, saying, "I will continue mourning until I join my son in the grave." Joseph, however, was sold as a slave

****

Activity: Act out how Joseph was speaking with his brothers in special events. Or act about the life of Dinah, her friends and her brothers. Then discuss the life lessons of those people.

Or a play of Joseph and Potiphar's wife and the evil of rape—because of the child's age it is a sensitive matter but every child must be taught to recognize people who will bring harm or pain to them. We teach children to cross the road, avoid fire or deep waters. Many children are abused. And in the country I live in they say 90% of abusers are people the children know. And 23% are children themselves abusing each other, and some children are under five years old. Many do not leave their children with strangers but ask yourself, does your child go to play at the neighbor's, do you have guests who came to your home. Our children must go out and go to school or live in our homes but they must be taught something.

1. Talk to your child about body parts early. Use real names, or according to the child's understanding. Start this matter early.

2. Teach them that some body parts are private. No one should see them except mother or father or the one you have allowed to help treat them, bathe them etc.

3. Teach your child body boundaries.

4. Tell your child that secrets related to the body when someone tells them ‘don’t tell anyone’ are not right at all.

5. Tell your child that no one should take pictures of their private parts. Many people with mental illness and sin do this and put these pictures online.

6. Teach your child how to get out of scary or unpleasant situations that make them feel fear or anxiety. Teach them to say “I don’t want,” tell them to say they want to go to the toilet or somewhere they can escape.

7. Have a secret word which your children can use as a password when they feel unsafe or want to be picked up while at school or at people’s homes.

8. Tell your children they will not get punishment or trouble if they tell you a secret about the body or about these evil people.

9. Tell your child that body touches can be pleasant or ticklish, don’t just say good touch or bad touch, but focus on a touch that someone wants to keep secret or not report anywhere.

10. Tell your child that these rules apply even to people they know and even to another child. Remind the child that even if they love someone and he appears respectable, never allow him to touch them except you the parent when bathing them or helping them in health matters etc.

DAY 22 (January 22)

TOPIC: Joseph Comes Out of Prison

(Genesis 40-41)



The Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker had been imprisoned because they had offended their master. The prison warden placed them under Joseph's supervision. One night, both of them had dreams. The next morning, Joseph noticed their troubled faces and asked them why they were sad. They told him they had dreamed but did not know the meaning. Then Joseph told them to share their dreams, explaining that only God could interpret them. He gave glory to God and did not boast about knowing the meaning himself. This is rare today, as many people assume they know everything.

The cupbearer said in his dream, he saw a vine with three branches before him. The vine budded, blossomed, and produced ripe grapes. He took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and handed it to Pharaoh. Joseph interpreted the dream, saying that in three days, Pharaoh would restore him to his position, and he would serve Pharaoh again as before. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him and mention him to Pharaoh so that he could be released from prison. He explained that he had been stolen from the land of the Hebrews and had done nothing to deserve imprisonment.

The baker also shared his dream. He saw three baskets of white bread on his head. The top basket contained Pharaoh's baked goods, but birds ate them. Joseph interpreted it, saying that in three days, Pharaoh would

execute him, and birds would eat his flesh. Three days later, Pharaoh held a birthday feast and fulfilled Joseph's interpretations—restoring the cupbearer and executing the baker. This was the first birthday celebration recorded in the Bible! Unfortunately, the cupbearer forgot about Joseph after returning to the palace. Do you remember those who have helped you? We are told that kindness never rots; may it not rot in our hearts! Despite his own troubles, Joseph cared for others.

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. He saw seven fat and healthy cows come out of the river and graze. Then seven thin and ugly cows followed and stood beside the fat ones. The thin cows ate the fat cows but remained thin. Pharaoh woke up, then slept again and had another dream. He saw seven full and good ears of grain growing on a single stalk. Then, seven thin and scorched ears appeared and swallowed the good ears. Pharaoh woke up and realized it was a dream. Troubled, he called Egypt's magicians and wise men, who were mostly sorcerers, to interpret the dreams, but none could. That's when the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him.



Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from prison, shaved, and given clean clothes before standing before Pharaoh. Pharaoh told him about his dreams and that no one could interpret them. Joseph humbly responded, "I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." Joseph explained that God was revealing to Pharaoh what was about to happen: the seven fat cows represented seven years of plenty, and the seven thin cows represented seven years of famine. Likewise, the full ears of grain represented abundance, while the thin ones represented scarcity.

Joseph warned that the coming famine would be severe, erasing the memory of the years of abundance. He told Pharaoh that the dream was repeated twice because God had confirmed it and would bring it to pass soon. He advised Pharaoh to appoint a wise and discerning man to collect and store a fifth of the harvest during the years of plenty for the years of famine. Pharaoh and his servants were pleased with the plan. In humility, Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find anyone like this man, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

Pharaoh then appointed Joseph as governor over all Egypt, saying, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” He took off his signet ring and placed it on Joseph’s hand, dressed him in fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck. He gave Joseph his second chariot and had people shout before him in honor. Pharaoh granted Joseph authority and named him Zaphenath-Paneah, giving him Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On, as his wife. Indeed, God does not show favoritism—He can give dreams even to those who do not know Him well, like Pharaoh. When people treat others well and listen to God’s voice, they receive blessings!

Joseph was 30 years old when he became Pharaoh’s deputy. He traveled throughout Egypt, collecting vast amounts of food during the seven years of plenty. The stored food was so much that it became uncountable. During this period, Joseph had two sons: Manasseh, meaning “God has made me forget all my troubles and my father’s house,” and Ephraim, meaning “God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.” Truly, God is faithful and loving.

After the seven years of abundance ended, the famine began. The people cried out to Pharaoh for food, and he directed them to Joseph. The famine was widespread, affecting all known lands, so people from other nations came to Egypt to buy grain. Even today, we must store up the Word of God in our hearts because a time is coming when it will be scarce. If we prepare now, it will sustain us later.

Joseph’s patience is remarkable. He never complained about his suffering but remained faithful to God. He continued working diligently, even though he had been falsely accused. Often, when mistreated, people stop working hard for their bosses, but Joseph remained diligent. As a single man, he remained faithful to God. It is better to avoid sin entirely than to fall into it and later repent with sorrow. Whenever we face temptation, angels watch to see how we will respond. They rejoice when we resist temptation but grieve when we fall.

Many trials we face are Satan's attempts to ruin God's plan for our lives. God's plan for us can only be fulfilled if we remain faithful to Him. When troubles come, we must continue trusting and praying to God. If you are single, remain faithful to God. If you are married, stay faithful to your spouse. It is better to avoid sin than to suffer regret later.

Joseph's story is similar to Daniel's with King Nebuchadnezzar—God protects His people and reveals future events to them. Even today, we still have work to do before reaching our heavenly home. If we represent God with humility, we can have a great impact.

Our prayers and fellowship should be times of special help and encouragement. Everyone has a role to make these gatherings uplifting and meaningful. This can be achieved by seeking new experiences with God daily and by sharing His love in our assemblies. If we do not allow darkness or unbelief into our hearts, they will not manifest in our gatherings.

Questions:

Why did Joseph still have hope while in prison?

Why did Pharaoh want Joseph brought to him?

How did Joseph know the meaning of Pharaoh's dream?

What did Pharaoh do for Joseph?

Was Joseph happy to be released from prison?

Why did Egypt have food while other nations did not?

Who ensured food was stored in Egypt?

Why is witchcraft a sin?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus

DAY 23 (January 23)

LESSON: The Sons of Jacob Go to Buy Grain

(Genesis 42-43)

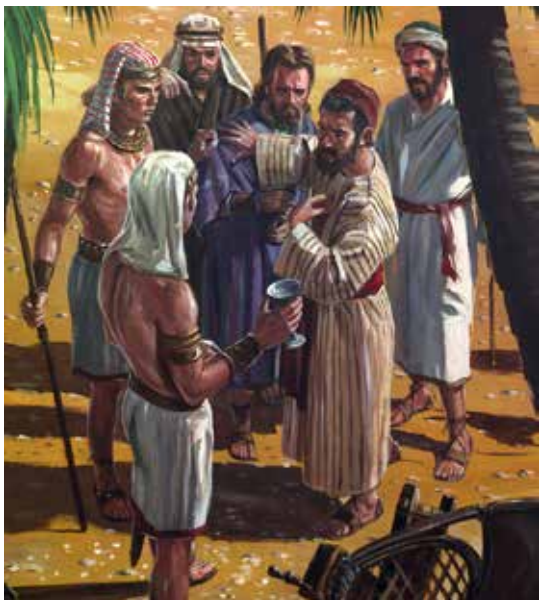


When Jacob saw that the famine was getting worse, he sent his sons to buy food in Egypt so they would not die. Benjamin stayed home to avoid misfortune. When the sons of Israel arrived in Egypt, Joseph, who was in charge of selling food, recognized them. He spoke harshly to them, asking, "Where have you come from?" They replied that they had come from Canaan to buy food. However, they did not recognize Joseph, who then remembered his dreams. He accused them of being spies who had come to see the vulnerability of the land. They denied it, insisting they were honest men. They explained that they were twelve brothers, sons of one man in Canaan—one was with their father, and the other was no more (referring to Joseph).

Joseph tested them, saying they would not leave until they brought their youngest brother, Benjamin. He commanded that one of them go and bring Benjamin while the others stayed in prison. On the third day, he told them to do this to live, as he feared God. They agreed, allowing one brother to be imprisoned while the others took food to their family.

The brothers spoke among themselves, feeling guilty for what they had done to Joseph. They said, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for

we saw his distress when he begged us, but we did not listen. That is why this trouble has come upon us." Reuben reminded them that he had warned them not to harm the boy, but they did not listen, and now his blood was being required of them. When we do wrong, our conscience accuses us until we repent and change our ways. Although they had never told their father the full truth, everything was now becoming clear.



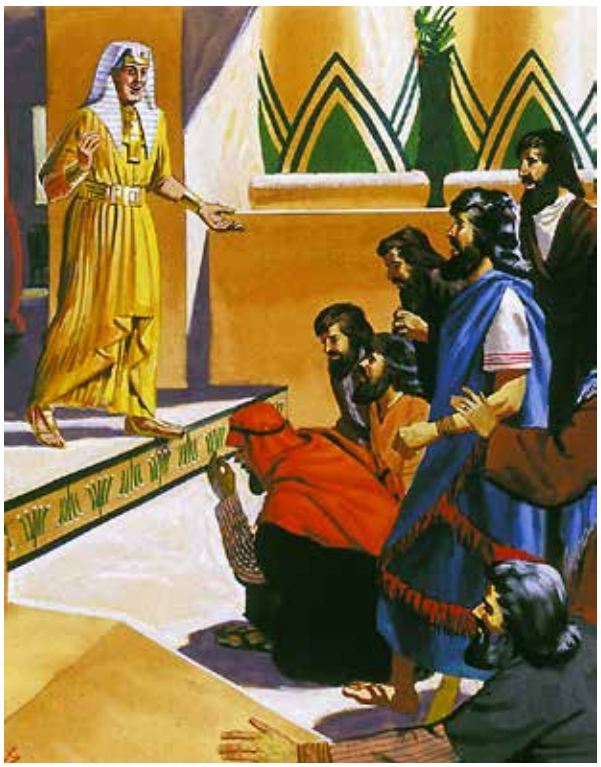
🎁 Their attitudes were changing from cruelty to repentance. God used this situation to help them. They did not know that Joseph understood everything they were saying. Joseph stepped aside and wept, then returned and took Simeon, binding him before their eyes. He instructed his workers to fill their sacks with grain and secretly return their money. As they left, one of them opened his sack to feed his donkey and found his silver in the mouth of the sack. In fear, they said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

🎁 When they reached their father, they explained everything that had happened in Egypt. They told him that the Egyptian ruler accused them of being spies, took Simeon, and demanded that they bring Benjamin to prove their honesty. When they also mentioned the silver returned in their sacks, their father was filled with fear. Jacob lamented, saying, "Joseph is gone, Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!" Reuben offered to let Jacob kill his two sons if he failed to bring Benjamin back, but this offer was meaningless, as his sons were also Jacob's grandsons. Jacob refused, saying, "If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray hair down to the grave in sorrow."

🎁 Every family faces struggles and sorrow. The solution is to seek God's help in our conflicts and challenges caused by sin. Since the famine worsened and they would all die without food, Jacob finally agreed to let them return to Egypt for more grain. Judah explained that they could not go without Benjamin, as the Egyptian ruler had insisted. Jacob sorrowfully asked why they had mentioned Benjamin in the first place. They explained that the ruler had questioned them closely, and they could not lie because they did not know he would demand to see Benjamin.

🎁 Judah took responsibility for Benjamin's safety and spoke to his father as a leader. Jacob finally agreed, instructing them to take gifts for the ruler—

balm, honey, spices, myrrh, pistachios, and almonds. He also told them to take double the silver to return what had been found in their sacks. He prayed, saying, "May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he releases your other brother and Benjamin."



They took their goods and returned to Egypt, standing before Joseph again. Joseph ordered his steward to bring them to his house and prepare a meal for them to dine with him at noon. The brothers were afraid, thinking they were being brought in because of the silver in their sacks, and they would be taken as slaves along with their donkeys. They explained to the steward that they had brought back the silver they had found and had come to buy more food. The steward reassured them, saying, "Peace be with you; do not be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks. I received your silver." Then he brought out Simeon.

The steward gave them water to wash their feet and fed their donkeys. When Joseph arrived, they presented their gifts and bowed down to the ground before him—his dreams were coming true! He asked about their father's well-being, and they confirmed he was still alive and well. They bowed down again in respect.

Joseph looked at Benjamin, his full brother, and asked if this was their youngest brother. He blessed him, saying, "God be gracious to you, my son." The sight of Benjamin moved Joseph deeply, and he hurried into his room to weep. After composing himself, he returned and ordered the meal to be served. The Egyptians did not eat with Hebrews due to their customs. Joseph arranged his brothers from the eldest to the youngest, and they were amazed that he knew their birth order. Benjamin received five times more food than the others.

REFLECTION:
Ezra 5 showed how the Israelites risked their reputation and authority to obey God. Ezra 6 reveals the results. Instead of stopping the work, as their enemies expected, King Darius ordered the Israelites to complete the temple.

Encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the people finished the work successfully. Not only was the task completed, but their hearts were also right with God.

🎁 The same God we serve today was with them. When we obey His commands, He will use us to complete His work, regardless of opposition or persecution. No one can destroy God's plan for another person—not even Satan. The only one who can ruin God's plan for a child of God is the person themselves through disobedience or neglecting their spiritual growth. If God is pleased with us, no one's opinion can stop His blessings.

🎁 Joseph's story teaches that character is more valuable than anything else. Why didn't God give Pharaoh the dream a year earlier or later? Because God had a perfect timeline. Humans may forget us, but God never will. He works with both past and future knowledge, considering human forgetfulness in His divine plan.

🎁 God intended for Joseph to begin serving Pharaoh at the age of thirty—just as Jesus began His ministry at the same age. The two-year "delay" brought Joseph to that age precisely. In the end, everything worked for his good. The same applies to every child of God! Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

🎁 Discussion Questions:

Why did Joseph frighten his brothers?

How did his brothers feel?

Who was left behind in Egypt?

Why didn't Jacob want Benjamin to go?

Why did Joseph want Benjamin to be brought to Egypt?

Why did Joseph give Benjamin more than the others?

Why did Jacob send gifts to the ruler of Egypt?

How should a family handle conflicts or crises?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus. 👦👧

Key Verse: Genesis 44:14-16

[14-16] Then Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for showing us that Your Word is always fulfilled in the life of the person You foretold about. Help us to abandon evil, forgive our sins. Let us change and be like Judah, who humbled himself after realizing they were wrong in selling their brother. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama—Speak before the one chosen as Pharaoh, King, or President, the solution which Joseph was told concerning Pharaoh's dream… Genesis 41. Or Joseph's brothers bowing before him and what they said with the sack containing the cup inside it.

DAY 24 (January 24)

Lesson: Jacob Meets Joseph – Repaying Good for Evil

(Genesis 44 and 45)



🎁 Joseph ordered his steward to fill their sacks with food, put their money back in their sacks, and place his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. At dawn, they were allowed to leave with their donkeys. As they left the city, Joseph told his steward to follow them and say, "Why have you repaid good with evil? Isn't this the cup my master drinks from?" When the steward caught up with them and accused them, they denied the theft, saying they had returned the previous money and that whoever was found with the cup should die while the rest would become Joseph's slaves. They hurriedly dismounted their donkeys and opened their sacks. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack, and in sorrow, they tore their clothes and returned to the city.

🎁 Judah and his brothers fell face down before Joseph, saying, "What shall we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has exposed the guilt of your

servants. We are now my lord's slaves." Joseph insisted that only Benjamin, in whose sack the cup was found, would stay as a slave while the others could return to their father in peace. Joseph wanted to test whether they still discriminated against his mother's children. Judah stood up to defend Benjamin, explaining their father's old age and how Benjamin was dearly loved. He pleaded that if they did not return with Benjamin, their father would be heartbroken and die in sorrow.

🎁 Judah took full responsibility, offering himself as a slave in place of Benjamin. Joseph saw that his brothers had truly changed and that they deeply cared for Benjamin and their father! Unable to hold back his emotions, he cried out and ordered all Egyptians to leave the room. Then, he revealed his identity to his brothers. He wept loudly, and even Pharaoh's household heard it. He said, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" His brothers were terrified and speechless. Joseph reassured them, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because it was God who sent me ahead of you to save lives."

🎁 Joseph lovingly embraced his brothers and explained that five years of famine remained. He told them how God had granted him favor with Pharaoh and emphasized that he bore no grudge against them, "It was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler of all Egypt." He urged them to bring their father to Egypt quickly. He promised they would settle in Goshen, a fertile land along the Nile, where they could tend their livestock and farm.

🎁 This story is deeply moving. True love forgives. No matter how painful the betrayal, God grants wisdom to rebuild relationships—though they may not be the same as before, forgiveness is crucial. Holding onto bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting your enemy to die. Those who have wronged you don't necessarily have to become your best friends or move into your home, but God enables you to forgive and act according to His will.

🎁 The Bible contains many such astonishing stories of God's intervention and kindness. For example, Governor Tattenai ordered a search for a hidden decree, which was found. As a result, King Darius authorized the temple's construction, which had been halted for 13 years. Not only did he approve the work, but he also provided animals for sacrifices and warned that anyone who opposed his decree would be executed. This led to the temple's rapid completion with abundant resources.

🎁 Beloved brothers and sisters, if God has placed a calling in your heart, continue pursuing it. If God is for us, who can be against us? And so, the

temple was rebuilt, dedicated, and daily and yearly services resumed after seventy years. Can you imagine the overwhelming emotions of that moment? Years of pain, sorrow, and loneliness were released in cries of joy. Have you ever felt such deep emotions in your life that you broke into tears? If so, crying is healthy—let out those intense feelings instead of bottling them up. Even Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb, not because He doubted His power to resurrect him, but because He felt the sorrow of Martha and Mary.

🎁 Jesus, our loving Savior, understands our grief and pain. Joseph's brothers transformed from jealous betrayers to compassionate and caring men. When Judah offered to become a slave in place of Benjamin, it proved their repentance. The same power that changed Joseph's brothers is available to us when we seek revival and reformation. Let us continue reading our Bibles and praying, for the Bible says, "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth."

🎁 Pray, then, and you will receive. Pray for humility, wisdom, courage, and increased faith. Every sincere prayer receives an answer—not always in the way or time you expect, but always in a way that best meets your needs. The prayers you whisper in solitude, in exhaustion, or in trials, God answers—not always as you wish, but always for your good.

🎁 Questions: Were Jacob's sons happy to return to Egypt with the cup? Why did they have to go back? Why did Joseph reveal his identity? How did they feel? What lessons can you learn from the lives of the eleven brothers?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: Genesis 44:33, 34.

[33, 34] "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Prayer: Lord, I thank You today for the story of Joseph. I ask You to help me have love like Judah when he stood for his brothers. Forgive my faults where I have wanted to be selfish. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

DAY 25 (January 25)

TOPIC: Jacob's Family Goes to Egypt

(Genesis 45 and 46)

🎁 Joseph started with a great dream, but he was thrown into prison and falsely accused of assaulting his master's wife. Now, he sat on the throne as the vice president or ruler of the land. Truly, we should leave vengeance to God. Maybe you have had a lifelong dream to do something great for God, but your plans have failed, and you have reached the end of your hope. It may seem like God has abandoned you. But God has not forgotten the dream He placed in your heart, for it is His dream too. Just as He did for Joseph, God is fighting your battles, making His purpose come true in your life.

When Pharaoh learned that Joseph's brothers had arrived, he told Joseph to bring his family, and he would give them the best of Egypt and the richness of the land. He provided them with carts to bring their father, promising them the best of Egypt. They were given food for the journey, money, and ten donkeys carrying grain, bread, and provisions.

🎁 Joseph reminded them not to quarrel on the way, perhaps fearing they would be envious because Benjamin received five garments and 300 silver pieces. The journey from Egypt to Canaan, about 450 km, took approximately two weeks on foot. When they arrived, they shocked their father with the news that Joseph was alive and was a ruler over all Egypt. His heart grew numb because he did not believe them. It became a time for them to confess their wrongs, and they found freedom in their hearts! They told him all that Joseph had said, and when Jacob saw Pharaoh's carts, his spirit revived, and he said, "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

🎁 Jacob set out and, along the way, offered sacrifices to God. God spoke to Israel in a night vision, saying, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt." The entire family and their livestock traveled to Egypt. Jacob's family, including his grandchildren, wives, and children, totaled 70 people. Judah led the caravan to Egypt, and when they arrived in Goshen, Joseph came in his chariot to greet his father. Upon seeing him, Joseph fell on his neck and wept for a long time. Jacob said he could now die in peace, having seen his beloved son Joseph after 13 years of separation.



🎁 Joseph informed Pharaoh of his family's arrival, telling him they were shepherds. When Pharaoh asked, they confirmed they were shepherds and requested permission to settle in Goshen due to the famine. Pharaoh responded, "Egypt is before you; settle your father and brothers in the best part of the land." He even requested that capable men among them care for his livestock.

🎁 Joseph brought his father before Pharaoh. Jacob, who was 130 years old, blessed Pharaoh. It is likely that Pharaoh came to know the God of Heaven through his vice ruler, Joseph. Jacob had lived a life of suffering from his youth, and God had kept him under His shadow.

During the famine, Joseph continued to provide food for his family and the Egyptians, collecting money and storing it in Pharaoh's treasury. When the famine worsened, the Egyptians traded their horses and livestock for food, eventually offering even their land.

🎁 Thus, all of Egypt, except for the priests' land, became Pharaoh's property. Joseph provided the people with seeds to plant, and when they harvested, they gave one-fifth to Pharaoh while keeping four-fifths for themselves and their families. Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years. Before his death, he made Joseph swear to bury him in the tomb of his fathers in Machpelah, and Joseph took the oath.

Jacob then called Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to bless them. He took them as his own sons, completing the twelve tribes of Israel. Often, Joseph and Dan were not mentioned, but Ephraim and Manasseh were. Jacob's eyesight had weakened with age, but he embraced and kissed his grandchildren.

🎁 He blessed the younger as if he were the firstborn, and when Joseph tried to stop him, Jacob insisted that although the older would be great, the younger would be even greater, and his descendants would become a multitude of nations. He declared that the Israelites would bless their children, saying, "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh." He assured Joseph that, though his life was ending, God would be with them and one day return them to the land of their fathers, Canaan.

🎁 Joseph seemed to carry a certain birthright, acting as the leader of his brothers, yet Judah was the one who was rightfully given that role. Though Judah had made mistakes and even sinned in the past, he had repented.

🎁 Joseph's story is a reflection of the Messiah in some ways. Jesus Christ

was treated as we deserved so that we could be treated as He deserved. He was condemned for our sins, which He did not commit, so that we could be justified by His righteousness, which we had no part in. He suffered the death that was ours so that we could receive the life that was His. “By His wounds, we are healed.” Through His life and death, Christ gained more than restoration from the destruction brought by sin.

Satan intended to create eternal separation between God and humanity, but through Christ, we are drawn even closer to God than if we had never fallen. By taking on our nature, the Savior has bound Himself to humanity with a bond that can never be broken. 🎁 From eternity, He has been united with us. God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son—not only to bear our sins and die as our sacrifice but to be permanently part of the human family.

🎁 Long and repetitive prayers are unnecessary, especially in social gatherings. They weary both the angels and those who listen. Our prayers should be short and direct to the point. Let the Spirit of God dwell in the hearts of worshippers, removing all distractions and unnecessary traditions.

Discussion Questions:

How did Jacob feel about going to Egypt?

How did he know he should go?

How old was Jacob when he arrived in Egypt?

Why did the Israelites settle in Goshen?

Who were Joseph’s sons?

How long did Jacob live in Egypt?

What was the distance from Canaan to Egypt?

Compare Joseph’s story with that of the Messiah.

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: Genesis 46:2-4

[2-4] Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

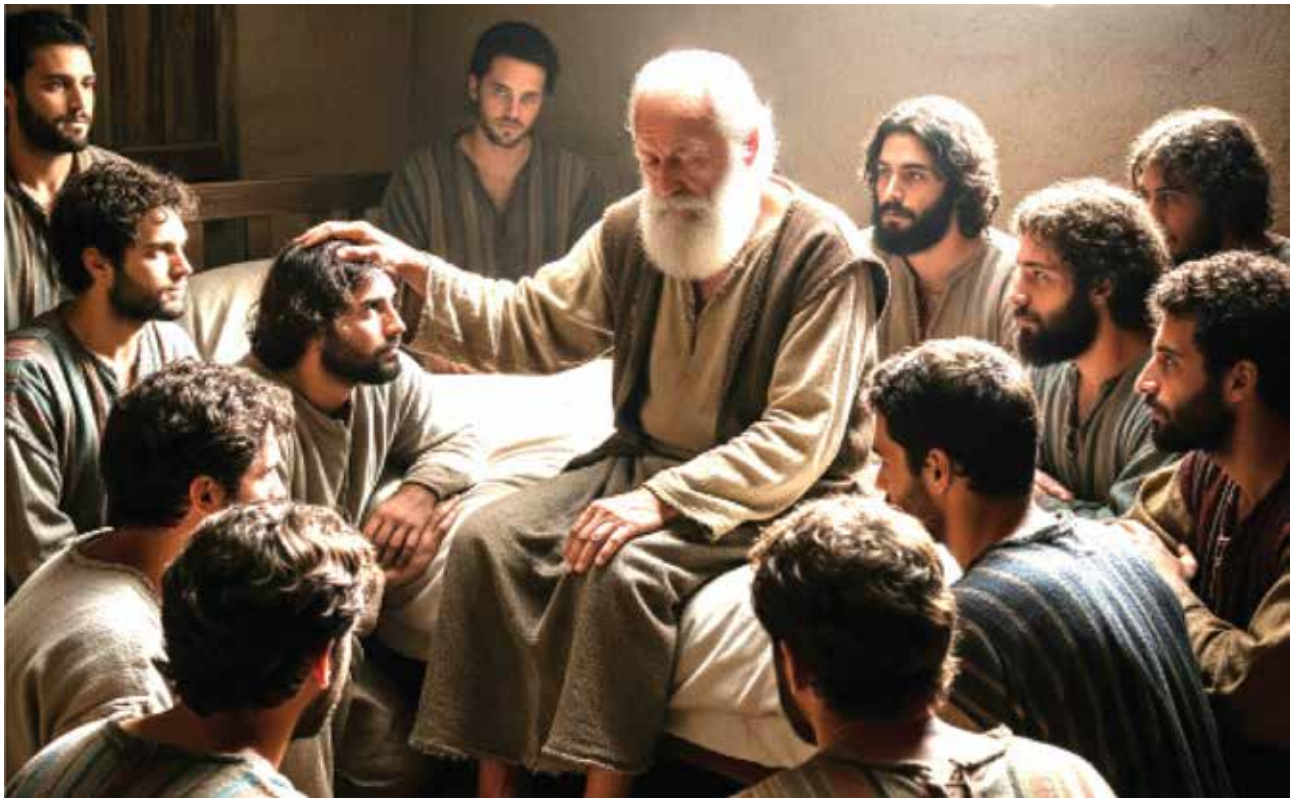
Prayer: Thank You Lord for helping us resolve family conflicts that You allow. Thank You for delivering us from many troubles. Forgive our faults, and help us to love one another. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: The journey of Jacob and his sons going to Egypt, meeting Pharaoh, and the questions Pharaoh asked them.

DAY 26 (January 26)

TOPIC: Jacob Finishes Well by Blessing His Sons

(Genesis 49 and 50)



🎁 Jacob called his sons together and began to bless them. This is something good that every parent should do daily—bless their children! Names in the Bible sometimes reveal character, and at other times, names were changed or assigned to match a person's destiny. Understanding the true meaning of names in different tribes can be insightful.

The Spirit of God revealed to this faithful old man the future history of his descendants. He said to Reuben, as the firstborn, the son of his youth and strength, that he had done wrong by sleeping with his father's concubine, Bilhah. As a result, the birthright would not belong to him. Simeon and Levi, being violent and cruel, were cursed in their anger, and they too lost the birthright.

Judah, your brothers will praise you! Your father's sons will bow down to you. The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the one to whom it belongs shall come. Judah was given the

great blessing of being the ancestor of Christ. Zebulun was told he would live by the seashore and harbor ships.

Issachar is a strong donkey that will bear heavy burdens. Dan will judge his people but will be a snake by the roadside. Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack at their heels. Asher's food will be rich, and he will provide royal delicacies. Naphtali is like a freed deer that speaks beautiful words.

Joseph received blessings of the deep waters and the womb, blessings greater than the ancient mountains and everlasting hills. These were to rest on the head of Joseph, the one set apart from his brothers. Benjamin is like a ravenous wolf; in the morning, he devours his prey, and in the evening, he divides the spoil.

After blessing his sons, Jacob told them he was going to the land of all men—the land of the dead. When he finished speaking, he gathered his feet into the bed and passed away. Joseph wept over his father, embraced him, and ordered that his body be embalmed. The Egyptians mourned him for 70 days.

The tribes of Dan and Ephraim are absent in the book of Revelation, possibly due to their transgressions. See Revelation 7. Joseph then spoke to Pharaoh, requesting permission to bury his father in the tomb he had prepared in Canaan. Pharaoh agreed, and Joseph went with his brothers, officials, and elders of Egypt, leaving only their children behind. They mourned deeply for seven days and then buried Jacob in the cave of Machpelah.

After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers became fearful. They worried that Joseph would now take revenge for the evil they had done to him. They sent a message asking for his forgiveness, claiming that their father had commanded it. When Joseph heard their plea, he wept. His brothers threw themselves at his feet, offering to be his slaves.

But Joseph reassured them, saying, "Am I in the place of God? Do not be afraid. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good—to save many lives." He comforted them and promised to take care of them and their children.

Joseph lived to be 110 years old and saw three generations of his descendants. As he neared death, he reminded the Israelites that God would one day lead them out of Egypt and into the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He made them swear that when they left Egypt, they would take his bones with them.

We, too, have been promised a heavenly Canaan.

Calculating the Years Israel Spent in Egypt:
Joseph was sold into slavery at around 17 years old.
At 30, he became a ruler in Egypt.
He lived 93 years in Egypt.
Jacob moved to Egypt at 130 years old and lived there for 17 more years.
Levi lived about 42 years in Egypt and died at 137.
Kohath lived 133 years.
Amram (Moses' father) lived 137 years.
Moses, born in Egypt, killed an Egyptian at 40, then lived in the wilderness for 40 years.

When adding these figures, the total time in Egypt is approximately 372 years. However, if Kohath and Amram were enslaved their entire lives, the period of slavery could be around 270 years (since Joseph and Levi were not slaves).

The Book of Genesis spans about 2,600 years, from the creation of Adam and Eve to Joseph's death. No other book in the Bible covers as many years as this one. Moses wrote Genesis while shepherding in Midian, around 1400 BC.

The beautiful part of this story is that Jacob's family was reconciled. How many people live with regret for years because they never sought forgiveness? Many families today are divided, filled with sadness, misunderstandings, hatred, and wrongdoing. If someone has wronged us, holding onto resentment only leads to more sin.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

The Bible is our daily guide—our lamp and light. Never go a day without it!

Can you imagine the joy when Jacob's sons were reunited? It was as if Joseph had risen from the dead! Now, imagine the joy on the morning of resurrection when Jesus returns in glory.

On that day, we will weep, but not in sorrow—in joy!

Who will you look for on that glorious day?

Key Verse: Genesis 49:8-10.

[8-10] "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."

Prayer: Thank You for the blessings You give, and help us that when we have children, we may bless them. Help us honor our parents. Thank You for the promise of the Messiah through Judah. Forgive us our sins. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: A play of Jacob giving blessings. Discuss forgiveness and its meaning as well.

Day 27 (January 27)

The Birth of Moses

Exodus 1 and 2



Forgiving oneself is an important aspect of health, as we saw with Joseph who forgave his brothers, but they still doubted him! The Israelites (descendants of Jacob) continued to increase and multiply, living in Egypt for 430 years. Many believe that for 30 of those years, they were free, and for 400 years, they were slaves. Eventually, a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph arose to rule and told his people, "The Israelites are too many and stronger than us. Come, let us deal wisely with them so that they do not multiply further; and if war breaks out, they may join our enemies and fight against us, and escape from the land." The Egyptians set taskmasters over the Israelites to afflict them with burdens, and they built store cities for Pharaoh, such as Pithom and Raamses.

But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread abroad. They made their lives bitter with hard labor, making bricks, working in the fields, and doing other difficult tasks. Then Pharaoh instructed the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill every male child born to the Hebrews but allow the female children to live. Since the male child was the one who carried the family line, and the female child would marry and join another tribe, the midwives, fearing God, did not carry out the king's orders and let the male children live. Pharaoh called them and asked why they did not kill the male children. They replied, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife

arrives.” God blessed these midwives and treated them kindly, establishing families for them. Pharaoh then ordered that every male child born should be thrown into the Nile River, but the females were to be kept alive. This was a terrible cruelty.

Although today many are not slaves, people still suffer in other ways. Let us all remember God’s promises to save us from any kind of suffering. Let us stop here and reflect on the sorrow that parents felt when their male children were taken from them and thrown into the Nile. The sad images we see today on TV of children suffering from malnutrition and hunger in war-torn countries show that children still endure great suffering. Moreover, millions of unborn children are killed every year through abortion, and the situation becomes even more terrifying. Let us not forget those who are born but are mistreated by adults. How does God feel when He sees all this? Surely, there is a fearful punishment awaiting those who harm children. Lord Jesus, please come quickly and save the children! At the same time, those who bring children into this world must provide them with the best care, for children do not ask to be born. Some children have lost both of their parents and become orphans. Who will care for them? The Good Samaritans! Let us all be Good Samaritans.



A man from the house of Levi, named Amram, married a woman named Jochebed, and they had a child whose name was hidden. He hid the child for three months until he could no longer hide him. He made a basket of papyrus reeds, coated it with tar and pitch, placed the baby inside, and set it among the reeds along the riverbank. I imagine he cried tears of sorrow as he

placed the child there. Miriam, the child's older sister, who was six years old, followed the basket to see what would happen to her little brother. Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens were walking along the riverside. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to get it. When she opened it, she saw the baby boy and heard him crying. She felt sorry for him. Miriam, out of love for her brother, asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter agreed. In a wonderful turn of events, Moses' mother came, and Pharaoh's daughter paid her to nurse her own child, raising him in the ways of God. Later, she returned him to Pharaoh's daughter. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is a promise from God. Perhaps she wondered how long she would be able to care for him before he would be raised as Pharaoh's daughter. She intended to teach Moses to trust and obey God, knowing that the palace held much grandeur and temptation. She taught him to pray, to sing, and about the creation story and the fall of mankind. Parents should teach their children at home or send them to a church school in their early years if they want to make a difference in their Christian lives. To a very large extent, a mother holds her child's destiny in her hands. Aside from God Himself, no one has more influence on a child than a mother.



This mother never stopped telling Moses the story of his salvation from the river. She taught him the cleanliness of heart and God's laws. She told him about the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jochebed was heartbroken when Moses was taken away, perhaps even Aaron, his brother, wanted to go live in the palace as well. The name Moses means "I drew him out of the water." He was given this name by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses, who was born a slave, became Pharaoh's son! Many say he left the palace after completing his childhood, that is, after 12 years, since among the Hebrews, a child of 13 was considered an adult and underwent a special ceremony called 'bar mitzvah.' Look at his videos. God has plans for your life too.

His mother must have told him the story of his rescue from the river. Moses learned all the education of Egypt as the child of Pharaoh. I believe he studied

mathematics, security/military affairs, leadership, law, and perhaps even medicine. He was skilled and excelled in everything. When he grew up, he went to visit his Hebrew brothers. He did not want the pride of being called Pharaoh's son but saw it as better to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of Egypt. He recognized that God was of greater value than the treasures and riches of Egypt. He saw Him who is invisible. He looked at their suffering and saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. When he saw no one was around, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The next day, he came and saw two Hebrews fighting, and he asked the one who was wronging the other, "Why are you striking your companion?" He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Are you going to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was afraid, realizing that the matter was known. When Pharaoh heard about it, he wanted to kill Moses, thinking he was bringing about a rebellion. So Moses fled to Midian.

He arrived in Midian and sat down by a well. Moses could not wait for God to deliver the Israelites. He took matters into his own hands, now a man without even a place to sleep. Let us allow God to lead our lives. God calls us for different purposes; however, we often try to solve challenges ourselves and make mistakes that seem irreparable. Nevertheless, God can use our mistakes to help us grow. God used Moses' mistake in Egypt to lead him into the wilderness to learn humility and patience as a shepherd. There, he gained the skills necessary when he later led Israel through the wilderness. Moses was not abandoned because he failed. God used Moses' failure to teach him valuable lessons to prepare him for his mission. Similarly, God has a purpose for each of us. Though we make mistakes, God can still use us and our mistakes for His glory.

Jethro, the priest of Midian, had seven daughters. They went to draw water to give drink to their father's flock, but other shepherds came and drove them away. Moses stood up and helped them water their flock. The daughters returned home, and their father asked them why they had returned so soon. They explained that an Egyptian had helped them. He asked his daughters, "Where is he? Why did you leave him? Go and invite him to eat with us." They went and invited Moses, and he agreed to stay with them. Jethro gave him his daughter Zipporah as his wife, and she bore him a son, whom he named Gershom, meaning "I have been a stranger in a foreign land." The Midianites were descendants of Keturah, Abraham's third wife.

Now, the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites groaned because of their slavery, and their cry for help went up to God. He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Any suffering we experience should remind us that God is with us, just as He was with the Messiah. The presence of the

Almighty God surrounded Christ, and nothing befell Him except what the infinite love allowed to bless the world. This is where His comfort came from, and it is the same for us. He who is filled with the Spirit of Christ dwells in Christ. Any strike directed at Him falls upon the Savior, who is surrounded by His presence. Whatever comes to Him comes from Christ. He does not need to oppose evil because Christ is His protection. Nothing can touch Him except by the will of our Lord, and "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28). This shows us in our own lives that whatever comes, we should surrender it to the Lord, ask Him to give us strength, remove the pain from our hearts, and forgive our persecutors!

Questions:

How many years did the Israelites live in Egypt?

Why did Pharaoh order the killing of male children?

What excuse did the midwives give for not killing the children when they were born?

What does the name Moses mean?

Who were Moses' parents?

What was Moses' sister's name?

Why did Moses flee from Egypt?

What was Jethro's role?

What was Moses' wife's name?

The Bible does not use the word 'teenager,' but when a child reaches adolescence, what should they be taught?

Key Verse: Exodus 1:15-17.

[15-17] Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the **name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.**

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the story of Moses, showing us that You care about children being harmed by the wicked. Help us forgive ourselves and forgive others. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama: Baby Moses in a basket, with a basin of water, etc. Or the journey of Moses when he met Jethro the priest of Midian. Or discuss the trick of creating the slave Bible, the intent behind it, and how it was implemented.

DAY 28 - January 28

LESSON: Suffering Makes One Strong & Moses and the Burning Bush

(Exodus 3 & 4)



God sees every tear of the brokenhearted. If it seems that God is not acting quickly, it does not mean He is unaware of our situations. Moses had been a shepherd for 40 years, tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. While leading the flock near Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, Moses had become humble, patient, and gentle. Then, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him. Moses saw a flame of fire in a bush. The bush was burning but was not consumed.

God saw that His servant Moses was now ready to be used because he was humble and understood that only God could deliver the Israelites, not himself. When God calls someone, He enables them. Moses was curious and approached to see what was happening.

The Lord God called, “Moses, Moses!” and he answered, “Here I am.” Moses was 80 years old when God told him, “Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” God said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Moses

hid his face, afraid to look at God.

God told Moses that He had seen the suffering of His people, the Hebrews, in Egypt and had heard their cries because of their harsh taskmasters. He had come down to rescue them and bring them to the good land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. God commanded Moses, “I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”



Moses was now ready for service, recognizing that only God could deliver the Israelites. In the past, Moses had killed a man and sinned, trying to rescue the Israelites with his own strength instead of trusting in God. After 40 years of tending sheep and gaining wisdom, he had become humble. But he still asked, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

God reassured him, “I will be with you, and this will be the sign: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Moses asked, “What if they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I tell them?”

God said, “I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God also said, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name you shall remember for all generations.”

“I AM” means God’s eternal presence—past, present, and future. He sees beyond history and knows the future because He is all-powerful.

Moses gathered the elders of Israel and told them what God had said. But Moses feared they would not believe him.

The Lord asked Moses, “What is that in your hand?”

Moses replied, “A staff.”

God told him to throw it down, and it became a snake. Then He told Moses to grab it by the tail, and it turned back into a staff.

God gave Moses another sign: He put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous—white as snow. When he put it back and removed it again, it was restored. These signs were meant to convince Pharaoh.

🎁 But Moses still hesitated, saying, “Lord, I am not eloquent; my tongue is heavy.”

God reminded him, “Who gave humans their mouths? Who makes them deaf, mute, seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”

🎁 God insisted that Moses go, promising to be with his mouth and teach him what to say. But Moses continued to hesitate, making God angry. God then told him, “Your brother Aaron, the Levite, can speak well. He is coming to meet you and will be glad to see you. You will speak to him, and he will speak to the people for you. Take this staff, for with it you will perform signs.”

🎁 This story teaches us that God SEES what is happening, HEARS our cries, KNOWS our struggles, CARES, and WILL ACT. This comforts and encourages us in a broken world. No matter what happens, God is in complete control. Even when filled with God’s Spirit, we may face trials that others expect to break us, but we will not be destroyed.

🎁 Someone once said, “Moses failed to bury just one Egyptian he killed, but God buried an entire army of Egyptians in the Red Sea!”

Moses returned to his father-in-law, Jethro, and asked for permission to go back to Egypt to see if his people were still alive. Jethro agreed, saying, “Go in peace.”

God told Moses that those who wanted to kill him were dead. So, Moses took

his wife and two sons and set out for Egypt with God's staff in his hand. God warned him that Pharaoh would harden his heart, but He would show great signs in Egypt.

On the way, the Lord met Moses and was about to kill him because he had failed to circumcise his firstborn son. His wife, Zipporah, quickly circumcised the boy with a sharp stone and saved Moses.

Even when serving God, we must obey in both big and small matters. Moses, as the priest and leader of his family, had to obey. God was preparing him for a dangerous mission, and his life could only be protected through angelic guardianship. But if he neglected known duties, he could not be kept safe.

God told Aaron to meet his brother at Mount Horeb. After 40 years, the two brothers reunited—Moses was 80, and Aaron was 83.

Moses told Aaron all the Lord's instructions. Together, they gathered the elders of Israel, performed the signs, and the people believed that God had seen their suffering. They bowed and worshiped.

Although the Israelites had been in Egypt for over 400 years and had forgotten their family names, God still knew them by name.

The book of Exodus is the gospel of redemption and grace for the Hebrews. Like them, we, too, are saved by a Child—our Redeemer. Near the end of His life, Jesus climbed a mountain in Canaan and met Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:31-32). They discussed His departure—His "Exodus."

Discussion Questions:
What are the five books of the Torah?
Why did Pharaoh fear the Israelites?
Why did Moses go to Midian?
Did Moses find shepherding easy?
Why did God make Moses a shepherd?
What was unusual about the fire Moses saw?
Why did he remove his sandals?
Name Aaron's four sons.
What signs did God give Moses for the Israelites?
Who is "I AM"?

God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Exodus 3:13-15

[13-15] 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?" 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.'" 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.'"

Prayer: Thank You, I AM WHO I AM. You are the unchanging God, the eternal God, You do not need man's help to exist, You have been, You are, and You will continue to be. Teach us to know Your greatness and to worship You in the beauty of holiness. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of Moses meeting God and being told to remove his sandals, and being told God's Name. How does this story show us that God sees, God hears, and God deals with our troubles?

DAY 29 (January 29)

LESSON: Moses is Empowered to Face Pharaoh

(Exodus 5-7)



🎁 Moses' staff became God's staff. What is in your hand today? When we surrender everything to the Lord, He works in us and through us in miraculous ways!

🎁 Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that the Lord commanded, "Let my people go, so they may hold a festival in the wilderness." Pharaoh arrogantly replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go."

🎁 Instead of releasing them, Pharaoh made their work harder by stopping the supply of straw for making bricks. The Israelites suffered more, and their overseers complained to Pharaoh. He called them lazy and dismissed their plea.

🎁 The Lord reassured Moses: "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh." He reminded Moses of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He promised to rescue the Israelites with an outstretched arm and great judgments.

🎁 Moses obeyed God and went before Pharaoh, performing miracles. Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The first plague turned the Nile into blood, and Egypt suffered. Even then, Pharaoh refused to listen.

🎁 No matter what Satan does, God will fulfill His promises and take His people to the heavenly Canaan!

AFTER THIS PLAGUE, THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES TO GO TO PHARAOH AGAIN.

When God gives us a task to do, He always provides the ability to accomplish it and brings solutions to our problems. Let this give us the courage to move forward! If we are faithful to God, He will use us from childhood to old age.

God should be approached with reverence in prayer. Some people think that it is a sign of humility to pray to God in a casual or habitual manner, as they would speak to another human being. They dishonor His name by mixing sacred, awe-inspiring words with their prayers without necessity and without reverence. They should only utter the Holy and Majestic Name of God with a subdued voice and a sense of reverence, feeling His glory and holiness.

🎁 Questions:

Why did the overseers complain to Moses?

Why was Pharaoh's heart hardened?

How were the Egyptian magicians able to imitate miracles?

What was the first plague?

What is the difference between God and the gods?

May God bless you greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: Exodus 5:1, 2.

[1, 2] Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your power to deliver us from the bondage of sin. We are vessels in Your hands, use us to be a blessing to people and to Your work. Keep us from the evil one, help us not to worship other gods. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama—God's conversation with Moses when he was given the rod, choose a part and act it out! Then each one should say what they have in their hand today; if they cannot see, those who know them can help.

DAY 30 (January 30)

LESSON: The Plagues of Egypt

(Exodus 8-11)



Then Moses went to Pharaoh again and said, "The LORD says: Let My people go so that they may serve Me." Moses told Pharaoh that if he refused, frogs would come upon the land. Pharaoh refused, and at the Lord's command, Moses stretched his hand over the rivers, streams, and ponds, and frogs came up and covered the land. They entered bedrooms, beds, and eating utensils. The frogs covered the land, and even the magicians could imitate bringing frogs onto the land.

Pharaoh was overwhelmed by the frogs everywhere and begged Moses to ask the LORD to remove them. Moses asked him, "When do you want this to happen?" Pharaoh replied, "Tomorrow." Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD did exactly as Moses had promised Pharaoh. The frogs died in the fields and houses, and people gathered them in piles, causing a foul odor to fill the land. However, when Pharaoh saw relief, he hardened his heart and refused to listen, just as the LORD had said.

Moses then stretched out his staff, struck the dust of the land, and it turned into lice. Everyone, including animals, was covered with lice. The magicians tried to imitate bringing lice but failed, and they told Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." Yet, Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen.

Many people, when faced with a big problem, are willing to listen to God's voice, but once relieved, they forget. Let this open our eyes!

The next morning, they approached Pharaoh while he was by the river, asking him to let the Israelites go, but he refused, and the plague of flies was brought upon the Egyptians alone. The flies were numerous. Pharaoh told the Israelites to go and offer sacrifices to their God but not to go far. Moses explained that their sacrifices would be detestable to the Egyptians, so they needed to travel three days into the wilderness. Moses prayed, and the flies were removed, but Pharaoh hardened his heart again.

Despite all these plagues, Pharaoh refused to obey God's voice. Then, all of Pharaoh's livestock, including horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep, were struck with a plague of boils and sores after Moses threw ashes into the air before Pharaoh. However, the Israelites' animals were spared. Even the magicians could not stand before Pharaoh due to the boils.

Then came the plague of heavy hail, and Pharaoh was warned to prepare by bringing his animals into shelter. A powerful storm of thunder and hail struck, breaking trees, destroying crops, and shattering everything. Pharaoh told Moses, "I and my people have sinned; the LORD is righteous." But once the storm ceased, he again hardened his heart.

The eighth plague of locusts came, covering the land. The locusts consumed everything left by the hail. Astonishingly, even after all these plagues, Pharaoh remained stubborn. He allowed only the men to go and offer sacrifices, leaving behind the children. He pleaded for forgiveness, and Moses prayed, causing the LORD to change the wind and drive the locusts away. Yet, Pharaoh hardened his heart again.



The ninth plague was total darkness for three days over Egypt. Hardened hearts bring great suffering. The darkness was so thick that people could not see each other. Pharaoh then allowed them to go worship the LORD but without their livestock. Moses insisted that they needed their animals for

sacrifices. Pharaoh became furious and expelled Moses, saying, “Go away! Do not see my face again.” Moses replied, “You have spoken correctly; I will not see your face again.” That was the last time Moses went to Pharaoh.

🎁 The final and tenth plague was the death of every firstborn in Egypt, from Pharaoh’s son to the lowest servant and even animals. The LORD told Moses that after this, Pharaoh would finally let them go completely. The Israelites were instructed to ask the Egyptians for silver and gold, and the LORD gave them favor, so they received these items easily.

At midnight, the LORD struck down the firstborn of Egypt. There was great wailing, for there was no house without someone dead. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to leave with all their people and livestock, even asking them to bless him. The Egyptians urged them to leave quickly out of fear.

🎁 Every miracle Moses and Aaron performed before Pharaoh was imitated by his magicians with fake miracles. This competition in Pharaoh’s court reminds us of the Great Controversy between good and evil. Satan can use his limited power to bring suffering to our world, but he cannot compete with the Creator of heaven and earth.

A day is coming soon when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father. Then, the Great Controversy will be over, and the world will experience perfect peace again.

🎁 Questions:

How many plagues affected only the Egyptians?

Why couldn’t the magicians imitate some of the plagues?

What was the final plague?

Why didn’t Pharaoh want to release the Israelites?

Revelation 16 describes similar plagues coming before the end of the world. How should we prepare for them?

May God bless you greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Exodus 9:14-17

[14-17] "For at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth. Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go."

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be proud like Pharaoh. Create in me a clean and tender heart, so that when I hear Your voice I will obey.

Activity: List the 10 plagues and compose a simple song about those plagues. A play of one plague on Egypt, and Pharaoh's conversation—choose a plague depending on the resources available in your class.

DAY 31 (January 31)

LESSON: The First Passover

(Exodus 12 and 13)



The LORD told Moses, "This month shall be the first month of the year for you." They were instructed to take a lamb for each household. If a family was too small, they would join with their neighbors. The lamb had to be without blemish. Children and adults rejoiced, as their time to leave slavery was near.

On the tenth day, they were to select a lamb and slaughter it in the evening. They were to take its blood and apply it to the doorposts of their houses. They were commanded to eat the roasted meat that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.

At midnight, the LORD struck down the firstborn in Egypt. Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go. The Egyptians urged them to leave quickly, fearing for their lives. The Israelites departed, numbering about 600,000 men, excluding women and children.

That night is a great reminder of how the LORD delivered His people, just as He delivers us from the slavery of sin.

Will you let anything hold you back from fully following God?

If we accept, He will deliver us from the bondage of sin. The Egyptians who obeyed these instructions received salvation, but the Israelites who ignored

them lost their firstborn sons. It does not matter what tribe, race, or language you belong to—when you choose to obey God, His blessings will follow you. That is how He works. Choose to listen to God, especially when you feel you are causing others pain.

Often, we are our own Pharaohs, so before criticizing the Pharaoh in this story, let us examine ourselves. It could be a particular scientific theory, a false philosophy, or a weakening addiction that we have embraced. Let us learn a lesson from Pharaoh. When a leader makes bad decisions, everyone under his leadership suffers. His servants pleaded with him to let the people go; otherwise, Egypt would be ruined. And indeed, it was ruined, and then they suffered the disaster of losing their firstborn children.

Is there something holding you back that you consider more important than following God fully?

🎁 At midnight, the LORD struck down all the firstborn of Pharaoh and the people of Egypt, and there was great wailing, for there was no house without someone dead. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to leave with their people and livestock to worship their God. He also asked them to bless him. The Egyptians urged them to leave quickly, fearing for their lives. The Israelites took their belongings and left. The men alone numbered 600,000, excluding women and children. It was a vast multitude along with their animals. That night was a significant moment of remembrance of how the LORD delivered them from Egypt. It is also a moment for all humanity, as the LORD has delivered us from the bondage of sin.

Perhaps they did not sleep that night, rejoicing as they left for their promised land. This reminds me of when we were in boarding school at Kifungilo, Lushoto. Though a faint comparison, when we closed school, we were overjoyed to see the buses coming to take us home! We sang joyfully as we went home.

🎁 Thousands of Passover lambs were slaughtered, symbolizing Christ, the Lamb of God, who would be sacrificed for the sins of the world. Some Egyptians fled their masters that night and joined the Israelites. Others witnessed God's mighty works and joined them. However, these mixed groups later caused many problems.

🎁 Then the LORD told Moses that all firstborn males were to be consecrated to Him. He reminded them of how they left Egypt in the month of Abib and that when He brought them to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey, as He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—they were to keep this feast. Those who disobeyed

lost their children, just as it happened to the Egyptians. Obedience is crucial; when God speaks, we must listen and obey.

🎁 Thus, a new nation was born that day. It takes two weeks to travel from Egypt to Canaan. Moses looked at the massive procession and wondered how they would all reach Canaan. Led by God, he began to apply his leadership experience. Some non-Israelites also joined them, later becoming a source of much complaining. Perhaps Moses thought, "If I had known, I would have prevented them from coming." They saw the pyramids disappear from sight. They moved at a moderate pace due to the livestock and children, carrying Joseph's bones as promised. They journeyed from Rameses to Succoth and camped in Etham, at the border of the wilderness, about 400 kilometers from Canaan. A cloud led them by day, shielding them from the desert sun, and a pillar of fire led them by night, protecting them from the cold. God's presence was always with them. He directed their path, possibly avoiding the land of the Philistines to prevent war. Though many did not understand why they took that route, they had been in slavery and were not ready for battle. They reached Pihahiroth, seemingly heading towards Ethiopia, and completely left Egypt. The book of Exodus is named so because they departed from Egypt towards Canaan.

🎁 May God increase our love for Him as we walk with Him, spending an hour each day meditating on Jesus' life. Frogs, lice, and flies—Father, please remove these from my spiritual life and help my heart be humble, teachable, and surrendered to Your will. Pharaoh's repentance was fake. He said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness, but do not go too far; pray for me." These agreements were not made with a sincere heart to let the Israelites go; rather, he was planning ways to bring them back. He said, "Go, but not too far," because he knew they might miss Egypt's food and other things. Satan does not mind if we are Christians, as long as we do not forsake sin, purify our bodies, and follow God's commandments.

🎁 A believer without faith is easily tempted to return to their past life. We need complete surrender. Another thing that touched me was Pharaoh's false repentance. He admitted he had sinned, acknowledged that the LORD was righteous, and promised to let the Israelites go. But when the thunder and hail stopped, he hardened his heart again and refused to release them. How many times have I acted like Pharaoh? How often do I turn to God only when I am in trouble, instead of focusing on His goodness? His kindness is the only thing that leads us to true repentance (Romans 2:4).

🎁 Both publicly and in private worship, we have the opportunity to kneel before GOD in prayer. Jesus, our example, "knelt down and prayed" (Luke

22:41). His disciples also “knelt and prayed” (Acts 9:40). Paul declared, “I kneel before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:14). Ezra knelt in confession before GOD for the sins of Israel (Ezra 9:5). Daniel “knelt down three times a day, prayed, and gave thanks before his GOD” (Daniel 6:10).

🎁 Questions:

What were the purposes of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night?

How was the first Passover celebrated?

What happened to those who did not put the blood on their doorposts?

How many Israelite men left Egypt?
Where did the Israelites get their possessions?

What nation was born on the day of the Exodus?

May God bless you abundantly, Child and Young Person of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: Exodus 12:11-14a.

[11-14] “And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial…”

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father, for delivering us from the bondage of sin. Forgive our faults, help us move forward in our journey toward the heavenly Canaan. Thank You for Your goodness. In Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

Activity: Lesson of obedience and sacrifice—put a red mark on the door, and continue with a drama of eating together and being ready to leave Egypt, belts fastened, etc.

DAY 32 (February 1)

LESSON: Crossing the Red Sea

(Exodus 14)

✿ While at Pihahiroth, Pharaoh's heart hardened again, and he decided to pursue the Israelites after hearing they had fled into the wilderness. His unpaid labor force was escaping! God was glorified through Pharaoh and his army so that the Egyptians would know He is the LORD. Pharaoh prepared 600 chariots and pursued the Israelites. The Israelites, seeing the Egyptians approaching, were terrified and cried out to God. They blamed Moses, saying it was better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. Moses reassured them, saying, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of the LORD today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only be still."

✿ Then God commanded Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. That night, a strong east wind divided the waters, making a dry path. Over three million people and their livestock crossed overnight on dry ground. The Egyptians pursued them, but God caused confusion among them, and their chariots' wheels got stuck.

✿ At dawn, Moses stretched out his hand again, and the waters returned, drowning Pharaoh's army. The Israelites, safe on the other side, praised God, led by Moses and Miriam.

✿ Let us always remember to give thanks to the LORD. He is mighty to save! The Red Sea parted when the Angel of God stood behind the Israelites at the pillar of cloud. As dawn broke, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea again at God's command, and the waters rushed back with His power. The Egyptians fled, but they were swept away by the sea—soldiers, chariots, and horses alike. Not a single one survived. However, the Israelites crossed safely.

Read Psalm 136:15—what do you understand from this passage? This is how the LORD saved Israel that day from the hands of the Egyptians. When God makes a promise, He fulfills it. We have been promised to reach our destination! The Israelites saw the great work the LORD had done against the Egyptians, and they feared the LORD, believed in Him, and honored His servant Moses.



Then Moses and the Israelites sang a song to the LORD, glorifying Him:
“I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise Him. He is my father’s God, and I will exalt Him. The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is His name.”

You can continue reading Moses’ song. His sister, the prophet Miriam, a singer, also responded with tambourines, leading the women of Israel:
“Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea.”

✿ It is a good thing to thank and praise the LORD. The LORD delights in the praises of His people. When He does great and wonderful things for us, we must not forget to show gratitude.

To allow nearly three million people to cross in just one night, along with their livestock, was a miracle. Let God be called God! The path was not just a narrow way but a wide, dry road, without a trace of water. Some people have compared this crossing to the Suez Canal, built in 1869, which is about 350 km wide and 2 km deep.

✿ A skeptic once told others that the Israelites only passed through shallow water—just two feet deep! A little child responded, “Hallelujah! That’s an even greater miracle than I thought, because if the Israelites crossed in two feet of water, how did the Egyptians drown in just two feet?” Even trembling children who saw Pharaoh’s army knew the greatness of God.

Indeed, Pharaoh, who sought revenge for his deceased son and wanted his slaves back to continue his oppression, was dealt with by God’s mighty hand. That same powerful hand is still present today to help us in our troubles. Let us remember to pray for our children in times of joy and hardship.

✿ No one could forget that night. With such a large crowd crossing in just one night, along with their livestock and belongings, there must have been a wide path for them to pass through.

Moses continued leading the Israelites through the Red Sea and into the wilderness of Shur. They traveled for three days and arrived at Marah, meaning bitter. The people were thirsty, but the water was too bitter to drink. They complained to Moses, who cried out to the LORD. The LORD showed him a tree, which he threw into the water, making it sweet.

There, the LORD gave them laws and tested them. He told them to listen carefully to His voice, obey His commands, and follow His laws. If they did, He would not bring upon them any of the diseases that afflicted the Egyptians, for He declared, “I am the LORD who heals you.”

Indeed, God carried them on His wings, just as an eagle carries its young. They arrived at Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. They camped by the water and rested after their many trials. Then they left Elim and reached the Wilderness of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt.

✿ This song of praise will also be sung by those who are saved in Heaven (Revelation 15:3).

One might think that such an incredible miracle of deliverance at the Red Sea would strengthen the faith of the Hebrews for their entire lives. But that did not happen. Soon after, the people complained to the LORD again.

Why did this happen? Because they had not grown or nurtured their faith. Their character still reflected their past environment. They had left Egypt, but Egypt had not left their hearts.

We, too, must remove Babylon (Revelation 17:5) from within us to enter the heavenly Canaan. How do we do this? By growing the character of Jesus within us. By loving, imitating, and fully depending on Him, we will be transformed into His likeness. He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6; Isaiah 45:22).

✿ Songs are a special way to remember God’s goodness and events.
During the creation of the world, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7).
At the crossing of the Red Sea, there was singing.
When Jesus was born, angels sang (Luke 2).

Indeed, one of my prayers in Heaven will be to hear that song again!

And over the sea of glass, all the redeemed will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Revelation 15:3).

We will praise the LORD for setting our souls free from the bondage of sin. God has granted us a greater redemption than that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea.

All the enemies of righteousness will be destroyed, and the final victory of God's Israel (spiritual Israel) will be achieved.

Will you be there to join that great choir? By God's grace, I will be there!

✿ In public and private worship, it is our duty to kneel before God when we bring our prayers to Him. This act shows our dependence on the LORD.

✿ Questions:

What was found at Elim?

Who led the singing?

How did the Israelites cross the Red Sea?

What happened to Pharaoh and his army?

Who asked, "Why do you cry out to Me?"

God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus. 

Key Text: Exodus 14:16,17

[16,17] And you, lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them, and I will get honor over Pharaoh, and over all his army, over his chariots, and over his horsemen.

Prayer: Thank You for dividing the Red Sea of our lives when the enemy wants to oppress us. We ask that You remind us to give You the glory You deserve.

Activity: Drama; Running and being pursued by the Egyptian army, their chariot wheels coming off, etc. Sing a song about the experience of deliverance, and ask one another if each one plans to be there.

Day 33 (February 2)

TOPIC: Bitter Water and the Bread of Manna – Complaints Increase

(Exodus 16)

✿ In this wilderness of Sin, nothing thrived, and the people quickly forgot God's great works, even though they had witnessed them just days before. The pillar of cloud and fire was a clear sign that the LORD Himself was leading them. Yet, one person started complaining, and soon others followed.

Lack of faith and complaining are dangerous because they can lead many into sin. We should remember to give thanks and obey God as He leads us. When you lack faith, sometimes it's best to stay silent and pray in your heart.

It is true that they had children and livestock with them, but they forgot that in Egypt, they were slaves. They started glorifying Egypt more than trusting in the hands of the LORD. They said, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat by pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us into this wilderness to starve this entire assembly to death!"

✿ They remembered the garlic, melons, cucumbers, and other foods but forgot the greatness of God. Leadership is a heavy responsibility; it is service to people, not a position of worldly power. God wants His leaders to be servants. Even Jesus served people when He came to earth.

We cannot touch heaven without caring for people. Since the Israelites saw Moses and Aaron, they directed their complaints and accusations toward them! Contentment and gratitude are very important.

✿ Even today, God has His servants, and we must be careful not to make their lives miserable as Moses' life was. Whether by speaking against them, mistreating them, or disobeying the authority given to them by God.

It is true that some ministers serve for personal gain, but many sincerely serve the God of heaven with honesty and truth. Let us not make their work difficult, for God has placed them for our benefit.



The LORD then promised to rain down bread from heaven and instructed the Israelites to gather just enough for each day. On the sixth day, they were to collect twice as much to prepare for the Sabbath day of rest.

God wanted to test them to see if they would follow His instructions. They were to gather only what was needed, avoiding greed, and on the Sabbath, they were not to collect anything.

✿ Moses and Aaron communicated the LORD's instructions to the people, reminding them that it was God who had delivered them from cruel slavery. Even today, we have been delivered from the slavery of sin.

Sin is a kind of Egypt, and we must listen to the voice of the LORD, abide in His Word, obey His commands, and keep His holy day.

They Continued Gathering Manna for 40 Years Until They Reached the Land to Cultivate and Harvest

They gathered manna for 40 years until they reached the land where they could farm and harvest; then the manna stopped falling. Their clothes and shoes did not wear out. Blessed be the LORD, who is the giver of all things and has great love for us. They prepared this bread in different ways. They could eat it as it was, bake it, and cook it in various styles, giving it different tastes and aromas.

They did not need to work for food; they were fed for 40 years for free. They didn't even have to pay rent or buy new clothes. When the Israelites started complaining, they perceived the food as undesirable; otherwise, it was good, and they loved it.

Some children, when given toys, quickly grow tired of them and desire new ones. Some little children cry in stores and refuse to leave until they get what they want, only to lose interest in it within a few days and start crying for something else.

It is good to talk to our Heavenly Father and tell Him, "Father, this food today does not satisfy me; please provide something different." He is a Father who understands.

✿A 12-year-old child was invited to a feast with more than 200 different types of food arranged on various tables. As he walked around, he complained,

“There’s nothing here that I like!” Food plays a significant role in shaping good character because if we do not control our appetite, we can easily fall into temptation.

This is how the Garden of Eden was lost—by failing to control the desire for food. Denying the desires of the flesh and the eyes is a great victory.

Today, let us recognize the blessings we have received instead of complaining about what does not please us on our journey to the heavenly Canaan. Let us be grateful for His love and care!

Every day, manna covered the ground, speaking a message of mercy anew each morning. Without it, they would have perished. God has always been attentive to the needs of His children.

This care is perfectly shown in Jesus, who is greater than the manna given to the Israelites in the wilderness. “I am the bread of life” (John 6:48). “This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat of it and not die” (John 6:50).

✿In everything, let us remember that God is the Owner and the Giver.

The world’s greatest need is for people who cannot be bought or sold—people who are true and faithful to their core, people who are not afraid to call sin by its rightful name, people whose consciences are as steadfast in duty as the needle to the pole, people who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

Manna was like white coriander seed, and its taste was like wafers made with honey. Moses commanded that a portion be kept as a historical record for future generations so they could see the food that had sustained them in the wilderness and glorify God for His provision. Aaron took a jar and placed an omer of manna inside it as a testimony, and it was preserved in the sanctuary.

Even today, God performs great miracles for us.

✿At one time, I met 60 people from Angola at a laymen’s meeting in Michigan. They told me that manna had been falling in their country during a famine that year! I was astonished, but they had taken pictures of people collecting it, and news reporters had interviewed them.

God still provides salvation and help.

Manna was not to be gathered on the Sabbath, signifying that even when buying and selling are impossible due to the enforcement of Sunday laws, God will feed His faithful children. Even in the wilderness, He can bring down a rain of food!

Even in the desert, we must remember and keep the holy Sabbath of the Lord.

✿We hope that our brethren will show more reverence and fear when approaching the one true and living GOD than pagans show in honoring and worshiping their idols. Otherwise, these people will be our judges on the final day of judgment.

I would speak to all those who hold the position of teachers in our schools.

Men and women, do not dishonor GOD by failing to respect Him—by boasting and displaying pride and self-importance.
Do not stand in your Pharisaism and present your prayers to GOD.
Do not trust in your own strength.
Do not rely on it.
Instead, bow your knees before GOD and worship Him frequently.

✿Questions:

What happened when they drank bitter water?

What foods did the Israelites remember from Egypt?

What is the danger of gluttony?

What is the meaning of manna?

Why were they told not to gather manna on the Sabbath?

How many years did they eat manna?

How does God provide food for us today?

Can you list the good things God has done for you?

God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Exodus 16:2-4

[2-4] And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law, or not.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for protection, goodness, and mercy. We pray that You help us not to remember sin and suffering and praise them as if they were something good. Forgive our sins of forgetfulness. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Reflect on God's provision through manna and quail. You may draw a container of "manna," foods like bread resembling chapati or popcorn, games like collecting "manna," and lessons on a 'thankful heart' by listing God's blessings.

DAY 34 (February 3)

LESSON: The Waters of Meribah and Dividing Leadership

(Exodus 17 & 18)



✿The Israelites traveled through the Wilderness of Sin and arrived at Rephidim, but there was no water there. They quarreled with Moses, demanding, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me?"

The thirsty people grumbled, saying, "Have you brought us here to die of thirst with our children and livestock?"

Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

The LORD instructed Moses to take some of the elders of Israel and the staff he had used to strike the Nile. He was to go to the rock at Horeb, where the LORD would stand before him. He was to strike the rock, and water would come out for the people to drink.

Moses did as he was commanded, and he named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, asking, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

The passage continues, discussing:

The battle against Amalek and Joshua's leadership

Moses' hands being held up by Aaron and Hur for victory

Jethro's wise counsel to Moses about delegating responsibility

✿Questions:

What happened at the waters of Meribah? Why was it a serious sin?

What happened when Moses lifted his hands
Who held up Moses' hands?

What advice did Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, give him?

Why did Moses ask Hobab to accompany them when they were already guided by a pillar of cloud and fire?

God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus

Key Text: Exodus 17:11,12.

[11,12] And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; so they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for helping us in victory. We pray that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable before You, oh God, our strength and our redeemer. Forgive us for speaking carelessly. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of water from the rock, or victory over the Amalekites. Materials—a place with a big stone, a rod to strike the rock, and how water would come forth, etc. Also how to celebrate when they show victory over the Amalekites by two people holding up 'Moses' hands.' Or a drama of the conversation between Moses and his father-in-law Jethro about choosing men to help in the work.

DAY 35 (February 4)

LESSON: The Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (Horeb)

(Exodus 19 & 20)

✿Mount Sinai, also called the mountain of God, is in Egypt.

Three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the wilderness of Sinai and camped at the foot of the mountain. The LORD called Moses up the mountain and told him to remind the Israelites how He had delivered them from Egypt on "eagles' wings."

God instructed them to obey His voice and keep His covenant so they would be His treasured possession among all nations.

The people agreed, saying, "All that the LORD has spoken, we will do."

The LORD told Moses to consecrate the people, wash their clothes, and prepare for the third day when He would descend upon Mount Sinai.

On the third day, the mountain was covered in smoke, there was thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet grew louder. The mountain trembled, and the people stood at its base in fear.

✿First Commandment:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

(This reminds us of God's love and salvation before He even gave the commandments.)

❦"You shall have no other gods before Me."
This means God must be first in our lives.
Do Not Have Any Other gods Before Me


Provonsha

This commandment shows that God must be first in our lives. Whether it's how we spend our time, our resources, our talents, our bodies, or anything else, He must come first.

❦ Do not make for yourself an idol or an image of anything in heaven above, on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands who love Me and keep My commandments.

Today, there are many forms of idolatry that do not involve carved images. These include sports, entertainment, work, food, spouse, children, computers, cars, houses, beauty, opinions, thoughts, possessions, wealth, fashion, appearance, education, pleasure, influence, and more. We should ask ourselves these four questions:

1. Where do I spend most of my time?

2. Where do I spend most of my money?

3. What brings me the most joy?

4. What is constantly on my mind and in my heart?

❦ Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.

We should not swear falsely in God's name. Our "yes" should be "yes," and our "no" should be "no." Misusing God's name also means claiming to be His follower while living in disobedience. If our actions do not honor Him, others may despise His name because of us.

❦ Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work—neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

This is the longest commandment. The Israelites had forgotten to observe the Sabbath during their time in slavery, so God reminded them again. Isaiah 58

teaches that the Sabbath should not be a day of pursuing our own pleasures but a day of delight in the Lord. It is a day for worshiping the Creator and doing good.

Some claim that Sunday is now the day of worship because Jesus rose on the first day of the week. However, the Bible clearly identifies the Sabbath as the seventh day in Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1, Matthew 28:1, and other verses.

❦ Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

This is the only commandment with a promise. It is crucial to respect parents and elders. Even if our parents have difficult personalities, God commands us to honor them. However, if their instructions contradict God's, Acts 5:29 says, "We must obey God rather than men."

As they grow old, we should not let our parents suffer if we have the ability to care for them. Love them and never be ashamed to introduce them to your friends.

❦ Do not murder.

This is the shortest commandment, yet it holds great weight. Courts worldwide recognize this law. Jesus expanded on it, saying that even harboring hatred in our hearts is like committing murder (Matthew 5:21-22). If we have resentment, we must confess, forgive, and ask God to cleanse our hearts.

❦ Do not commit adultery.

This commandment forbids all forms of sexual immorality. A person should remain pure in thought, word, and action, engaging in sexual relations only within marriage. Avoid situations that might lead to temptation, such as secretive or inappropriate conversations with the opposite gender. Jesus said that even looking at someone with lust is committing adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28).

❦ Do not steal.

Taking anything that does not belong to us is theft. Borrowing without returning, wasting time at work, or even taking small items like a pen without permission are all forms of stealing. Let's examine our hearts and actions.

❦ Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Lying takes many forms, including keeping silent when we should speak the truth, using gestures to deceive, exaggerating, slandering, or ruining someone's reputation with unfounded accusations. We must repent and live in truthfulness.

❦ Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Many people struggle with jealousy without even realizing it. The heart is deceitful. Instead of envying others, we should rejoice in their success and never wish them harm.



The Commandments Summarized:

The first four commandments focus on our relationship with God.

The last six commandments focus on our relationships with others.

Jesus summarized them as:

1. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."

2. "Love your neighbor as yourself."

These two commandments are interconnected. We cannot truly love God without loving others.

God's commandments are not just good advice; they are divine instructions. Sin is breaking these laws. They serve as a mirror, helping us see where we need correction. Unlike the ceremonial laws of sacrifices, which ended with Jesus' death, the Ten Commandments are eternal. Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's law remains (Matthew 5:18).

✿ Kneeling in Prayer Teaches Reverence for God and His Majesty.

May God teach His people how to pray with sincerity and devotion. Teachers in our schools and ministers in our churches should learn daily at the feet of Jesus. Then their prayers will be fervent, heard, and answered, and the Word will be preached with power.

✿Questions:

What do the first four commandments say?

What do the last six commandments say?

What are the two greatest commandments?

What is sin?

Why are the Ten Commandments more than just good advice?

Why are the commandments eternal and not just for a certain time?

Why is the law called a mirror?

What is the difference between the ceremonial laws and the Ten Commandments?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Exodus 20:1-3

[1-3] And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your love in saving us from sin. Help us to see that Your commandments are not prohibitions but enablement to overcome the evil one, and to prepare us to live with You forever in perfect joy. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: God brought the Israelites out of Egypt so they could come to Him— Discuss Exodus 19:3-6. Each one should recite the Ten Commandments and say them as they are and also in summary. Discuss the instructions to prepare to meet God at Mount Sinai and how that applies today. Discuss how to keep the Sabbath today, as the Bible says about how the Israelites were to keep the Sabbath.

DAY 36 (February 5)

TOPIC: The Law and Judgment

(Exodus 20 and 21)



✿ When God finished speaking the Ten Commandments, the people saw lightning, thunder, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain was covered in smoke. The people trembled and stood at a distance. They told Moses, "Speak to us, and we will listen, but let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses told the people not to be afraid because God had come to test them so that His fear would be before them to keep them from sinning. The people remained at a distance, but Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

✿ The Lord told Moses to inform the Israelites that they had seen Him speak from heaven. Therefore, they should not make gods of silver or gold. He instructed Moses to make an altar of earth for sacrifices, including burnt offerings and peace offerings (sheep and goats) in every place where He would put His name. He was also told to build an altar of uncut stones. When ascending to the altar, he should not use steps so that his nakedness would not be exposed.

✿ God then gave instructions on how to live in harmony. These laws can be seen as traffic lights that guide vehicles to avoid accidents and problems. Here are a few examples:

If a Hebrew slave is bought, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh year, he must be set free. If he married while a slave and had children, the wife and children would remain with the master unless the slave chose to stay with them. If he decided to stay, his ear would be pierced at the doorpost as a sign of lifelong service.

God gave regulations on how female servants should be treated justly.

If a person killed another with intent, they would be put to death.

If someone struck their father or mother, they would be executed.

If someone kidnapped another person and sold them, they would be put to death.

If a person struck another, causing them to be bedridden, but later they recovered, the attacker would have to pay for their time lost.

The law of retribution was given: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”

If an ox gored a person to death, the ox would be stoned, and its meat not eaten. However, if the owner knew the ox was dangerous but did not restrain it, both the ox and its owner would be put to death.

✿ Instructions were also given regarding engagements, borrowing animals, and justice for strangers and the poor. If someone borrowed an animal and it died, they had to compensate the owner. If a person engaged a woman, they had to fulfill the requirements and pay the bride price. A sorceress was to be put to death. Bestiality was strictly forbidden. Anyone who sacrificed to other gods was to be destroyed.

✿ The Israelites were reminded not to oppress strangers, as they had also been strangers in Egypt. Lending to the poor should not include charging interest. People were warned not to curse God or insult their leaders. Women were not to wear men’s clothing, and men were not to wear women’s clothing, as this was detestable to God. The firstborn of livestock and crops belonged to the Lord.

✿ False reports and bribery were condemned, and justice was to be upheld. They were instructed to cultivate their land for six years but let it rest in the seventh year for the poor to eat. They were also warned against making covenants with other nations or worshiping their gods.

✿ God promised to send an angel to guide and protect them. He instructed them to listen to the angel and not rebel against him. The Israelites were assured that God would drive out their enemies gradually so that the land would not be overrun by wild animals. They were reminded not to worship other gods or make agreements with them.

✿ In both public and private worship, it is our duty to kneel before God when we bring our prayers to Him. Jesus, our example, "knelt down and prayed." Concerning His disciples, it is written that they also "knelt and prayed." Paul declared, "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." When confessing Israel's sins, Ezra knelt before God. Daniel "knelt three times a day, prayed, and gave thanks before his God."

✿Questions:

Why did the people tremble when they heard the thunder?
Discuss six examples of the Israelites' civil laws.
Why would God give the Israelites the land gradually?
Which modern laws are similar to the laws given to the Israelites?
May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Exodus 21:1-3

[1-3] Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he was married, then his wife shall go out with him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your laws of love for people. There are many who are hurt, and we pray You bring healing and hope to them. Help us to be of service to make their lives better, avoiding selfishness and quarrels. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: List other laws that promote good relationships and good environment as Exodus 21 lists, and discuss.

DAY 37 (February 6)

TOPIC: "Let Them Build Me a Sanctuary"

(Exodus 24-27)



✿ After giving the laws, Moses went up the mountain, and the glory of the Lord covered Mount Sinai. The cloud covered it for six days, and on the seventh day, God called Moses from within the cloud. The sight of the Lord's glory was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop. Moses remained there for forty days and forty nights.

✿ God instructed Moses to tell the Israelites to bring offerings willingly from their hearts to build a sanctuary for Him to dwell among them. They were to bring gold, silver, bronze, blue and purple yarn, fine linen, goat hair, ram skins dyed red, acacia wood, olive oil for the lamp, spices for anointing oil and incense, and precious stones for the priestly garments.

✿ The Lord provided a detailed plan for building the Tabernacle and its furnishings, which included:

The Ark of the Covenant: It was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold inside and out. It was to have four gold rings, with poles of acacia wood overlaid with gold to carry it. The atonement cover (mercy seat) was to be placed on top of the Ark, with two cherubim of gold facing each other, covering it with their wings.

The Table for the Bread of the Presence: It was also to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. The bread of the Presence (showbread) was to be placed before the Lord continually.

The Golden Lampstand: Made of pure gold with seven lamps, it was to be crafted with intricate designs of almond flowers and buds. The lamps were to be kept burning continuously.

✿ God also gave instructions for making the Tabernacle itself, which was to be made of ten curtains of finely twisted linen, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, decorated with cherubim. These curtains were to be joined together with loops and gold clasps. The tent covering was to be made of goat hair, ram skins dyed red, and sea cow hides. The frames were to be made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and set in silver bases.

✿ The Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) was to house the Ark of the Covenant. A special veil, woven with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, embroidered with cherubim, was to separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The altar of burnt offerings was to be made of acacia wood, overlaid with bronze, with horns at each corner. The courtyard was to have linen curtains and bronze pillars.

✿ The Israelites were commanded to keep the lamps burning continually in the Tabernacle, using pure olive oil. The priests were to wear sacred garments, including a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a tunic, a turban, and a sash, all made from fine linen with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn.

✿ God emphasized that everything was to be made exactly as He had shown Moses on the mountain. This Tabernacle was a representation of God's dwelling among His people, pointing forward to Jesus, who would later come to dwell among us as Emmanuel, "God with us."

✿Questions:

Why did God command the Israelites to build a sanctuary?

What materials were used to build the Tabernacle?

What was placed in the Most Holy Place?

What was the purpose of the veil in the Tabernacle?

How does the Tabernacle point to Jesus?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Exodus 24:6-8.

[6-8] And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.

Prayer: Thank You our God and our Rock for the Covenant You have made with us. Help us to understand and love this Covenant. We pray to know the meaning of everything that is contained in it. Thank You for saving us from the originator of sin, according to Genesis 3:15. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

DAY 38 (February 7)

LESSON: The Sin of Worshiping the Golden Calf

(Exodus 32 and 33)



✿ Then Moses came down from the mountain. God had already warned him that the children of Israel had rebelled—"come down"—because your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, had ruined themselves, quickly straying and forsaking the way, making for themselves a calf to worship and offering sacrifices to it. Not even 40 days had passed since they heard the voice of God telling them the Ten Commandments, yet they had forgotten. This is a lesson for us: let us not forget God's commandments and let us be humble. Moses heard strange sounds like people singing, and immediately his eyes saw the golden calf. Joshua, who had been waiting for him a little below, thought the people were engaged in warfare.

✿ When the people saw that he was delayed in coming down, they went to Aaron and said, "Hey! Make for us gods that will go before us, for this Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him."

It appears that old Aaron had a character weakness and feared the people. So he told them to take off the gold earrings that were on their ears and those of their children and bring them to him. When they brought it to him, he fashioned a calf out of the gold by melting it down! And the people said, "This is your god who brought you out of Egypt." Creating something like this takes time, and therefore it is a sin of presumption. Aaron built altars and declared that the next day would be a feast for the LORD. Too often people want to worship visible gods, which is a great error, for faith is built by hearing God's Word.

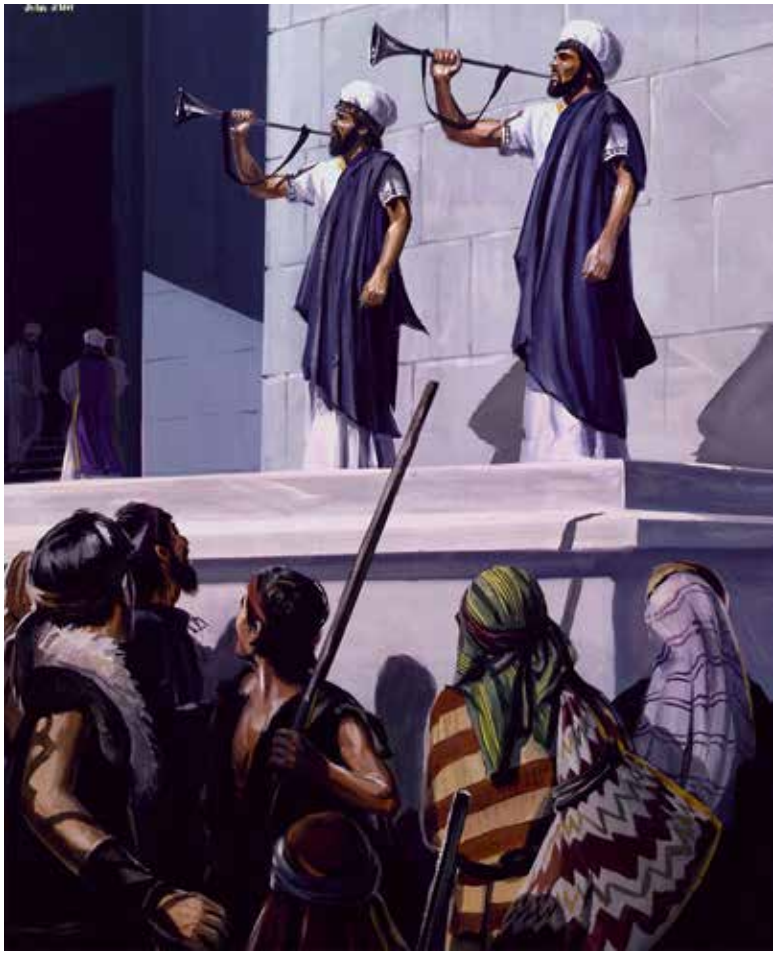
✿ Then Moses turned and came down with the two blue stone tablets that had writing on both sides. When he saw the people dancing and giving in to the worship of the golden calf, in anger he threw down the two wooden pieces, breaking them at the foot of the mountain. Then he took the golden calf, ground it up, and scattered its powder in water, causing the Israelites to drink it. Moses said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you that you brought such a great sin upon them?" Aaron had no proper answer but pleaded for Moses' anger to subside and exonerated himself by saying, "You know these people—they have inclined themselves toward evil." He explained that what happened was because they gave him gold, and he threw it into the fire, from which the calf came out. An idol cannot come about without being crafted by man! Moses then called upon those on the side of God to come near him, and the Levites stood ready by his side. That day, 3,000 people fell by the sword because of this sin.

✿ The golden calf might have represented the gods of Egypt. The bull god Apis was worshiped in Memphis as the god of life. Hathor, the cow goddess, was worshiped in Thebes as the goddess of fertility, beauty, love, and joy. In Exodus 32, the people "rose up to dance," which carried connotations of open lust and could be compared to Hathor. Aaron, their spiritual leader, acceded to their requests and legitimized their worship by declaring the celebration of the LORD. That mixed worship caused God to disown the Hebrews and say to Moses, "Your people..." But when God rejects those who choose a calf instead of Him, Moses intercedes and pleads that His name be blotted out of the Book of Life.

✿ Moses' love for his people was so great that he was willing to give up his life for them. But there is only one acceptable substitutionary death to God, and that is the death of His Son, Jesus. Have you ever tried in your life to combine the world and its practices with your worship of God? Here we see the consequences of that action. God would have had people faithful only to Him—if only the heavens themselves would be different. Moses had no selfishness; he sacrificed himself so that others might be saved. I believe the

LORD saw that Moses truly loved his people. Surely the character of Christ will be fully manifested in our hearts, and He will come to claim us as His people.

✿ That morning Moses told the people that they had committed a great sin, and that he would go to the LORD to make atonement for their sin. He also pleaded with the LORD to forgive their sin, and if not, "erase me," he implored, from your written book. Moses was an example of Jesus in that regard. Then the LORD told Moses, "The one who commits this sin will be blotted out of My book," and He told Moses to lead these people to Canaan, with His angel going before him. Even today we hear of three books: the Book of Life, the Book of Remembrance, and the Book of Judgment. The LORD struck these people for having done that thing with the calf which Aaron made. Obedience, humility, repentance, and turning from sin are essential for all mankind if we are to be delivered from sin.



✿ Here the Levites were chosen to be employed in the priestly work. The male children of Aaron—Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar—were set apart for this service. Moses spoke with God face to face, as one speaks with a friend. There has never been a prophet like Moses who knew God face to face. This does not mean that he saw God's face, but rather that he was so close to God that they conversed as dear friends do. They were so close that Moses longed greatly to see God's face. The LORD promised him, "My face will go with you; I will give you rest, for you have found favor in My sight. I know your name; I will have all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the Name of the LORD before you. You cannot see My face, for a man shall not see Me and live; you shall only see My back." Moses asked how this would come about, and the LORD told him to ascend Mount Sinai, for He would appear to him. Moses went up the mountain carrying

two other wooden pieces that he had hewn himself, because the first ones had been broken. When Moses saw all of this and heard the LORD speaking, he was struck with awe, and he no longer dared to look at Him but instead bowed in worship before Him, as if His face had touched the earth.

✿ Many children and many people today would love to see God face to face, and that is a good thing, but for now we cannot. Yet if we are good and love God, one day we will see His face. Face to face, indeed, with great joy! Now it is important that we know that the Almighty is full of mercy, forgiving, gentle, and abounding in grace and truth. The apostle John says, "God is love," so we can completely trust Him—even though we do not see Him, we sense Him near and speak with Him in prayer every day when we wake, when we sleep, and in the midst of the day. Our lives here on earth have meaning only when we prepare to live with Him forever, making it our foremost goal to develop the character needed so that we may live with God for eternity. Just by being near Him, holding His hand, speaking with Him, even embracing Him, all our earthly troubles will pale before the eternal blessings He has in store for us.

✿ No eye has seen, nor ear heard, what God has prepared for mankind. Our souls are roused by joy; every hardship will pass. God has prepared great and wonderful things for us—dear child or adult, do not miss being under the Tree of Life in heaven. Let your aim and your prayer, both day and night, be to love God. Start praying for Him to grant you a heavenly character, for if you love fighting, stealing, defiance, laziness, or any evil, you will trouble others. And even if you are forced to go (to judgment), you will not find pleasure, because you will be inclined to lie or hate someone, and then there will be none of that goodness. However, when God comes near only to sin, sin begins to crumble, for God is a consuming fire that burns sin—that is His nature. The wicked will begin to crumble before Him without even being touched by God. It is only character and people that we take with us into heaven, not material things.

✿ At Mount Horeb, God established a covenant with His people. God, in His love, chose Israel by an act of grace, just as in the earlier covenants made with the elders of the tribes. God had already delivered Israel from Egypt, and now His covenant at Sinai was a continuation of that deliverance. There are conditions in this covenant relationship. Now, therefore, if you obey My voice truly and hold fast to My covenant, then you will be Mine (Exodus 19:5). Up to that time, Israel had witnessed the unique acts of God's deliverance. Now Israel had to choose: go their own way or choose to be obedient to God and follow Him wherever He led. In this passage, they seemed to engage in mere lip service, for only six weeks had passed and they had already forgotten.

✿ How about us today—do we give God mere lip service like His people did, and then complain and try to go on with our lives without Him? Or will we respond as Israel did initially, saying, “Everything the LORD has spoken, we will do,” and not do as in Exodus 19:8? God here is revealed as a jealous God. It was God’s desire at Sinai—and still today—to have an even deeper, inner relationship with the people He created. We have a God who forgives and who will start the journey anew with us. No matter how great the sin, as soon as we confess and abandon it, God forgives us (1 John 1:8, 9). Therefore, let us not allow Satan to trouble us by bringing sin into our memories and telling us that we have not been forgiven. That is false, for he is an expert in this deception.

✿ Moses dearly desired the grace of seeing God face to face, and he pleaded for it. He was answered: “You have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Show me Your glory.” No man who has fallen into sin can stand before God face to face, but Moses’ humility and purity of heart in that moment brought him together with his Creator. Do you want to feel the nearness of God in your life today? Put aside all the sins that could separate you from Him and ask Him to reveal Himself in your life. The same God who passed by Moses, hidden in the cleft of the rock, can reveal Himself to you. For He is Jesus—the gracious One who came to save you from your sins.

✿ Indeed, it would be good for both the elders and the youth to meditate on those Scriptural words that show how the place where the presence of GOD is reported should be considered sacred. “Take off your sandals,” Moses commanded on the burning bush, “for where you stand is holy ground.” Jacob, after seeing the vision of the angel, said, “The LORD is in this place; I did not know that this was not another place but the house of God, and this is the gateway to heaven.”

✿ Questions:
- Were the people faithful to God when Moses went up the mountain?
- Why did they rebel only six weeks after saying they would keep all the commandments?
- What did Moses do when he saw the rebellion taking place?
- What do we learn from this?
- How was the friendship between Moses and God?
- In what way did Aaron demonstrate his leadership?
- We must set ourselves apart from the world, yet also be reachable by people—discuss this paradox of being in the world but not of the world.

May God richly bless the child and the youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Exodus 32:31-33

[31-33] And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.

Prayer: Thank You Father for writing our names in Your Book. Help us to love You and give You spotless worship. Deliver us from the evil one and from idols of wealth, possessions, knowledge, opinions, food, and all other things we put before You. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: The Book of Life. Give papers and let each one make a small booklet. Write sins on one side with pencil and after erasing write (forgiven), etc.

DAY 39 (February 8)

LESSON: Moses Goes Up the Mountain Again

(Exodus 34 and 35)



✿ Moses went up the mountain once again after the Ten Commandments had been inscribed on the tablets that he had hewn. Having spent 40 days on the mountain, his face shone so brightly that his brother Aaron was afraid to come near him. He had to conceal his face while speaking to the people. For the second time, God wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger on stone tablets. The law that God personally recited and that was heard by the people (Exodus 20:1-2), and then written down twice on those stones, must be taken very seriously because undoubtedly He takes it very seriously. Breaking one commandment is like breaking all ten, for it is one thing (James 2:10; 2:12).

Is This How God Speaks?

The Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, abundant in love and truth; showing mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sin. When Moses heard this, he bowed down and pleaded with the Lord to go among them, for they were a stiff-necked people. He asked for their sins and iniquities to be forgiven and for them to be taken as His inheritance.

Moses represented Christ as he interceded for the children of Israel, asking for forgiveness for their sins. He warned the Israelites not to worship other gods, for the Lord is a jealous God. This jealousy is holy, for He is our Creator, and only He has the right to be jealous or to destroy what He has created.

Even in our daily lives, children who neglect their parents while helping others—fetching water, washing clothes, or providing for their needs—while abandoning their own parents, do they not provoke their parents to jealousy?

Giving is Better Than Receiving

When Moses came down from the mountain, the people were ready to build the tabernacle as instructed. However, they were tested to see whether they valued spiritual matters by offering contributions for its construction. They had acquired these materials while in Egyptian captivity. God did not force them to give, though He was the provider; instead, He asked for voluntary offerings from anyone whose heart was willing.

Until that point, the Israelites had been receivers, but now God wanted them to give. They gave willingly and joyfully, though perhaps a few grumbled. Giving is better than receiving—it is a heavenly virtue. Sharing with those in need and giving what little we have is a sign of love. If you eat while another child watches, hungry, or keep two pencils while another child has none, what does that say about your heart?

The people brought gold, linen threads, and silver, offering gifts to the Lord day and night until those collecting the contributions declared, “Enough! Stop bringing offerings!” Imagine if this happened in your church today—people giving so much that a call had to be made to stop donations because there was more than enough! This shows that the Israelites were neither greedy nor selfish.

If we are to entrust anyone with our wealth, should it not be the One who provides all things? Today, people are building churches and places of worship everywhere. Let’s pray that these constructions don’t take too many years to complete! Whenever possible, let’s avoid building places of worship using debt.

Giving Time and Skills for God's Work

God did not only ask for material offerings—He also wanted people to give their time and skills to help build the Tabernacle. "Everyone who is skilled among you, come and do the work the Lord has commanded," Moses said. Women with skill spun thread and brought it willingly.

Moses then told the Israelites, "The Lord has called Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—designing artistic works, working with gold, silver, and cutting precious stones."

Bezalel was also given the gift of teaching others his craftsmanship. His assistant, Oholiab, son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan, was also filled with wisdom and skill for intricate work—engraving, carpentry, embroidery, and weaving. Moses called these young men, along with others who were willing to help in this great task.

Without a doubt, Bezalel personally handled the sacred furnishings, including the Ark of the Covenant's mercy seat, which was made of pure gold!
Bezalel and Oholiab must have been astonished when they were called by name by God Himself. For the first time in the Bible, it is explicitly stated that someone was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Today, these skills would be recognized as engineering, architecture, graphic design, and interior decoration. Many people may not have known Bezalel and Oholiab before, but this shows that God knows each person intimately, including our abilities—even better than we know ourselves!
Ask yourself: What does God know about you?

The Humility of Solomon

When Solomon began his responsibilities as king, he admitted before God, "I am only a little child" (1 Kings 3:7). His profound love for God, his reverence and humility, and his acknowledgment of his own limitations—while exalting the Creator of all things—are qualities to be emulated.

These virtues were revealed in his prayer of dedication for the temple, during which he knelt in humility as a true worshiper before God.
Today, followers of Christ must guard against losing their sense of reverence and awe for God. The Scriptures teach us how we should approach our Creator—with humility, faith, and deep respect—through Jesus Christ, our Mediator.

Reflection Questions

1. What lesson have you learned today?
2. Why is giving better than receiving?
3. How did Moses recognize Bezalel's craftsmanship and building expertise?
4. Who was Bezalel's assistant?
5. Why did Bezalel teach others?
6. Where in the Bible is it first mentioned that God filled someone with the Holy Spirit?

May God bless you, child and young servant of Jesus!

Key Text: Exodus 35:21,22.

[21,22] And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord.

Prayer: Thank You Father for the gifts and skills You have given us. Help us to use them for Your glory and to help people. Forgive us our mistakes, help us to love Your law and obey it. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: A formal service to learn the talents that youth and children love, advising on their gifts, and praying for them in a special way about their service. Draw a picture of Bezalel and Oholiab.

DAY 40 (February 9)

TOPIC: Reasons for Having the Sanctuary

(Exodus 25, Leviticus 16 & 22)



✿ God commanded the construction of the tabernacle or temple so that He could dwell among His people. The sanctuary was also a place for confessing sins and receiving forgiveness. God provided a way to cleanse people from their sins through the altar. This tabernacle was a representation of the true sanctuary in heaven, illustrating the plan of salvation that people could physically see (a picture of salvation) (Hebrews 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10). We are told to approach Him with confidence through this way.

✿ This plan also helped prevent idol worship by continuously teaching the truth that God is invisible to our sinful eyes at this time. The sanctuary was a place where God dwelled with His people, and where they could meet with Him. It was positioned at the center of the Israelite camp, near Moses' dwelling. The tabernacle was built with pillars and beautiful curtains surrounding it.

✿ God's presence is everywhere, but He also has His holy city and temple in heaven. As human beings, we do not fully understand what He looks like, but we are told in John 4:24 and 1 Kings 8:27 that He is Spirit. The Bible clearly

states that there is a temple in heaven, and heaven is a real place. There are many things we do not comprehend, nor can we fully grasp them with our limited minds. However, we must trust the Bible even when we do not understand everything, because in time, God will reveal more to us.

✿ In Hebrews 10:25, we are advised not to neglect attending worship services, and Jesus Himself had the habit of going to worship every week (Luke 4:16). We should make every effort not to be late for worship, nor should we arrive and make noise, chew food, or play around. The house of God is a holy place where we meet with Him.

✿ The plan of salvation is centered on sacrifice. Jesus came to live among people, died, and rose again so that we may have eternal life. Even today, God wants us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Dear child, obedience is a greater sacrifice than any offering. The Bible shows us that God will judge the world. Christ is both our High Priest and Judge in the heavenly temple.

✿ In Daniel 7:10, it says, "A thousand thousands served Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened." The temple was highly significant to the Jews in terms of their economy and national governance. However, over time, they forgot its true meaning, failing to realize that it was connected to God and the plan of salvation.

✿ After Christ's death on the cross (Matthew 27:50-51) and His ascension to heaven, the earthly temple was no longer the center of worship, but God still desires to dwell with His people through the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we must keep them pure—physically, mentally, and spiritually. Things like alcohol, smoking, immoral thoughts, and sinful actions defile the temple of God.



✿ Even though we are still children, we will continue to understand these things as we grow. It is true that we are saved by the death of Jesus on the cross, not by our works, but when we know Him, our actions and character are transformed to reflect Him. The most important thing about the temple is

that even today, God wants to dwell within us, in our hearts. We must guard what enters our hearts—what we see, hear, touch, and think about. Psalm 77:13 says, “Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary.”

✿ The book of Leviticus mentions various feasts aside from the most significant one, the Day of Atonement.
These include:

The Sabbath,

The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread,

The Feast of Tabernacles (Camps),

The Feast of Trumpets,

The Feast of Weeks (later called Pentecost).

✿ Jesus does not only call us to pray in the temple or church but also to serve the needs of those around us. We cannot connect with heaven without caring for people. “For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.” (Matthew 25:35-36).

✿ We should live a balanced life—one of thoughts (reflection) and actions, as well as a life of silent prayer and diligent work. We have received immense love from our Savior, and we have the opportunity to share that love with friends, neighbors, and even strangers in need. Ask God in prayer how best to reach out to others. Prioritize personal prayers, for great wisdom is needed to understand the science of saving souls. Before speaking with people, speak with Christ. Receive guidance for serving others from the throne of divine grace.

Here are some ways you can help others:
- Buy a meal for a student in need.
- Collect clothes for the needy.
- Distribute tracts and booklets.
- Read a book to an elderly person.
- Visit an orphanage.

✿ The detailed instructions in Leviticus remind us that God values order, structure, and precision. He is also a lover of beauty and artistry! Those

gifted in the arts can find great joy and inspiration in these passages. God Himself granted artistic talents to Bezalel and Oholiab. Their craftsmanship in constructing the tabernacle brought honor to the God they served. The people gave so generously to the building project that, eventually, a command was issued: “Stop bringing more!”

✿ It is rare today to hear of fundraising efforts for a ministry where so much is given that the leader says, “That’s enough! No more contributions are needed!” Indeed, giving is better than receiving. The enthusiasm, creativity, diligence, and passion that ancient Israel demonstrated in building a place of worship to honor God are still needed among His people today. Whether we are caretakers or designers, we glorify God when we serve and worship Him using our talents.

✿ Then Solomon knelt on the bronze platform, and in the presence of all the people, he offered a prayer of dedication for the temple. Lifting his hands toward heaven, while the congregation lay prostrate on the ground, the king pleaded: “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven or on earth, keeping Your covenant and showing mercy to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.”

✿ Reflection Questions:

1. Will there be a temple in heaven?

2. Since our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, what should we avoid?

3. Why is it important to attend worship services or go to church?

4. What is the meaning of “holy”?

5. Why is the temple considered holy?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Exodus 25:7,8.

[7,8] And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all its instruments, even so shall you make it.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for wanting to dwell among us, and we pray that we may love to dwell in Your house. Forgive us our sins, and make us able to minister to others and to pray for them too. We pray You help us to understand the message of the Sanctuary. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of the Sanctuary, its three parts, and the things inside and write their names—the altar of burnt offering, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place.

DAY 41 (February 10)

TOPIC: Consecrating the Priests and Their Garments for God's Glory

(From Exodus 28, 27, 39, and 28)

Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the assistants who were willing to work for the Lord with their talents and time continued building. Some sorted various threads or skins, while others dyed the linen. Some watched and asked questions about what was happening, while others helped. Perhaps Moses answered many questions about the plan of salvation as the construction continued. There were no newspapers or radios, yet news about the tabernacle and its construction spread through what was happening.

✿ In such a sacred place, work had to be done with order, planning, and reverence. Making unnecessary noise, engaging in inappropriate conversations, or even having bad thoughts brought danger. Even today, when we go to church, we should avoid making noise and doing our own things. The church is a sacred vessel chosen to preach the good news of God and His soon-coming kingdom. God prioritizes His church. When we are in church, we should be silent and dress modestly. Arriving late to church and having wandering thoughts during worship is a sin. There is a book called Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, Chapter 55, which explains well the behavior we should have in church. If you don't have this book, write to us, and we will send you a Kiswahili copy. The English version is available for free online.

✿ It took the engineer Bezalel six months to complete the work of the sanctuary. He did an excellent job, even sewing the garments for the priests. Perhaps Moses praised him for the great work he did in the wilderness for the sanctuary. The furniture was put in place, and Moses himself placed the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. Everything was arranged, and suddenly, as people watched, they saw a cloud filled with God's glory. The people rejoiced when they realized that God was with them and was pleased with their work. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

At night, the tabernacle or tent of meeting appeared to glow with the light of fire. That cloud provided warmth in the desert, while the fire reduced the cold of the wilderness. God is the provider of all His people's needs. Anyone who was sad or troubled would find comfort when they saw the cloud.



They had light and air conditioning without paying for it.

✿ After a few weeks, Aaron and his four sons were consecrated for service in the tabernacle. Everyone was invited and saw six people: Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar entering while wearing tunics. Moses took water and washed the five men, preparing them for the sacred service before the Lord in the tabernacle. Then Moses dressed Aaron in his garments, which were beautifully designed with blue, purple, red, and gold, just like the curtains of the tabernacle. Blue represented God's Law, red represented sin, purple—a mixture of blue and red—represented grace, and gold represented righteousness.

On Aaron's chest was the ephod with twelve shining stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel. On his shoulders were two stones, each bearing the names of six tribes, reminding him that he carried the burdens and sins of the Israelites on his shoulders and heart. Moses placed a golden plate on Aaron's head with the words "Holy to the Lord."



✿ Aaron was to represent holiness. Without explaining every part of the garment, everything symbolized Christ. Do our clothes represent Christ? These garments were not meant to bring glory and attention to the wearer but rather to glorify God. Should religious leaders today wear luxurious garments

adorned with gold and jewels like in those days? The most beautiful garment of all is the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Aaron also had two stones, one on each shoulder, called Urim and Thummim, which were the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. These were used to provide answers to inquiries—if the right stone glowed, it meant the matter was approved by God; if the left stone remained shadowed, it was rejected.

Aaron's robe was also sewn with golden bells so that when he entered and exited, his sound would be heard. If he entered the tabernacle without wearing the proper garments, he would die.

✿ As this was happening, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar stood watching. Finally, it was their turn to be dressed. Their garments were not like their father's, but they were beautiful and glorious.

✿ Then a bull was brought, and as Aaron and his sons stood, they laid their hands on its head, confessing their sins. Moses slaughtered the bull and sprinkled its blood on the altar. Then a ram was brought, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head before it was slaughtered, and its blood was sprinkled on the altar. Another ram was brought for consecration, and these five priests laid their hands on it, symbolizing the transfer of their sins.

But this time, instead of sprinkling its blood on the altar, Moses placed the blood on the tip of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot. Then he did the same to the four sons—on their ear, thumb, and big toe.

The blood on the right ear symbolized not listening to evil but keeping thoughts pure and dedicated to God. The blood on the thumb represented using their hands for holy work, helping the poor, orphans, and widows, and building God's kingdom. The blood on the big toe represented walking in righteousness, following God's commandments, and not straying into sin.

✿ In summary, this service was for consecration, setting them apart for God's holy work. Even today, we must be consecrated by the blood of Jesus—our ears, fingers, and feet—so that we think pure thoughts, do good deeds, and walk in God's righteous paths. Even today, God's servants and places of worship are consecrated.

God's servants should be respected because they represent Him. The tabernacle represented God's house on earth—it was not a place to sleep as

if it were a hotel, nor a place for gossip and idle talk after the service. It was a place to be still and worship.

✿ Prayer: Father, help me understand that I have not yet reached my heavenly home and that I am a stranger and a pilgrim on this earth. Deliver me from the deception of walking the broad path while serving You. Consecrate me for Your work and help me have a heavenly mindset that benefits both You and humanity.

✿ You have been given intelligence to understand how to work. You have been given eyes to recognize the opportunities God has given you. Your ears should listen to God's instructions. Your knees should bow three times a day in heartfelt prayer. Your feet should walk in the path of God's commandments.

Questions:

Which sons of Aaron were consecrated?

What did the blood on the ear symbolize?

Why is it important to respect God's servants?

What things should we avoid doing during worship?

God bless you, child and young person of Jesus. 

Key Text: Exodus 28:2-4.

[2-4] And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. And you shall speak to all who are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle. And they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister to Me in the priest's office.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the teachings we receive from the priest, with garments of honor and beauty. Help us to have reverence before You always, and to give You glory in how we speak, how we dress, and how we interact with people. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Make an ephod with 12 precious stones. Glue on paper or plastic, stones of different types according to their colors as the Bible says, for example. Or make a stone of Urim and Thummim.

DAY 42 (February 11)

TOPIC: The Services of the Sanctuary

(Exodus 27, 35-40; Leviticus 1 and 8; Numbers 10)



Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skilled workers who were willing to offer their talents and time to the Lord continued with the construction. Some sorted different threads and animal skins, while others dyed linen fabrics. Some watched and asked questions about the work in progress, while others assisted. Perhaps Moses answered many questions about the plan of salvation as the construction went on. There were no newspapers or radio stations, yet news about the tabernacle and its construction spread through what was happening.

✿ In such a holy place, work had to be done with order, planning, and reverence. Shouting, idle talk, or even impure thoughts posed a danger. Even today, when we go to church, the house of worship, we should avoid making

noise or engaging in personal activities. The church is a holy, chosen vessel entrusted with the mission of preaching the good news of God and His soon-coming kingdom. God prioritizes His church. When we are in church, we should remain silent and dress modestly. Arriving late and being distracted during worship is sinful. There is a book called Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, Chapter 55, which explains the proper conduct we should maintain in church. If you do not have this book, write to us, and we will send you a Swahili copy. The English version is available for free online.

✿ It took Engineer Bezalel six months to complete the construction of the sanctuary. He did excellent work, even sewing the priests' garments. Perhaps Moses praised him for his outstanding work in the wilderness for the sanctuary. After placing the furniture, Moses personally placed the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. Everything was in order, and suddenly, as people watched, they saw a cloud filled with the glory of God. The people rejoiced, knowing that God was with them and pleased with their work. The joy of the Lord is our strength. At night, the tabernacle glowed with the fire of God's presence. This cloud provided warmth in the cold desert nights, while the fire reduced the desert's chill. God is the provider of all His people's needs. Anyone who was sorrowful or troubled found comfort when they saw the cloud. They had light and air conditioning without paying for it!

✿ A few weeks later, Aaron and his four sons were consecrated to serve in the sanctuary. Everyone was invited, and they saw six men—Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar—entering while dressed in linen undergarments. Moses took water and washed the five men, preparing them for holy service before the Lord in the tabernacle. Then Moses dressed Aaron in his priestly garments, which were beautifully crafted with blue, purple, red, and gold colors, matching the curtains of the sanctuary. Blue symbolized God's law, red represented sin, purple (a mix of blue and red) symbolized grace, and gold represented righteousness. On Aaron's chest was a breastplate with twelve precious stones, each inscribed with the name of one of Israel's twelve tribes. On his shoulders were two stones, each engraved with the names of six tribes, reminding him that he bore the burdens and sins of the Israelites on his shoulders and heart. Moses placed a golden crown on Aaron's head with the words "Holy to the Lord."

✿ Aaron was to represent holiness. Every piece of his clothing symbolized Christ. Do our clothes today represent anyone? These garments were not meant to bring attention or glory to the wearers but to glorify God. Do religious leaders today need to wear luxurious clothing adorned with gold and jewels like in those days? The best garment of all is the robe of Christ's righteousness. Aaron also had two stones, one on each shoulder, called Urim

and Thummim, which contained the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. These stones were used to provide answers in decision-making—if the right stone glowed, it meant God approved; if the left stone darkened, it meant rejection. Aaron's robe also had golden bells sewn into it, so when he entered or exited the sanctuary, the sound would be heard. If he entered the tabernacle without wearing the robe, he would die.

✿ While all this was happening, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar stood watching. Finally, it was their turn to be dressed. Their garments were not as elaborate as their father's, but they were still beautiful and glorious.

✿ Then, a bull was brought before them as Aaron and his sons stood. They placed their hands on its head, confessing their sins, and Moses slaughtered the animal, sprinkling its blood on the altar. Next, a ram was brought, and Aaron and his sons again laid their hands on its head before it was slaughtered, and its blood was sprinkled on the altar. Then, another ram, the consecration ram, was brought, and the five priests laid their hands on it, symbolizing the transfer of their sins. But this time, instead of sprinkling its blood on the altar, Moses applied it to Aaron's right earlobe, right thumb, and right big toe. He then did the same for the four sons.

The blood on the right earlobe symbolized that they should not listen to evil but keep their thoughts pure and consecrated.

The blood on the right thumb represented using their hands for holy work, helping the poor, orphans, and widows, and building God's kingdom.

The blood on the right big toe symbolized walking in the paths of righteousness, obeying God's commandments, and avoiding evil ways.

✿ In short, this ceremony set them apart for God's sacred work. Even today, we should be consecrated by the blood of Jesus—our ears, hands, and feet—so that we think pure thoughts, do good deeds, and walk in righteousness. Even today, God's servants and places of worship are consecrated. Ministers should be respected because they represent God, and the sanctuary represents God's house on earth. It is not a place to sleep as if we are in a hotel, gossip, or engage in idle talk after the service. It is a place to be still and worship.

PRAYER:

Father, help me to remember that I have not yet arrived home, and that I am a stranger and traveler in this world. Deliver me from the deception of

walking the broad path while serving You. Consecrate me for Your work and help me have a heavenly mindset that benefits both You and humanity.

✿ You have been given a mind to understand how to work. You have been given eyes to be watchful and recognize the opportunities God has given you. Your ears should listen to God's instructions. Your knees should bow in prayer three times a day from the heart. Your feet should walk in the path of God's commandments.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which sons of Aaron were consecrated?

2. What did the blood on the ear symbolize?

3. Why is it important to respect God's servants?

4. What things should we avoid doing during worship?

God bless you, dear child and youth of Jesus! 

Key Text: Hebrews 7:24-27.

[24-27] But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.

Prayer: Thank You Lord because You are our High Priest, without blemish, and You are able to save us completely from all unrighteousness. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: A drama of the consecration of the sons of Aaron in Leviticus 8. Learning the priestly garments piece by piece. And how the finger, hand, and faces were involved, and why.

DAY 43 (February 12)

TOPIC: The Holiness of the Priestly Ministry

(Leviticus 1-10)



✿ They were set apart to serve God, but they did not serve for long. The priests and all those who ministered in the temple were constantly reminded and taught about Christ's work for the salvation of mankind. The ministry was conducted with the purpose of instilling love in people's hearts for God and His Law. The sacrifice of a spotless lamb was a lesson about God's love, who sent His Son to suffer and die for our sins. We should never think that God is angry with us, but rather understand that the boundaries He sets through His Law are for our safety. If we do whatever we please, we will hurt others and ultimately grieve God.

✿ The altar stood at the center of the Israelites, symbolizing that God was the King who ruled over Israel, and the Levites camped around the temple. The altar was holy, set apart, and consecrated. God is holy, and He wants us to be chosen and holy to the extent that humans can be holy. Young person and child, consider your actions, intentions, words, or thoughts—are they holy? David said, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," or "I will

dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord in His temple." The altar represents God's beauty, righteousness, and mercy. God's way is in holiness (Psalm 77:13). The altar carries profound teachings.

✿ When Solomon spoke to God, he portrayed the altar as a place to seek forgiveness, take oaths, pray for help when defeated by enemies, ask for relief during droughts or other calamities, seek victory, and even a place for foreigners to pray.

✿ After all the sacred ceremonies of consecrating Aaron's sons—dressing them in new official garments, belts, and turbans—it didn't take long before they acted wickedly. The blood of the sacrifice was placed on their ears, thumbs, and toes (Leviticus 8:24). Their hearts were still in awe after witnessing the fire from the Lord consuming the burnt offering (Leviticus 9:24). Truly, we must ask God for the strength to do what pleases Him. These young men saw the sacred temple service daily and perhaps became too familiar with it, failing to consecrate themselves. Yet, if they ever forgot, they only needed to look at their father's forehead, where it was inscribed in bold letters: "HOLY TO THE LORD." They understood and knew because their uncle, Moses, had explained clearly that they were to be role models for other young Israelites. They were given great responsibilities, and God expected them to follow His instructions. They were spiritual leaders for other youth in Israel. But they drank alcohol after being consecrated. For anyone consecrated, this was a terrifying sin.

✿ The blood applied to their ears, hands, and feet did not help them. This shows us that alcohol should be completely avoided because it dulls the mind and makes us disrespect sacred things. Alcohol should never enter your mouth. We are told that each of them took his censer, put fire in it, added incense, and presented unauthorized fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded. Then, fire came out from the Lord's presence and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Moses told their father, "The Lord says, 'I will be sanctified by those who draw near to Me, and I will be glorified before all the people.'" Aaron remained silent. He was struck with shock and trembling at losing two sons in a single day due to disobedience to the Lord. Moses called their relatives, the Levites, to carry them outside the camp, but they were not to mourn or lament. God had entrusted them with His work, but they treated it lightly. They made holy things seem ordinary. This was a lesson for young people, children, and even adults not to repeat such foolishness. They were close to the Mercy Seat, so their sin was great, and even mercy could not cover them.

✿ Moses told their father and relatives not to mourn them and to continue with the worship service. Then God commanded, “Do not drink wine or any intoxicating drink, neither you nor your sons, so that you will not die. This shall be a lasting ordinance for generations to come. You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean.” The temple or church of God is a sacred place, and His worship is holy. People must revere and honor Him.

✿ Even today, dear child or reader, alcohol should be completely forbidden because it leads to many sins. There are over 50 Bible verses that command us not to drink alcohol. Aaron’s sons were led astray by alcohol and failed to distinguish between sacred and ordinary things. Their younger brothers, Eleazar and Ithamar, took their places and served God with reverence. God is not honored when we enter worship without reverence. Music that lacks reverence should be avoided in worshiping a Holy God. Eating during worship should be discouraged, even for young children, and a proper schedule should be set to make worship services meaningful and not overly long and tiring. Using mobile phones during worship should also be avoided as much as possible. As we approach the end of the world’s history, we must worship God in holiness and truth.

✿ Verses 8-11 highlight how alcohol led Nadab and Abihu to make reckless decisions. After their tragic deaths, God spoke to Aaron, instructing him and his remaining sons to abstain from wine or strong drink so they could differentiate between the holy and the unholy and teach the Israelites God’s commands properly. Alcohol removes the mask of shame in the brain and makes a person do things they would never do if they were sober because they would feel ashamed or afraid.

✿ Jesus, our High Priest, represents the temple ministry. He is now in the heavenly sanctuary, carrying the names of His beloved children and interceding for repentant sinners before His Father. We have the assurance that Jesus will never forget us if we fix our eyes on Him as He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary. We must present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God,



through the grace of Christ, without blemish. If this seems impossible for us, we should claim this promise in Jude 1:24:
“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

✿ Ministers should kneel to pray before preaching – According to the light we have received, it would please GOD if ministers knelt as soon as they stepped onto the pulpit and sincerely sought help from GOD. What a solemn impact this would have! A deep sense of reverence for God’s glory would be felt by the people. Their minister is communicating with GOD, consecrating himself to GOD before daring to stand before the people. A sense of awe would rest upon the congregation, and GOD’s angels would be drawn closer. Ministers should fix their eyes on GOD the moment they step into the pulpit, declaring to all: “GOD is the source of my strength.”

Questions:

Why did Nadab and Abihu die on the same day?

Why is drinking alcohol a sin?

What did “HOLY TO THE LORD” signify?

Who did the priests represent in the temple?

Why does the Bible say drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God?

We are repeatedly commanded to distinguish between the holy and the unholy, and between the unclean and the clean. What does this mean?

The Bible contains many verses prohibiting alcohol consumption—can you mention two?

May God bless you, dear child and young follower of Jesus! 

Key Text: John 10:11-12.

[11,12] I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches them and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know My own, and My own know Me.

Prayer: Thank You Lord because You are the Good Shepherd, You care for us, You do not run away when we are in danger, and You know us. Forgive our sins, fill us with Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss the sons of Aaron and the work of the priesthood. The blood applied on their ears, hands, and feet did not help them. This shows us that alcohol must be forbidden to us, for it destroys reason and makes us careless about sacred things. Never should liquor or alcohol enter your mouth. Discuss the dangers of alcohol and how to avoid it. Or discuss together Matthew 23 which says "woe to you Pharisees," meaning all evangelists, paid and unpaid.

DAY 44 (February 13)

TOPIC: The Day of Atonement

(Leviticus 16)

✿Although many have found it difficult to read the book of Leviticus, we must understand that this book contains deep truths about our salvation! Some Bible readers have referred to Leviticus, especially chapter 16, as Good News or the Gospel. The sacrificial services in Leviticus were a shadow of Christ's death on the cross. This was a day that God did not want anyone in the entire nation of Israel to forget. The focus shifted from the blood that was shed to the blood that was applied, symbolizing how our salvation comes through the blood of the Messiah.

✿While daily sacrifices were offered regularly, once a year there was a special ceremony known to the Jews as Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Everyone was required to show reverence to God through self-denial. If they were careless or indifferent to what was happening behind the veil, they faced the death penalty. Two goats were chosen, but only one was sacrificed. This one was called "the goat for the Lord." Its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, symbolically cleansing the sanctuary from all the sins that had been forgiven throughout the year. The other goat was sent alive from the sanctuary into the wilderness—a desolate place—where it was left alone to die.

✿This was a great and joyful day! For those who understood its importance and kept it in mind, it was a day of cleansing and victory. And it can be the same for us today! Preparations have been made for purification, and a day is coming when sin will be no more!

✿On this great day in the nation of Israel—the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)—everyone ceased their work. Before this day, they were instructed to prepare by examining their sins and repenting. Only the high priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place, and he could do so only once a year on this appointed day. If he violated this rule, he would die immediately. The service of the Day of Atonement reminded people that all humans have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and they must seek God's forgiveness.

✿Everyone was required to fast until the atonement service was completed. They were to show sorrow and repentance for their sins, drawing near to God for mercy. They were also required to maintain physical cleanliness, as an



outward sign of spiritual readiness to meet their God. Even today, it is good practice to cleanse our bodies and wash our clothes, so that impurities do not return to our skin and bloodstream.

✿On the morning of this day, the high priest first offered a sacrifice of a bull for his own sins and those of his family. He took the blood of the bull into the Holy Place and then into the Most Holy Place, sprinkling it on the golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant. This symbolized his acknowledgment of sin and his plea for God's mercy and forgiveness. The high priest had to seek forgiveness for himself first before interceding for others.



✿Then, two goats were brought before him. These two goats represented the bearing of the people's sins. The one chosen "for the Lord" was slaughtered and offered on the altar. The high priest took its blood into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it on the Ark of the Covenant, asking God to accept the sacrifice and forgive Israel's sins. Then, the priest returned to the altar and placed his hands on the second goat—called the scapegoat (Azazel)—symbolically transferring the people's sins onto it. This goat was led far into the wilderness, where it was released, never to return. This demonstrated that the people's sins were removed and separated from them.

✿Once this service was completed, the people believed that the Lord had forgiven and forgotten their sins. Then, the usual daily sacrifices resumed at the altar, and the people went home joyfully, breaking their fast.

✿God instituted this system to show that sin is a serious and sorrowful matter because it separates us from Him and leads to death. Sin could only be removed through the shedding of blood. If Almighty God found no other way but for His own Son to die, then sin is truly a grave issue—one we should never take lightly. The blood of animals was only a symbol of Jesus, who takes away the sin of the world. Before Christ came, God showed the way of forgiveness and peace through these sacrifices.

✿What the high priest did on the Day of Atonement is what Jesus began doing in the Heavenly Sanctuary on October 22, 1844, according to the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9. In the Most Holy Place, He is cleansing the Heavenly Sanctuary through the investigative judgment. Even today, sins can be confessed and forgiven. But when this work is finished—very soon—grace will be closed for humanity. Then, He will declare: "Let the unjust continue to be unjust; let the filthy continue to be filthy; let the righteous continue to practice righteousness; and let the holy continue to be holy." (Revelation 22:11)

✿If there was ever a time for Christians to practice self-control, fasting, and prayer—confessing and forsaking sins so that we are sealed as God's children before grace closes—it is now! All the sacrifices pointed to the one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself.

✿I am grateful that Jesus is truly cleansing us from all sin. We must confess our sins in prayer to Him, who is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Amen!

✿This is the ministry that was symbolized in the earthly sanctuary but is now being fulfilled in the Heavenly Sanctuary. After His ascension, our Savior began His work as our High Priest, interceding for us before God the Father. Paul says: "Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands, which was only a copy of the true one, but He entered heaven itself, to appear now in God's presence for us." (Hebrews 9:24)

✿Aaron had to spend many hours preparing to meet God, but we can approach Him at any time today (Hebrews 4:16). What a privilege to access God more easily than the high priests of the Old Testament! However, we must never forget God's holiness and should always approach Him with reverence.

✿God told Moses about the sanctuary services and how sacrifices should be offered. Not because He delighted in them, but so that humans could see how repulsive sin is to Him and recognize that the wages of sin is death. The sinner had to kill an innocent lamb, showing that he deserved death but that

the lamb died in his place. This lamb represented Christ, who would one day die on Calvary as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world.

✿Today, we have no human priests! Christ alone is our High Priest. We do not need to bring an animal to symbolize our sins being transferred because Jesus, the Lamb of God, has already borne the sins of every human being! When Jesus said "It is finished" (Tetelestai), the human priesthood ended. We have pastors, bishops, and spiritual leaders, but they are not priests. They, too, must confess their sins directly to the Savior. No human being can forgive sins—only God can!

✿Salvation is by grace. Jesus, our High Priest, is calling us to repentance, so that our sins may be removed from us forever. Let's prepare ourselves and live in obedience to Him, for the Day of Atonement is coming soon!

Questions:

How many times a year was the Day of Atonement observed?

Why did people fast?

Why did the high priest seek forgiveness for himself first?

What did the two goats represent?

Why did the people rejoice after the ceremony?

Who did the scapegoat represent?

Why are sacrifices no longer needed today?

What was the earthly sanctuary modeled after?

What do Leviticus 16 and Isaiah 53 talk about?

How did priests maintain excellence in their duties?

What challenges would you face if you had to sacrifice a lamb every time you sinned?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus! 

Key Text: Leviticus 16:22.

[22] And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

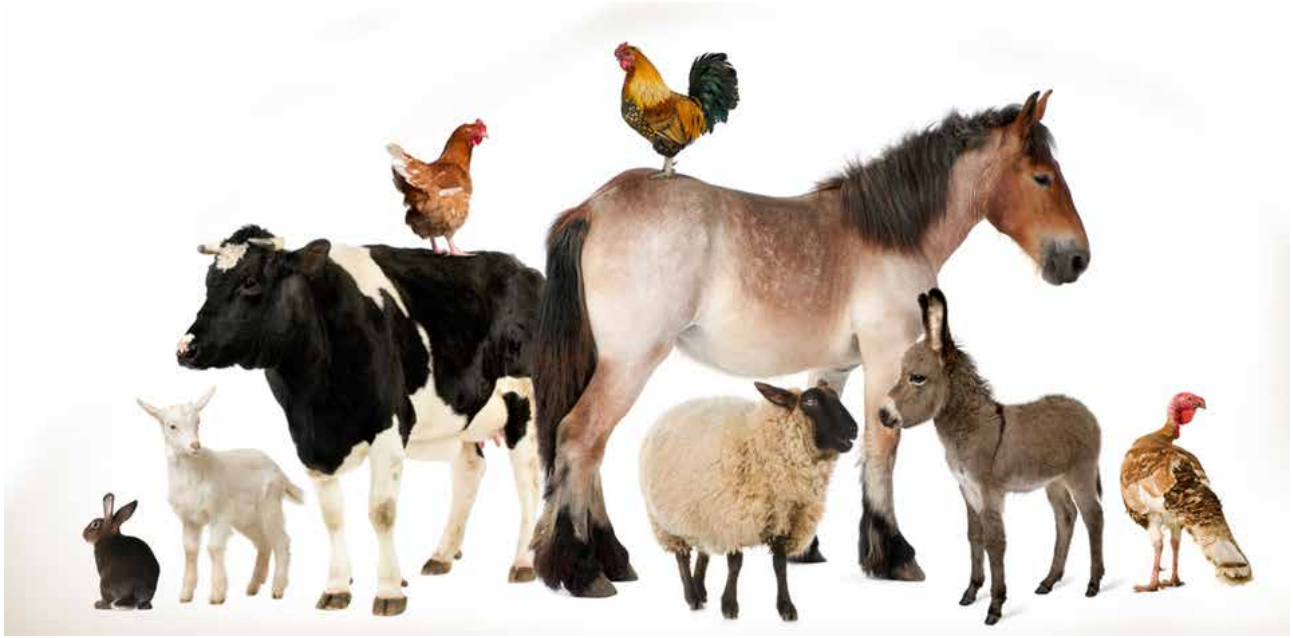
Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the book of Leviticus where we get a picture of the gospel, and Your voice speaks directly 48 times. Help us to read it and understand well the Day of Atonement in our lives today. Forgive our sins. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: The Day of Atonement. Discuss and dramatize what happened.

DAY 45 (February 14)

TOPIC: Clean and Unclean Things

(Leviticus 11-19)



✿ God instructed the Israelites on which animals were permissible to eat and which were not. They were told to eat animals with split hooves that also chewed the cud, such as cows, goats, sheep, and deer. However, animals like pigs, camels, lions, and elephants were prohibited because they lacked one of these two characteristics. Pigs have split hooves but do not chew the cud, while rabbits chew the cud but do not have split hooves.



Regarding fish, only those with fins and scales were allowed. This meant that creatures like octopuses, shrimp, and other shellfish were considered unclean. Birds that fed on carcasses, such as eagles, crows, vultures, owls, and hawks, were also forbidden. However, chickens, guinea fowls, and doves were permitted. Among flying insects, those with long legs for jumping, like locusts, grasshoppers, and crickets, were allowed, but termites were not.

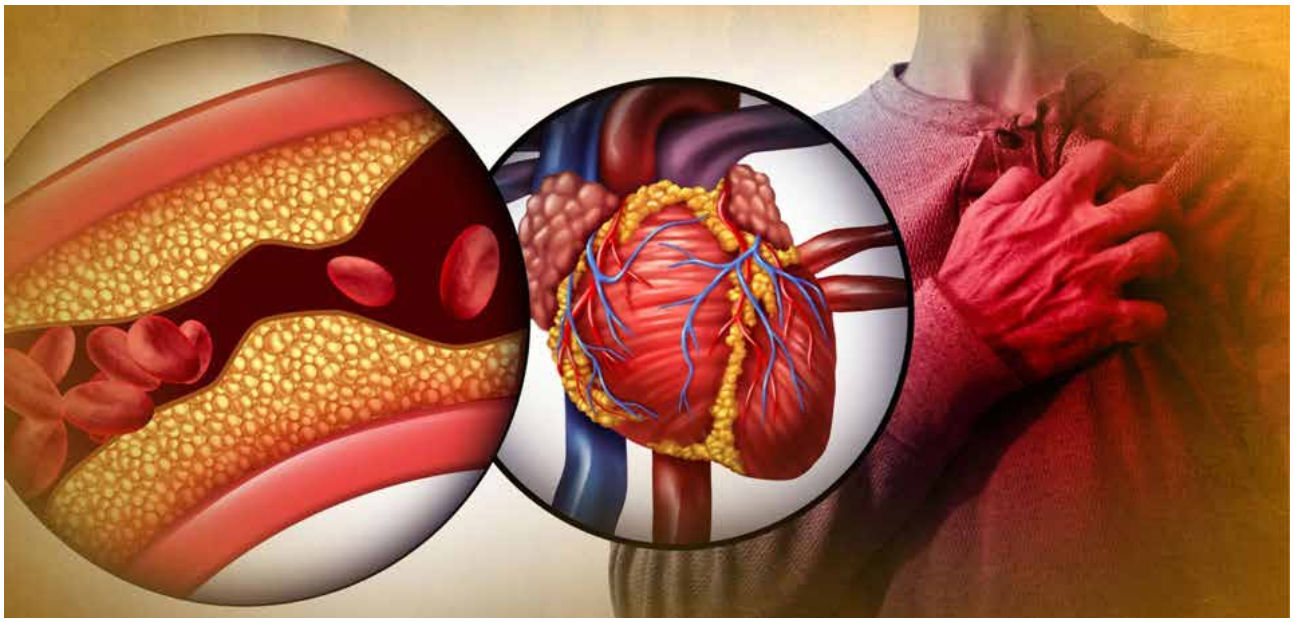
Today, scientists have discovered that pigs carry worms in their flesh and eat anything, which can lead to diseases in those who consume them. Despite

God's early warning, some people continue eating such meats, risking their health. God, who created us, knows what is best for our bodies. These instructions were given for our physical and spiritual well-being.

✿ Excessive meat consumption weakens physical, mental, and moral strength. The Lord provides wisdom for His people to prepare meals from plant-based foods suited to their environment. In the past, people had livestock but did not slaughter them daily. They ate meat occasionally, unlike today, where stores make meat readily available. Frequent meat consumption without proper control can lead to heart diseases, cholesterol issues, cancer, and other illnesses, whereas plant-based diets promote better health.

✿ As you reflect on the food you place on your table daily, do so for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). God desires us to be healthy, happy, and holy in every aspect of our lives. This is why He set boundaries on what we should consume, even from the Garden of Eden. Our diet affects our spiritual and moral inclinations. We should not indulge in gluttony or food cravings. Our eating habits should be guided by wisdom and moderation. If we discipline our appetite and eat for God's glory, our lives will be prolonged. We should eat to live, not live to eat. If we make our stomachs our gods, our digestive systems will wear out, leading to serious illnesses and a loss of joy.

✿ Though we may love meat, God, who created these creatures, knows what is best for us. Many modern diseases result from poor dietary choices. Let us return to the Edenic diet and enjoy healthy living until Jesus returns. We need good health to face the challenges coming upon the world. Meat consumption was allowed after the flood, but today, there is no such necessity. Science has confirmed that plant-based diets promote health and help prevent infectious diseases.



✿ God also gave health laws. These laws were meant to prevent diseases among the people, especially as they traveled through the wilderness. They were instructed to wash their clothes and properly dispose of waste by covering it with soil. They had to maintain cleanliness, as God is holy and required them to be clean. Otherwise, He might withhold His blessings due to their impurity.

✿ Laws were given regarding blood and fat consumption, possibly for health reasons. Those who had houses with mold (fungus) were given instructions on how to remove it, and if unsuccessful, they had to burn the house. Today, we know that mold in homes is dangerous and has caused many deaths due to inhaling contaminated air. People with infections or discharges from their bodies had to be isolated temporarily to prevent spreading diseases.

✿ Social laws were also given. They were instructed not to harvest everything from their fields but to leave some for the poor, foreigners, and strangers. They were told not to curse the deaf or put obstacles before the blind but to fear God. They were commanded to judge fairly, not to gossip, not to harbor hatred in their hearts, nor to seek revenge or hold grudges. They were also instructed not to engage in sexual immorality, such as adultery, incest, bestiality, or homosexuality. These evils existed even in ancient times. Satan remains the same and continues to torment people until he is finally destroyed.

✿ They were commanded not to consult mediums or witches. God said, “I am the LORD your God.” They were instructed to remove sorcerers and all who practiced dark powers. They were also told to respect the elderly and to honor their parents. They were commanded to treat foreigners, orphans, and widows with kindness, helping them as they would their own families, without mistreating them. This is important for us today, especially as children. We should not discriminate against new students in school or new neighbors. Many people in the Bible were foreigners who were a blessing to others. Can you name some of them?

✿ The Levites, who served in the temple, were given rules regarding attending funerals and maintaining purity. They were also required to marry only women of good moral standing. They were forbidden from making tattoos or body markings. Today, many people in Western cultures get tattoos, although in Africa, some were previously forced into it and now try to remove them. Read more about this in Leviticus 19.

✿ Priests had to be morally and physically pure, without defects, as they represented God. They were also forbidden from eating dead animals that

were not properly slaughtered. Sacrificial offerings had to be perfect, without blemish.

✿ Anyone who blasphemed God's name was to be put to death. They were commanded to support their fellow Israelites. In Canaan, they were to farm the land for six years and let it rest in the seventh year so that the poor could gather food. They were forbidden from making and worshiping idols. Today, we may not create idols, but anything we prioritize over God becomes an idol—whether food, clothing, entertainment, technology, or even people.

✿ God gave laws regarding making vows and the importance of keeping them. Even today, if you make a vow to God—such as promising to give an offering or perform an act of gratitude—remember to fulfill it. Do not take God's name in vain.

✿ These laws are like traffic lights, guiding people in their relationship with God, each other, and strangers. They are detailed explanations of the Ten Commandments. If understood, they prevent people from making mistakes. These laws were meant to uphold the holiness of the Ten Commandments, which were written on stone tablets. Jesus summarized them by saying:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:38-40)

✿ It is natural for people to seek revenge when wronged, but here we are told not to retaliate. It may seem like the wrongdoer is getting away, but they will reap what they sow. The Bible says:

"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written: 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,' says the Lord." (Romans 12:19-20)

✿ Holiness is not achieved by force; it comes from surrendering our will to God and living by His Word. Only His grace can change our hearts. Holiness is a gift from God through Christ. Those who receive Him become God's children, transformed into His image.

✿ Develop the habit of speaking to the Savior throughout the day—in solitude, while walking, and in daily tasks. Lift your heart in silent prayer for guidance, strength, and wisdom. Let every breath be a prayer. Instead of self-reliance, we should pray more and talk less.

✿ Questions:

Why are pigs and octopuses considered unclean to eat?

Why is it important to keep our vows to God?

Why were the Israelites instructed not to farm in the seventh year?

Why are we commanded not to consult witches?

Why is it a sin to discriminate against people of other tribes or foreigners?

Why should we not get tattoos?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 14:2-4

[2-4] For you are a holy people unto the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a special people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the face of the earth. You shall not eat any abominable thing. These are the animals which you shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat…

Prayer: Blessed be the Lord for being our provider of food, clothing, and shelter. Thank You for all the plans to provide for our needs. We pray that You help us not to have the desire to eat what You forbid us to eat, to wear what You forbid us to wear, or even to live where You forbid us to live. Lord, teach us to speak with wisdom and act with integrity. Help us to honor every vow we make to You, and let our lives reflect Your faithfulness. Amen.

Activity: Although we are permitted to eat certain animals, nowadays eating meat has many risks because many animals have diseases. Eating plant foods such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, and grains is the best choice. Do research on the disadvantages of eating meat and fish.

DAY 46 (February 15)

TOPIC: God and His Complaining People (Leviticus 26, Numbers 1, 7, and 11)



✿ As the book of Numbers begins, the people are counted, and special offerings are given according to their 12 tribes, with the leaders of each tribe making the offerings. Generosity is very important. Try comparing this census with the one taken when they left Egypt. The Levites were set apart as the Lord's portion, just as the firstborn was dedicated to the Lord. Likewise, today, it is good to dedicate our children to the Lord. We have a wonderful God, full of grace! He seeks to save us in every possible way. He gives us all kinds of blessings and would love to give us even more if we could bear them. If we fall into sin and reject Him but later repent, He will accept us again with His grace and restore His blessings.

✿ I appreciate the fairness in the census process. A representative from each tribe was present during the counting, ensuring justice and accuracy. God is a God of order and planning. We must strive to follow His instructions with integrity and effort. Jesus warns us that many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). Only those who fully surrender their lives to God without reservation will enter heaven. Let us determine to be among them.

Not long after Nadab and Abihu died, the people saw the cloud moving toward the Promised Land. They traveled for three days, and the cloud stopped. The Levites set up the altar, and the 12 tribes camped around it. The people rejoiced that they were finally moving toward the Promised Land. However, they were not ready for the many lessons God wanted them to learn. They had witnessed miracles—the Red Sea, manna, and others—but their faith was still weak.

Before long, the people started complaining about the wilderness, saying it would have been better to return to Sinai.

✿ Even today, we should avoid complaints because our Heavenly Father loves us and provides for our needs. We should tell Him our problems and have faith that He will act. God does not answer complaints, but He answers prayers.

Some people wanted livestock food or water. When the Lord heard this, His anger burned, and His fire consumed the outskirts of the camp. The people cried out to Moses, who prayed for them, and the fire stopped. This place was named Taberah because the Lord's fire burned among them.

But the complaints did not stop. The mixed crowd among them started complaining again, and the Israelites joined them. Their issue was food; they were tired of manna. They cried for the meat they ate for free in Egypt—cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. They said, "Now our souls are dried up; we have nothing to look forward to except this manna." Yet, manna could be prepared in different ways—ground, baked, boiled, etc.

Even today, we crave unhealthy foods or drinks and neglect the food God has provided, complaining instead of eating with gratitude.

✿ If we went to our Heavenly Father and respectfully told Him, "Father, today I am struggling with eating manna; is there something else You can provide?"—would a loving God refuse? Many earthly fathers do so much for their children; how much more would our Heavenly Father?

Moses heard the people weeping. The Lord's anger burned greatly, and Moses

also became frustrated. He said, “Lord, why have You brought this trouble upon Your servant? Why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have placed the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give birth to them, that You should tell me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a father carries a nursing child,’ to the land You promised their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They cry to me, saying, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot carry all these people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You are going to treat me, please take my life if I have found favor in Your eyes; do not let me see my misery anymore.”
Indeed, Prophet Moses was overwhelmed to the point of wishing for rest.

✿ God had already done much for them and made many promises: rain, peace, and victory. “Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. You will eat the old supply of stored grain. I will place My dwelling among you; My Spirit will not reject you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of slavery.”

But He also warned that if they rejected His commands, He would bring terror. “You will plant seeds in vain, for your enemies will eat them. You will be struck down before your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you. I will break your pride in power and punish you seven times for your sins; you will eat and not be satisfied.” These were heavy warnings. God is love, but His commands must be followed—for our own good and that of others.

Have you ever thought about what would happen if everyone did only what they wanted and ignored the law? Take five minutes to reflect on that. God is merciful, but if we continuously rebel and refuse His leadership, His judgment must come. Let us not forget this.

✿ The Lord told Moses to gather 70 elders of Israel, and He would put the spirit of Moses in them so they could help carry the burden of the people. He was also told to tell the people to purify themselves, for the next day they would eat meat. Since they cried for the meat they had in Egypt, the Lord said they would eat it—not just for a few days, but for a whole month—until it would come out of their noses and they would loathe it because they rejected the Lord.

Moses wondered how they would get enough meat. Even if all the flocks and herds were slaughtered or all the fish in the sea were caught, would it be enough? The Lord replied, “Is the Lord’s arm too short?” Moses then told

the people and the 70 elders. Still, the burden was heavy on him, despite Jethro's advice.
The 70 elders received the spirit of Moses and began to prophesy. However, Eldad and Medad, among the 70, were still in the camp, not at the gathering. When Joshua heard this, he urged Moses to stop them, but Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!" Moses was not jealous of God using others. We too should not envy others whom God uses.

✿ The Lord brought an abundance of quail, and everyone ate until they had excess. Catching quail is difficult, but the Lord brought them! While they were still chewing the meat, and while some had even preserved it, the Lord's anger burned, and they were struck with a severe plague for their complaints and gluttony. The place was named Kibroth-Hattaavah (Graves of Craving) because there they buried those who craved.

God desires us to have good health, joy, and holiness. That is why He wants us to eat as He instructed and avoid harmful foods. Many people suffer from overeating and indulgence. Behavioral changes in diet and drinking habits are necessary. However, these changes cannot happen overnight. They must be made step by step. Healthy foods must be presented in an appealing way to stimulate appetite.

✿The way to God's throne is always open. You may not always kneel to pray, but silent prayers can always ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, you can run to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you. Let these words strengthen you: "Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. They will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." (Revelation 3:4)

✿ Questions: Why is complaining a sin? How did the fire break out? List your complaints and determine which ones are sinful. What was the role of the 70 elders? Why did Joshua feel jealous? Where did the quail come from? Why is gluttony a sin?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Numbers 6:24-26

[24-26] The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for You are the One who blesses us and keeps us. We pray for Your grace, and to be spared from complaints and greed. We ask for a thankful heart. Help our loved ones. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of greediness in a restaurant. Pretend you are cooking food and serving it (fruits, etc.). Take orders, and let the children eat greedily, fighting over food, making loud greedy noises while chewing, and finishing the whole plate.

DAY 47 (February 16)

TOPIC: The Siblings of Moses and Rebellion

(Numbers 12 & 16)



✿ It didn't take long before Miriam, the sister of Moses, and his brother Aaron began speaking against Moses out of jealousy. Often, when someone close to us betrays us, it hurts more than when a stranger does. Miriam was a good sister who had once called Pharaoh's daughter to ensure that Moses was raised by his mother. She had worked alongside her brother from Egypt, leading the people up to that point. But now, Miriam began showing discrimination, speaking against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married. Some interpretations suggest it was because she was black, which, in our African context, we might say was because she was from another tribe. This kind of issue still happens today, even among in-laws, who mistreat a brother or sister-in-law just because they are from a different ethnic group. What truly

matters is faith, and in any case, Zipporah's father was a priest of the God of Abraham and worshiped the true God.

✿ God intervened, telling them: "If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal Myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But with My servant Moses, I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" As a result, Miriam was struck with leprosy, becoming as white as snow. Aaron pleaded with Moses to ask God for her healing, saying, "We have acted foolishly and sinned. Please forgive us." Moses interceded for her, and she was healed, but she had to stay outside the camp for seven days. The entire community had to wait for her return before they could continue their journey. One person's sin delayed everyone.

✿ Some others continued to grumble. They had spent 15 months traveling but still had not reached Canaan, even though it was only about 150 miles from Sinai—a journey that could take about six hours by car today. They were physically close to the Promised Land but spiritually far from it! They needed complete transformation to be fit to enter.

✿ After this, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram gathered 250 men and rebelled against Moses and Aaron, complaining that Moses was taking too much authority and that they, too, should have leadership roles. When Moses heard this, he fell facedown and told Korah and the assembly, "Tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who belongs to Him and who is holy." When Moses called Dathan and Abiram, they refused to come, accusing him of misleading them and claiming he wanted to make himself a ruler over them. Moses prayed to God, saying he had not taken anything from them nor wronged them.

✿ The next day, 250 men came with their incense censers. Korah had gathered the whole assembly against Moses and Aaron, and the glory of the Lord appeared. God told Moses and Aaron to separate themselves so He could destroy the wicked. But Moses fell facedown and interceded for the people, warning them to move away from the tents of the wicked men so they would not perish with them. Then, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, his followers, and their families. The Israelites fled in terror, fearing they would also be swallowed. This was a lesson that only those chosen by God could serve as priests—in this case, only the descendants of Aaron.

✿ The next day, the people again grumbled against Moses, accusing him of killing the Lord's people. The glory of the Lord appeared again, and as Moses and Aaron fell facedown in intercession, a plague broke out, killing 14,700 people. Moses and Aaron, out of love, stood between the living and

the dead, pleading with God to stop the plague.



✿ To settle the dispute over priesthood once and for all, God instructed that twelve staffs be taken—one for each tribe—with the name of each tribe's leader written on it. The staff of Levi was inscribed with Aaron's name. God said that the staff of the man He had chosen would sprout, ending the Israelites' complaints. The next day, Moses found that Aaron's staff had sprouted, blossomed, and even produced ripe almonds. Aaron's staff became a testimony of God's chosen priest and was kept in the Most Holy Place beside the Ark of the Covenant.

✿ Even today, we must be careful about desiring positions or fighting for roles that God has assigned to others. Some positions are sacred, and not everyone is called to them. Instead, we should have a spirit of contentment. Many people are never satisfied—they believe that if they get a particular job or thing, they will be happy. But even after obtaining what they desire, they find it unsatisfactory and seek something else.

✿ Those who are in error and deserve correction often crave sympathy and praise from others. The people were pleased with Korah, who pretended to care for them, and they assumed that Moses and Aaron were the bad ones. They convinced themselves that they were righteous and mistreated by Moses. If they admitted that Korah was wrong and Moses was right, they would also have to accept the judgment that they must die in the wilderness.

✿ Korah believed he was a hardworking servant of God and that God was on his side. He deceived himself into thinking he was righteous and that the congregation was holy. He saw himself as a champion of justice, ready to bring significant changes and improvements to Moses and Aaron's leadership. Yet, Moses never defended himself—he continually prayed for the people, recognizing the seriousness of their sin. We should pray for humility when we are corrected by God's leaders, accepting His discipline as He works out His salvation in us. Pride and greed lead to rebellion and downfall.

✿ Rebellion is contagious! But it is entirely possible to walk away from it! Let us not be driven by envy or dissatisfaction, trying to elevate ourselves by bringing others down. We must not twist God's Word to support our own desires but instead allow God's perfect will to shape our aspirations. Let us not seek satisfaction in authority or status. God can use us where we are now—we don't need to exalt ourselves.

✿ Everyone has influence, and as family members, we must be very careful not to bring destruction upon our families. Instead of joining our relatives in wrongdoing or remaining silent, we should, with love, gentleness, and the fear of God, correct their mistakes. If we support them or remain silent, we may share in their downfall.

✿ May God help us to never abandon His teachings and principles but instead find joy in following them, even if everyone else is against us. The people were given a choice regarding which side to stand on. Today, we also have a choice—to choose Christ and live or choose Satan and perish. The decision is ours!

✿ If all our workers were in a position to spend a few hours daily on physical labor, it would be a blessing for them; they would be more effective in their ministry. If they lack sufficient time for rest, they should plan and pray for ways to engage in manual labor so they can return to their duties refreshed in body and spirit.

Questions:
1. Why did Korah's family perish?

2. Explain the significance of Aaron's staff.

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus 

Key Text: Numbers 16:3-5.

[3-5] And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you lift yourselves up above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. And he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, Tomorrow the Lord will show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him; even him whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to Him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for teaching us that we must honor Your servants. Help us to do so, even with those who may not deserve it. Give us wisdom to deal with them in love, redeeming the time. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of Korah and Dathan, showing how important it is to respect God's servants. Draw a picture of the pit with people falling in.

DAY 48 (February 17)

TOPIC: God Commands the Sending of 12 Spies

(Numbers 13-15, 18)



✿ As we have already seen, the journey from Sinai to Canaan should have taken only two weeks, a distance of less than 300 kilometers. They were close to Canaan, yet at the same time, very far—it was a dilemma. They reached the border to enter Canaan and sent spies.

✿ The LORD spoke to Moses, instructing him to send twelve men, one from each tribe, to spy out the land of Canaan that He was giving to the Israelites. These twelve men were leaders. Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, telling them to observe whether the people were strong or weak, few or many, whether the land was good or bad, and if it had fortified cities. Were there plenty of food and resources? Be courageous and bring back some fruit from the land. They went up and spied out the land during the season of grapes, figs, and pomegranates. A single cluster of grapes was so large that two men had to carry it on a pole.

✿ They explored the land for 40 days and returned to Moses and Aaron, confirming that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. However, ten spies began to describe the size and strength of the Canaanites, saying that compared to them, they looked like grasshoppers. The entire assembly wept that night and started complaining again, saying it would have been better if they had died in Egypt or in the wilderness.

✿ Joshua from the tribe of Benjamin and Caleb from the tribe of Judah brought a good report and encouraged the people, assuring them that despite the presence of giants, the LORD's mighty hand would give them victory.

The people, however, insisted that their wives and children would become captives, so they sought to appoint a leader to take them back to Egypt. Moses and Aaron fell facedown, while Caleb and Joshua tore their clothes, emphasizing that the land was exceedingly good and filled with milk and honey. They pleaded, “Do not rebel against the LORD or fear the people of the land, for they will be like bread to us. The LORD is with us; do not fear them.” Despite their encouragement, the people picked up stones to kill them, but then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting before all the people.

✿ The LORD asked Moses, “How long will these people treat Me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in Me despite all the signs I have performed among them?”

✿ God told Moses that He would destroy them and remove their inheritance, making Moses a greater and mightier nation than they were. But Moses interceded, reminding God that the Egyptians and other nations would hear of it and say that He was unable to bring His people into the land He had promised them. Moses appealed to God’s character, saying, “You are slow to anger, abounding in love, and forgiving sin. I beseech You, forgive the iniquity of this people.” And the LORD answered, “I have forgiven them as you asked.”

✿ However, the LORD declared that they would not see the land of Canaan; instead, they would wander in the wilderness for 40 years, representing the 40 days they had spied out the land. He said, “None of those who have treated Me with contempt will see it, but My servant Caleb, who has a different spirit and follows Me wholeheartedly, will enter it.” God also promised that the children, whom they feared would suffer, would inherit the land.

✿ The spies’ report was factual; they did see giants, and they did appear like grasshoppers in comparison. But their mistake was concluding that they could not conquer the land. They lacked patience and faith in God. They forgot how He had miraculously delivered them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and destroyed Pharaoh’s army. They left God out of their problem and acted as if they had to rely solely on their military strength. Are we any better in our faith than the ten spies?

✿ Joshua and Caleb never lost sight of their mission. They never forgot the incredible journey from slavery in Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land. It took courage to stand against the negative report of the ten spies. The temptation to conform is powerful. Unity is good, but never unity in error, nor unity that drowns out the Truth.

✿ Do I wish to die in Egypt? Or do I trust the Lord while keeping my eyes on His promises? Surrendering our hearts to unbelief means falling into the enemy's trap. Let us remember to spread the Gospel, trusting that He who began a good work in us will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

✿ Another important lesson is about the Cities of Refuge. These cities were half a day's journey from anywhere in the land, and the roads leading to them were well-maintained. Signs were posted with bold letters reading "Refuge" to guide those fleeing for safety. Any person—whether an Israelite, a foreigner, or a resident—could seek asylum there. A fugitive's case was judged fairly, and only if found innocent of intentional murder was he granted protection. Otherwise, he was handed over for retribution. Those who sought refuge could return home only upon the death of the high priest.

✿ Life in a City of Refuge was not easy; one had to leave their family behind, waiting for the high priest to die! It was a kind of imprisonment, yet it was a mercy compared to being killed instantly by the victim's family. The community likely provided some form of sustenance. The Cities of Refuge symbolize the salvation offered in Christ. Our Savior, by shedding His blood, has provided an escape for all sinners. We can run to Him for safety from eternal death. No power can snatch us from His hands once we seek His forgiveness.

✿ While in the wilderness, a man was caught gathering wood on the Sabbath. The LORD commanded that he be stoned to death for his blatant disobedience, which others might imitate. Even today, we are called to keep the Sabbath holy, avoiding personal work or leisure activities. How are we keeping the Sabbath today? Do we sometimes forget that God cares about both big and small details and will not accept careless worship?

✿ Some people disregard the Sabbath and choose a different day. Others recognize the Sabbath but fail to honor it properly by not preparing in advance. Some talk about their own affairs or engage in their own pleasures instead of dedicating the day to God. Let us pray for pure hearts.

✿ Ways to Properly Observe the Lord's Day:

❁ The Sabbath begins at sunset and ends at sunset. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, ironing, and other chores should be completed before the Sabbath begins.

❁ It is acceptable to warm food on the Sabbath that was cooked the day before.

🌻 Avoid secular books, newspapers, social media, TV, radio, and technology-related activities until the Sabbath ends.

🌻 Business transactions, banking, paying bills, and shopping should wait until after sunset on Saturday.

🌻 Social gatherings and worldly entertainment should not take place during sacred hours.

🌻 The Sabbath is an excellent time to explore nature, learn about plants and animals, visit the sick, or support those in need—but only in a way that keeps the day sacred.

🌻 Avoid doing unnecessary work on the Sabbath. Even small tasks can show disrespect if done carelessly.

🌻 Sleeping the whole Sabbath to gain energy for personal activities afterward is not honoring God.

🌻 Honor God by gathering your family, singing worship songs, and closing the Sabbath with reverence.

✿ True prayer is not dependent on time, place, or situation. Pray in your room, at work, or wherever you are—let your heart be lifted to God constantly.

✿ Questions:

1. How long is the journey from Egypt to Canaan on foot?
2. Why did the people cry when they heard the report of the ten spies?
3. Why is it important for us to give good reports of God's goodness?
4. Why was the man gathering wood on the Sabbath put to death?
5. Do you know Shamua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gadi, Ammiel, Sethur, Geuel, and Nabi? If not, why do you think that is?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Numbers 13:30-32.

[30-32] And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature.

Prayer: Father, today is another day to thank You, for You have been good to me. I pray that You keep me from bringing bad reports instead of good news, when You intend good for people. Keep me from complaints and evil. Give me a thankful heart. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of the 12 spies. Talk about what you think the ten said, and then the two. Use a small telescope to view, and take pictures of the place like fruit trees, etc.

DAY 49 (February 18)

TOPIC: The Waters of Meribah Cause Moses to Miss Entering Canaan

(Numbers 20 and 21)



✿The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, being taught by God to trust and depend on Him. Not much is written about these 40 years, but we believe their hearts were humbled, and this difficult life was the consequence of their lack of trust in God and continued complaints. However, God did not abandon them; He continued to guide them, providing all their daily needs—whether manna, water, clothing, or shelter.

One day, while traveling in the wilderness, they arrived at Kadesh. Here, Miriam died and was buried. But there was no water. The people gathered and quarreled with Moses, saying they wished they had died where their relatives had perished. They complained, saying, “Here there are no grapes, figs, or pomegranates, and no drinking water!” Moses and Aaron, who were still mourning their sister, fell facedown, and the glory of the Lord appeared.

The Lord told Moses to take the staff and speak to the rock before the eyes of the people so that it would bring forth water.

However, Moses, in his anger, said, “Listen now, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” Instead of speaking to the rock as commanded, he struck it twice. The rock that was struck represented the Lord Himself. The Lord then told Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust Me enough to honor Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not enter the land of Canaan.” The water from Kadesh was called the Waters of Meribah because the Israelites quarreled with the Lord there.

✿The Israelites sent a message to the king of Edom requesting passage through his land, but he refused. Then the Lord told Moses that it was time for Aaron to die because he had rebelled against God’s command at the Waters of Meribah. Eleazar, his eldest son, was to take over his priestly duties. So Moses and Eleazar accompanied Aaron up Mount Hor, where Moses removed his brother’s priestly garments and placed them on Eleazar. The two brothers said their goodbyes, and Aaron died there at the top of Mount Hor at the age of 123. The Israelites mourned for him for a month. Though they had often opposed him, they now recognized his goodness.

✿The Israelites then traveled around Edom since they were not allowed to pass through it. Along the way, they complained again about the lack of food and water, calling the manna “miserable food.” The Lord sent fiery serpents among them, and many people died. Moses interceded for them, and the Lord instructed him to make a bronze serpent and set it on a pole so that anyone who was bitten and looked at it would live. Those who refused to look at the bronze serpent, thinking it was useless, perished.

Even today, God’s instructions matter. Even if we think we know better, obedience is more important than anything else. Jesus referenced this story when speaking to Nicodemus in the Gospel of John, saying, “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.” Insert your name here:

_____

✿It was not the bronze serpent that healed the people, but God, through their faith. Today, if you are bitten by Satan, look to Jesus! Whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal strength. There is no time or place where prayer is inappropriate. Nothing can stop us from lifting our hearts in sincere prayer. Whether in a busy street, in the middle of work or business, we can send a prayer to God, seeking His guidance, just as Nehemiah did before speaking to King Artaxerxes.

✿Questions:

Why was Moses considered to have sinned at the Waters of Meribah?

Why did he sin?

Why didn't the Israelites pass through Edom?

Who did the bronze serpent represent?

Who took over Aaron's role after his death?

How did Jesus relate the story of the serpent in the wilderness?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Numbers 10:33-36.

[33-36] And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let those who hate You flee before You. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel.

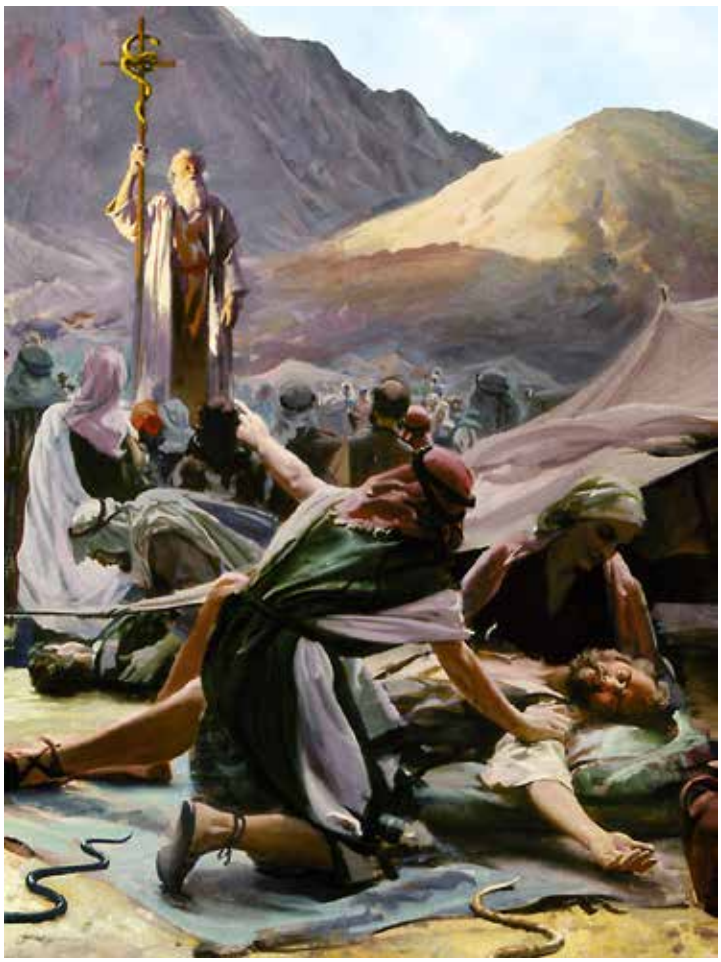
Prayer: Oh Lord, this morning as we continue to journey here on earth toward Canaan, keep us from anger. We see that Your faithful servant Moses sinned through this matter. Help us to bring good news to people as we journey. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama of the bronze serpent. A cross tree should also be included with the serpent. If you get a plastic snake, or rope shaped like a snake, use it. After the drama, sit down and discuss.

DAY 50 (February 19)

TOPIC: Journeying On Amidst Challenges

(Numbers 21-26)



✿As the Israelites continued their journey, they were bitten by snakes in the wilderness but received healing. We have all been bitten by a serpent called Satan. The venom is sin. Unless we look to the cross and fix our eyes upon it, we will perish. So, let us never take our eyes off the cross! To receive salvation, look to the cross. In disasters, look to the cross. In despair, look to the cross. In pain, look to the cross and see our sinless Creator suffering for us. Let us always look to the cross!

✿The Israelites, having lived in slavery in Egypt and later wandered in the wilderness, had not fought any battles. Perhaps in the wilderness, they learned to depend on God and be united so that He would fight for them. When they arrived at the land of the Amorites, they asked King Sihon for permission to pass peacefully without entering his fields or drinking from his wells. But Sihon refused and went to war against them. The Israelites defeated him and took over his cities, marking their first military victory. They then approached King Og of Bashan with the same request, but he also refused and went to battle, only to be defeated like Sihon.

✿Next, they reached the plains of Moab, near Jericho. King Balak of Moab, knowing how God had helped Israel defeat the Amorite kings, became very afraid. He sought a sorcerer to curse Israel because he knew they were led by a power greater than his own. He summoned Balaam, a prophet of God, to



prophesy against Israel. But when Balaam sought the Lord, God told him not to go or curse Israel because they were blessed.

✿Balak sent more officials with great offers of wealth and honor, hoping Balaam would reconsider. Though Balaam knew it was wrong, he was tempted by the rewards. That night, God permitted him to go but commanded him to say only what He instructed. As Balaam traveled on his donkey, an angel blocked the way. The donkey saw the angel and stopped, but Balaam, unaware of the angel, beat the donkey. Finally, the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and it spoke! Balaam then saw the angel, who warned him that his path was reckless.

✿When Balaam arrived, Balak built altars and offered sacrifices, but instead of cursing Israel, Balaam blessed them, saying, "How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob!" Enraged, Balak asked Balaam to stop both cursing and blessing Israel. Balaam replied, "I must speak only what God tells me."

✿Balaam later prophesied about the coming of the Messiah: "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A Star will come out of Jacob; a Scepter will rise out of Israel." This was a prophecy about Jesus.

✿However, Balaam later led Israel into sin by enticing them to worship Baal through Moabite women. Because of this, 24,000 Israelites died in a plague, stopped only when Phinehas, a priest, killed the leaders of the rebellion. Balaam, though once a prophet, met a tragic end.

✿Questions:

Name the two kings defeated by Israel.

Why is it dangerous for a servant of God to desire wealth or bribes?

What would you do if you heard a donkey speaking?

What did Balak say about the Messiah?

Why did 24,000 people die?

Why would it have been better for Balaam to stay home?

What is better: to be honored by God or by Balak?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Numbers 10:33-36.

[33-36] And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let those who hate You flee before You. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel.

Prayer: Oh Lord, this morning as we continue to journey here on earth toward Canaan, keep us from anger. We see that Your faithful servant Moses sinned through this matter. Help us to bring good news to people as we journey. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Learning about cruelty to animals. Drama is to make an image of an animal using wood or a pillow, and make a stick to act out beating this animal. Sit down and discuss about creation—why animals suffer today, that they were created before man, etc. How to treat harmful or dangerous animals, etc.

Or

Activity: Tell the entire story of Balaam's life, from when he came to Israel as far as you can remember, until he caused the Israelites to fall into sin.

DAY 51 (February 20)

TOPIC: Offerings, Feasts, and the Census of the Israelites

(Numbers 26-31)

✿Finally, the end came for the prophet who wanted to be used by people for wealth rather than being used by God. The Israelites were now camped east of the Jordan River, facing Jericho. At this point, they were commanded to count all men who could serve in the army, that is, those aged 20 and above. Forty years earlier, the number of men counted was 603,550, but now they were 601,730. This census shows that the population had decreased because, typically, a nation expects growth in its population over 40 years. For example, Tanzania's population was 9 million in 1969, but in 2022, it had grown to 63 million.

God records names repeatedly because people are important to Him. He who sees a sparrow fall and knows the number of hairs on your head also knows your name and everything about you, and all of it matters to Him. In heaven, there is a book called the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12). It contains the names of all who will be saved eternally. The key question to ask yourself is, "Is my name written there?" Today, why not talk to the Lord? Ask Him to forgive and save you. With joy, He will add your name to His list!

✿As they continued counting, the daughters of Zelophehad, son of Hepher from the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, planned to meet Moses. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses and the leaders at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying that their father had died in the wilderness and had no sons. They feared their father's name would disappear from his clan because he had no male heirs. With courage, they requested, "Give us an inheritance among our father's relatives."

This was a difficult matter at that time, but these young women were brave. Perhaps they chose one to speak so they wouldn't interrupt each other. Moses brought their case before the Lord. God answered Moses, saying, "The daughters of Zelophehad are right; you must give them an inheritance among their father's relatives." Moreover, God established a new law: if a man died without a son, his inheritance would go to his daughter. If he had no daughter, it would go to his brothers. If he had no brothers, it would go to his father's

relatives. This became a lasting decree for the Israelites.

✿These daughters later married within their father's tribe so that the inheritance would remain within the tribe. They made history that blessed future generations of daughters. Even today, it is good to follow this law that God gave.

God also reminded Moses of His earlier instructions, such as offerings, keeping vows to God, and His commandments. Then, God told Moses to prepare for his death on Mount Abarim. This was a hard reality to accept, all because of one sin at the waters of Meribah. What was Moses' sin? He became angry with the people. Jesus said, "Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."



Moses said, "Listen now, you rebels; must we bring you water out of this rock?" Only God could bring water from the rock.

✿Moses had taken God's glory and struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it. The rock symbolized Christ, who would die once and not twice. In all

our ministry efforts, we must be careful not to make people believe that we have the power to act. Honor and glory should always be given to God for any good thing we do. God was the leader and provider during their journey.
Aaron, too, remained silent when he saw Moses make this mistake. God counted Aaron's silence as rebellion (Numbers 20:24). By this time, Moses was 120 years old. He had led Israel in battles and counsel. God is good, and His plans for us are always for our good, even when we don't see it.

Moses handed over leadership to Joshua (Hoshea), son of Nun. He presented Joshua before Eleazar the priest and the entire congregation. Eleazar laid his hands on Joshua and instructed him, just as the Lord had commanded through Moses.

✿When was the last time you attended a camp meeting?
Numbers 28 and 29 repeat instructions on celebrating certain feasts originally mentioned in Leviticus (Leviticus 16, 23, etc.). Three major annual feasts are described:

① The Feast of Trumpets (Numbers 29:1-6)
A one-day event on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar.
Trumpets were blown, and it was observed as a Sabbath.
Burnt offerings, grain offerings, and sin offerings were made to the Lord.
This feast prepared the Israelites for the upcoming Day of Atonement.

② The Day of Atonement (Numbers 29:7-11)
Held ten days after the Feast of Trumpets.
This was the day when the sanctuary was purified through appropriate sacrifices.

③ The Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 29:12-40)
The last feast of the year.
A seven-day joyful celebration.
The required sacrifices for each day were specified.
These feasts helped the Israelites focus on God and draw closer to Him.

Today, the annual camp meeting serves a similar purpose. When well conducted, it can awaken and bring reformation to those who attend. If there are camp meetings in your area, do not miss this year's gathering—blessings await you there!

❦Moses wrote about the Israelites' journey as commanded by the Lord, which is why today we have a record of their wilderness journey. Our journey on earth is similar to that of the Israelites—we are in bondage to sin, and every

day, God guides us. Not by cloud and fire as before, but by His Word and Spirit, leading us to heaven—the New Canaan.

Children, let us pray to hear His voice so that we do not become like the Israelites who left Egypt but perished in the wilderness. With patience, let us build our faith, trust in God, and obey His voice.

✿Let us remember the sacrifice of Jesus. Think about all the lambs that were sacrificed—what a costly system to remind worshipers that salvation comes at an infinite cost. The Lamb of God came as heaven's greatest gift, demonstrating God's immeasurable love more than ever before. We are redeemed by His matchless grace!
We are His children! I say, Hallelujah! What about you? Take time today to reflect on how Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary impacts your life. Truly, He has brought us hope and peace, restored our broken relationships with God and others, and desires to be part of our daily lives—just as necessary as the food we eat every day. He is our perfect sacrifice.

✿ Your good intentions alone will not sustain you through trials. You must be a person of prayer! Prayer should not be inconsistent, emotional, or seasonal—it should be diligent, sincere, persistent, and continuous. Even in the midst of your activities, your soul can be lifted to God, drawing strength from Him. Then, you will be people of high purpose, holiness, and righteousness who will not be swayed from truth, the right path, and justice.

Questions:

1. Who was chosen to replace Moses and Aaron?

2. Did the Israelites in the wilderness have the written Torah?

3. Why were we given the Scriptures?

4. What is the difference in the number of men counted at the beginning and later?

5. Why is it important to attend camp meetings?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory verse: Numbers 23:23

[23] There is no sorcery against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'

Prayer: Dear Father, we pray that You keep us safe from witchcraft. We thank You that there is no sorcery against us. Remove fear when people try to threaten us, because You protect us from the evil one. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama of Moses striking the rock twice and the words he spoke. Why was it a bad thing? Discuss. Or a drama of the daughters of Zelophehad, son of Hepher, of the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph, as they came before Moses. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

DAY 52 (February 21)

TOPIC: The Story is Repeated a Second Time as Moses Bids Farewell to Jeshurun

(Book of Deuteronomy)

✿Before Moses died across the Jordan River in the Arabah, he spoke words that were recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. He repeated what they had experienced in the first four books after defeating Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. He reminded them that the LORD God had made them numerous and had set the land before them so they could enter and possess it, as He had promised their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses said he could not lead them alone, but the LORD God could, and He had blessed them, making them a model nation among all others on earth. They were reminded not to worship carved idols, for idolatry is evil before the LORD. Even today, many people have other gods.

✿These gods may be visible or invisible. They can be our sports, our appetites, food, video games, television, charms, opinions, fashion, beauty, houses, families, friends, or anything we prioritize over God. The Lord is the only God, and there is no other in heaven or on earth. He alone deserves praise and worship. Moses told them that secret things belong to the LORD, but the revealed things belong to believers and their children so they may obey them. He told them, "Take to heart all the words I testify to you today; command your children to observe and do all the words of this law. For this is not an idle word for you—it is your life, and through it, you will live long in the land" (Deuteronomy 32:45, 47).

✿Moses explained that after the first two tablets of the Commandments were broken, God told him to carve new ones. He went up again to Mount Sinai, and God rewrote the Ten Commandments. It appears that Moses fasted for 40 days more than once, without drinking water, which was a miracle from God. Moses said that when they desired a king, and if God allowed it, the king was to read and meditate on God's laws throughout his life to remain close to Him. He emphasized that the king should not think he was above God's law but should be an example of obedience.

✿On the other side of the Jordan, six cities of refuge were designated for anyone who accidentally killed another person. For example, during work, a tree might fall and kill someone, or a person might strike another



unintentionally. The accused would stay in the city until their case was judged to determine if it was an accident or premeditated. If it was an accident, they remained in the city for protection from the victim's relatives seeking revenge. They stayed in the city of refuge until the high priest died. Anyone who killed a person in the city of refuge was also to be put to death.

✿Even today, we must observe these commandments without deviating to the left or right. Moses commanded parents to teach their children and grandchildren these laws throughout their lives:
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

✿Satan is preparing any child who is not being prepared for heaven to become a citizen of hell, even through seemingly harmless things like games. These distractions can consume valuable time meant for household chores, schoolwork, and personal devotion. If there was ever a time to fill children with God's Word, it is now. Satan has intensified his efforts to capture young minds by bombarding them with messages and content meant to destroy them. When you see a child hiding in their room with a phone, computer, or tablet, there is a high possibility they are watching inappropriate content. Online deception has become a skill among many youths. Through the gateways of the heart—especially the eyes and ears—Satan feeds young people poison to make them his subjects.

✿The most effective way to protect our children from falling into Satan's trap is to teach them God's Word. A child whose mind is filled with God's Word daily develops a heavenly perspective, and by God's grace, they will not depart from it. The same creative power that spoke the universe into existence is in God's Word. His Word strengthens and gives life. Every command of God is a promise; when received into the soul, it brings the life of the Eternal One. It transforms character and reshapes the soul into God's image. Parents who do not have daily worship with their children give Satan an open opportunity to feed them his messages. Satan is preparing to lead to destruction any child who is not being prepared for heaven!

✿Even today, adults are commanded not to forget God, who delivered them from the bondage of sin, but to fear and serve Him without following the gods of others. Often, when we achieve success—building beautiful houses,

accumulating wealth, or having large herds of livestock, gold, and silver—we forget that God is our leader. Even today, God has set before us a choice: blessings or curses. We receive blessings when we obey His commandments, and curses if we do not.

✿They were reminded not to neglect tithes and offerings from their agricultural increase and business earnings. They were warned against dishonesty, such as moving boundary markers to cheat neighbors. If you carefully listen to the LORD your God and obey all His commands, the LORD will lift you above all nations. All these blessings will come upon you:

You will be blessed in the city and in the field.
Your children and livestock will be blessed.
Your food storage and kneading bowl will be blessed.
The LORD will defeat your enemies before you; they will come in one direction and flee in seven.
You will be a holy nation, and all nations will fear you.
The LORD will open the heavens to give rain at the right time.
You will lend to many nations but borrow from none.
You will be the head and not the tail, above and not beneath.

✿But if they disobeyed, many curses would come upon them:
They would suffer plagues and diseases such as tuberculosis, fever, itching, and mildew.
There would be no rain, only dust.

Enemies would conquer them, and they would flee in seven directions.
They would experience oppression and captivity.
They would marry but not keep their spouses, build houses but not live in them.
They would plant but not harvest.
Their livestock would be taken away permanently.
Their children would be enslaved.
Foreigners among them would rise, and they would fall.
If they did not serve God with joy and gratitude, all these disasters would befall them.

✿Why did God allow them to go through so much suffering? They would be in need, naked, and thirsty. Some would even eat their children. Truly, God's thoughts are higher than ours, and He does what is best for all. One day, we will understand why!

✿These were the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with Israel across the Jordan. He repeated the covenant made at Mount Sinai. Moses emphasized that the secret things belong to God, but the revealed things are for us and our children so that we may follow His Law.

✿Dear child, it is important to meditate on God's instructions and obey them. They are not too difficult or far away.

✿Moses said, "Today I am 120 years old; I can no longer go out and come in, and the LORD has told me I will not cross the Jordan." But he assured Joshua that God would go before him.

✿MAY GOD BLESS YOU, CHILD AND YOUTH OF JESUS👧👦

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 6:6-9

[6-9] These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the Scriptures. I pray that they may be in my heart, and that I may teach those around me diligently, and speak of them when I sit at home, when I walk along the way, when I lie down, and when I get up. May I tie them on my hand, place them as frontlets between my eyes, and write them on the doorframes of my house and on my gates. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Sit together and read the promises of Deuteronomy 28 – they are 113. Memorize the Ten Commandments of God in Exodus 20.

DAY 53 (February 22)

TOPIC: The Song and Death of Moses

(Numbers 27and Deuteronomy 31-34)

✿Throughout history, Christ has been left outside the doors of His people's hearts. But He still loves them. He promises the Laodicean church that if they allow Him into their lives, after His second coming, He will make them sit on His throne with Him (Rev. 3:21). He is the greatest lover of our world. He longs to dwell with us today and give us more than just physical blessings. He wants us to welcome Him so that He may reign in our hearts and that we may reign with Him forever. Those who welcome Him will ultimately bear God's commandments on their hands and foreheads, while others will accept Satan's counterfeit in order to buy and sell. The challenges of the world are many, and it is not easy to stay focused, but let our goal today be to join the great heavenly choir!

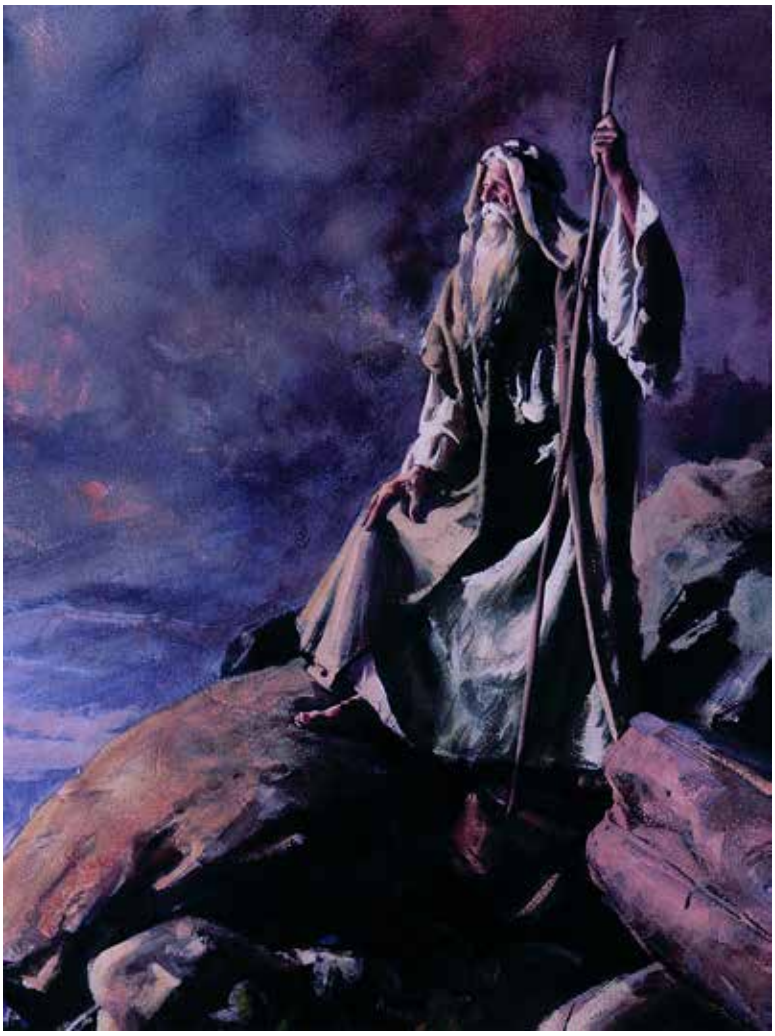
✿In summary, the song of Moses declares that God is good; disobedience leads to disaster. The saints will sing the song of Moses (Exodus 15) and the song of the Lamb on the sea of glass (Revelation 15). This song (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) reminds the Israelites of their covenant relationship with God. Essentially, one can analyze the song as follows: Surely, the Scriptures are useful for warning and teaching. This book is sorrowful, yet it continually reminds us that God is merciful and forgives our sins, but we will reap the consequences of those sins. Unfortunately, humanity continues to live in disobedience. One can imagine Moses looking down from heaven, wondering how we can continue to sin after reading about him and the lives of the Israelites. Let us recognize the seriousness of sin and begin to obey God's commandments and laws, as this will strengthen our relationship with Him and ensure our place in the heavenly Canaan. May God help us.

✿The LORD told Moses to climb the Abarim mountain range and view the land given to the Israelites. He said, "After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your ancestors, just as your brother Aaron was." God reminded Moses that his and Aaron's disobedience at the waters of Meribah in the wilderness of Zin caused them to remain on this side of the land. Moses pleaded with the LORD to appoint someone to lead the people so they would not be like sheep without a shepherd. The LORD instructed Moses to take Joshua, a man filled with the Spirit, and lay hands on him. He was to give him instructions in the presence of Eleazar the priest and the congregation. God

told Moses to bestow some of his honor upon Joshua. Joshua was to stand before Eleazar the priest, who would seek guidance from the LORD for him. By God's word, they would go out and come in—he, the Israelites, and the whole assembly. Moses did as God commanded.

✿Even today, God has appointed leaders for us; let us avoid tempting them to sin through our complaints and refusal to obey their guidance according to God's will. Our parents are also leaders set before us; let us honor them and not grieve them through stubbornness or sinful desires. Moses was a courageous leader who prayed, "Show me Your ways, O LORD, if I have found favor in Your sight, so I may walk in them and serve You well." God assured Moses, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. You have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." What sweet words! Even today, God knows your name. Do you desire to know His ways? He is ready to help and show you mercy.

✿Moses told the Israelites that because God loved them, He would do great things for them, but they needed to obey His commandments and walk in His ways to receive these blessings. They would be blessed in their coming and going, in their fields and homes, and even outside their land. God would open His treasury for them, and they would be the head and not the tail. He emphasized that they should remain close to God and do His will. He also warned them of the consequences of disobedience.



✿Moses climbed from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, the peak of Pisgah, opposite Jericho. The LORD showed him the entire land that the tribes of Israel were to enter. God told him, "This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying I will give it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over." Moses was given a supernatural view, seeing

east, west, south, and north. He saw the Israelites entering the land and beginning new lives. Indeed, God loved Moses.

✿After giving his final instructions, Moses climbed the mountain alone. Then, Moses, the servant of God, died in the land of Moab. Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet he was still youthful! His eyesight was not dim, nor was his strength diminished. When Aaron was to be gathered to his ancestors, Moses and Hur accompanied him, but Moses climbed Pisgah alone. He looked down at the camp and saw the beautiful land given to them. Then he rested. The Israelites mourned Moses for thirty days. Moses longed to enter that good land! But God said, "No!" Oh, but God showed him the entire Promised Land in the beauty of springtime!

✿Then Moses lay down and died, and God buried him. How long did Jesus wait before returning for Moses? Jude hints that Satan wanted to keep Moses in the grave forever! But Jesus did not argue with him and instead resurrected Moses. (Satan may think he is in control, but he is not!). Fourteen centuries later, when Jesus came to earth as one of us, just before offering His life for our salvation, Moses and Elijah descended from heaven to encourage Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. At last, Moses stood in the Promised Land!

✿Joshua, son of Nun, filled with the spirit of wisdom, took Moses' place. The book of Jude reveals an extraordinary event. God resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Satan contended for Moses' body, accusing him of sin, but God had seen Moses' repentance, patience, and suffering, and He took him. The Bible states that no one knows Moses' burial place to this day, likely to prevent idolatry.

✿We are told that in heaven, we will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Moses was indeed a close servant of God. You and I are now part of the spiritual people of Israel, and Christ is coming soon to take us to the promised land. What events in your life do you remember the most? Can you recount the wonders and miracles God has done for you on your life's journey? Can you reflect on times you disobeyed God and how He acted? Tell others what God has done for you as you journey towards His kingdom. Remember, God is faithful. Let us dedicate ourselves fully to Jesus so that He may use us to save the lost.

✿The Holy Spirit likely guided Joshua in writing the concluding verses of Deuteronomy. Moses showed us what we should do when facing death—reflect on our lives, confess every sin we can remember, and seek assurance in God's mercy. Just as Moses and the thief on the cross were assured of salvation, no Christian should die without this certainty while Jesus intercedes for us in the

heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 4:14-16). However, waiting until the last moment to confess or repent is risky, as death can come suddenly through accidents or illness. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

✿Moses' last words and actions show his obedience to the LORD. Likewise, Jesus' last words were: "Father, not My will, but Yours be done" and "Father, into Your hands, I commit My spirit." This is the example to follow! Total surrender in loving obedience. That is my prayer for my life today. What about you?

✿God wants to give us eternal life freely. Let us be faithful so we can be with our Friend and Savior in eternity. Amen.

God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus! 🙏

Memory Verse: Exodus 33:11-14

[11-14] The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. … "If You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favor with You. Remember that this nation is Your people." The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Prayer: Thank You so much Lord, because we have found Your favor. Please show us Your ways, that we may know You. Remember us Lord, and may Your Presence go with us and give us rest. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw Moses climbing Mount Nebo, Pisgah, or Abarim, and then looking at the Promised Land.

DAY 54 (February 23)

TOPIC: Rahab and the Scarlet Cord

(Joshua 1-3)



✿ After Moses died, God appeared to Joshua and told him, "Moses, My servant, is dead; now therefore arise, cross over this Jordan River, you and all these people." Joshua took leadership, and the Lord showed him the boundaries of the land of Canaan. Then He assured him, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall lead these people to inherit the land. Be strong and very courageous; be careful to follow all the Law that My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth, but meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

✿ Many books have been written about leadership, but the best one is the Bible, which God Himself gave Joshua. Strong and courageous leaders who apply biblical principles in their leadership succeed, even if they are not popular or well-liked. Aaron was loved, but he failed terribly because he lacked firm principles—he gave in to the people's demands and made the golden calf. Someone once said, "If you want to please everyone, don't be a leader, sell ice cream instead." A leader needs courage, fearlessness, and complete obedience to Christ. Their food, clothing, leadership style, and conduct should reflect the Lord. Any leader should read Joshua 1:7-9 whenever they feel pressured.

✿ Joshua began his leadership by secretly sending two spies to scout Jericho. They went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab, who welcomed them kindly. The king of Jericho was informed that Israelite spies were in the land, so he sent men, likely soldiers, to Rahab's house, demanding that she hand them over. Rahab hid the spies under flax stalks on her roof and told the king's men, "Yes, they came to me, but I did not know where they were from. They have left—chase after them quickly, and you may catch them." Once the soldiers left, Rahab brought the spies out from their hiding place and told them: "I know that the Lord has given you this land, and that fear has fallen upon us. All the inhabitants are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard this, our hearts melted, and no one had any courage left because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."

✿ Then Rahab pleaded with them, "Swear to me by the Lord that since I have shown you kindness, you will show kindness to my family. Give me a sign that you will spare my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them and that you will save us from death." The spies promised, "Our lives for your lives! If you don't tell what we are doing, when the Lord gives us the land, we will treat you kindly and faithfully."

✿ Rahab then lowered them down from her window using a scarlet cord, for her house was built into the city wall. She advised them, "Go to the hills and hide there for three days until the soldiers return; then go on your way." The spies instructed her, "Tie this scarlet cord in your window and bring your family into your house. Anyone inside will be safe, but anyone who goes outside will be responsible for their own death." Rahab agreed and tied the scarlet cord to her window. The spies then went to the hills, hid for three days, and later reported back to Joshua: "The Lord has surely given us the land; all its inhabitants are melting with fear because of us."

✿ Though Rahab did not fully know God, she was saved because she helped His people and later became a believer. Hebrews 11:31 says, “By faith, Rahab the prostitute did not perish with the disobedient, for she had welcomed the spies in peace.” Showing kindness to those in need or to strangers is important. “God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them” (Hebrews 6:10). Even sinners outside the church can eventually become believers and be saved, while those inside the church can be lost. So never lose hope in anyone—as long as there is breath, there is hope.

✿ Furthermore, while the Israelites were commanded to completely destroy the wicked nations, they did not always do so. Some of these people later appeared in Scripture. Rahab and her family were spared from Jericho’s destruction and even found a place among God’s people. Rahab later married Salmon and became the great-grandmother of King David. She is even mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy! What an amazing story.

Questions:

1. Many people make mistakes in religious practices by praying or preaching too loudly and forcefully. How did God instruct Joshua after Moses died?
2. What did Rahab tell the spies?
3. What report did the spies bring back to the Israelites?
4. Why is Rahab considered a woman of faith?
5. Who was Boaz?
6. Why did God command Joshua to meditate on the Law day and night?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Joshua 1:7-9

[7-9] Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law My servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.
Prayer: Thank You Lord for commanding us to be strong and courageous, not afraid nor discouraged, because You are with us wherever we go. Help us to keep the Words of the Bible always on our lips day and night, and to do everything written in it. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the words that the Lord spoke to Joshua in Joshua chapter one.

DAY 55 (February 24)

TOPIC: Crossing the Jordan River

(Joshua 3-5)



✿ The Israelites left Shittim and camped near the Jordan River before crossing. The river was overflowing, with strong currents and deep waters. They had no boats or ships—some may have wondered, "How will we cross?" Then the leaders announced, "When you see the Ark of the Covenant being carried by the Levite priests, follow it. But keep a distance from it." Joshua told them to consecrate themselves because the Lord would do wonders among them.

✿ God told Joshua, "Today, I will exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses." He commanded the priests, "When you reach the Jordan's edge, stand still in the water." Joshua told the people, "When the priests carrying the Ark step into the river, the waters will stop flowing and stand up like a wall."

✿ When the priests stepped into the river, the waters stopped flowing, piling up in a heap. The riverbed became dry, and the entire nation crossed on dry ground. God then instructed Joshua to have 12 men, one from each tribe, collect 12 stones from the riverbed and place them in their camp as a memorial. The stones were to remind future generations of God's power.

✿ After the crossing, the river returned to normal. God had performed another miraculous water crossing, just as He had at the Red Sea. The place was named Gilgal.

✿ The Amorites, upon hearing how God dried up the Jordan, were filled with fear and lost all courage. The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, who had settled on the eastern side of Jordan, crossed over armed to help their fellow Israelites conquer Canaan.

Questions:

1. How did the Israelites cross the Jordan River?
2. Who went first?
3. How did God honor Joshua that day?
4. Where did the stones at Gilgal come from?
5. Why did the Amorites' hearts melt?
6. Do you remember any miracles God has done for you or your family?
7. Besides the Jordan, where else did God perform a water-crossing miracle?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Joshua 3:5-7

[5-7] Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you." Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them. And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses."

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the miracles we read today, showing that You can exalt a human being who obeys You. We pray that as we go to reach people, You may exalt us too, so that they may know that You are with

us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the crossing of the waters and the taking of twelve memorial stones to set them up.

DAY 56 (February 25)

TOPIC: Joshua Encounters the Commander of the Army

(Joshua 5 and 6)



✿ Their feet had now stepped into Canaan, the Promised Land, and they thanked God for delivering them from slavery and for leading them across the Jordan River. Even today, God leads us through various challenges. Joshua was instructed that all the men should be circumcised because they had been born and traveled through the wilderness without circumcision. Circumcision at that time was a covenant between them and God. The Israelites observed the Passover, and they began to cultivate the land and eat its produce. They ate unleavened bread and roasted grain, and from that moment, manna stopped falling because they were now eating from the land's harvest. Our God is the one who provides for our needs, so it is good to pray for our daily provision.

✿ When Joshua was near the city of Jericho, he withdrew from the people to seek wisdom and guidance from the Lord because he was about to face many nations in battle to take possession of the land. He saw the walls of Jericho and many other cities with fierce giants, experienced warriors compared to his people who had

been slaves. Suddenly, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua approached him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” The man replied, “Neither! But as the Commander of the Lord’s Army, I have now come.” That’s when Joshua realized who he was speaking to! He was the one whom Abraham had welcomed and the one who wrestled with Jacob until morning. Joshua fell facedown and worshiped Him. Once he recognized that this was the Lord, he asked, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” God had many plans for him, but the first thing He said was to fear the Lord. Then the Lord, who is the Commander of the Army of the Lord, told Joshua what He had told Moses: “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.



✿ Then the Lord gave Joshua the strategy to capture Jericho. The people of Jericho had tightly shut the gates of their city because of the Israelites. At that time, they lived in fortified cities with massive walls and large gates. They wondered why the Israelites were not attacking them, as they had prepared for war with their weapons and armor. The Lord told Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho, its king, and its mighty warriors into your hands.” He commanded them to march around the city once a day for six days. On the seventh day, they were to march around it seven times, but the first six times were to be in complete silence. Seven priests carrying seven trumpets

made from rams' horns were to go before the Ark of the Covenant. On the seventh day, after completing the sixth round, the priests were to blow their trumpets loudly, and then all the people were to shout with a great shout, and the walls would collapse on the spot, allowing the people to enter the city. Joshua called the priests and instructed them to take the Ark of the Covenant and do as they had been commanded.

✿ Without a doubt, the people of Jericho were puzzled as they watched from the walls, perhaps asking themselves, "What is happening here? These people are just marching silently every day!" The Lord had given them the city. When the walls fell, they entered the city, defeated its inhabitants, and took it over. They destroyed everything in the city. They were told that the city and its possessions were to be dedicated to the Lord. However, Rahab and her family were spared because she had hidden the spies. The two spies went to bring out Rahab and her family along with their belongings, and then they burned the city down. The valuable items like gold, silver, and bronze were to be taken into the treasury of the Lord and kept as sacred.

✿ The Lord resolves our problems, simplifies difficult matters, and turns challenges into blessings. We should not walk around complaining, gossiping, or shouting, because the battle belongs to the Lord. However, we must fully surrender—what the English call surrender. The internet has opened up an entirely new way of communicating and sharing the gospel. When used correctly, it can help us bring down the "walls of Jericho" and enter into new territories. We must seek counsel from God through prayer and fasting. My church offers teachings on the Sabbath through Facebook and YouTube, and people from all over the world follow along. Many other ministries provide Q&A sessions, music, health guidance, counseling, evangelism, and parenting advice. Some people discover Christianity through radio, television, and websites. We need to learn how to use these tools effectively to reach the world, in addition to traditional methods like visiting people door to door.

✿ Another important point is that the land was divided among the Israelites by Joshua and Eleazar, the high priest, at Shiloh before the Lord at the entrance of the Tabernacle, which had been set up there. This showed that the true and rightful owner of the land was the Lord Himself. Even today, if we trace the ownership of the land we claim to possess, going back to the original owners, we would ultimately find that it belongs to God. We are not the true owners; we are merely tenants or stewards, and one day the Lord will ask us how we have used His resources and for what purpose.

✿ Questions:

- Do you discipline your mind to stay focused when praying?
- Daily prayer is essential for growing in grace and for spiritual life itself, just as physical food is necessary for our bodily health.
- We should train ourselves to lift our thoughts to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; through sincere and persistent effort, habits will form that make prayer easier.
- Who gave victory over Jericho?
- What did He command them to do for the walls to fall?
- Who provided food for the Israelites?
- What kind of food did they cultivate?
- Who is the Commander of the Lord's Army, and what did He say to Joshua?
- Why did the two spies return to Rahab?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus.

Memory Verse: Joshua 5:13-15

[13-15] Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a Man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, "Are You for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," He replied, "but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked Him, "What message does my Lord have for His servant?" The Commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your provision and blessings. Forgive our sins. We ask today, what do You say to us, Your servants? In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Joshua meets the Commander of the Army of the LORD and takes off his sandals.

DAY 57 (February 26)

TOPIC: The Sin of Achan—No One Is an Island

(Joshua 7)



✿ After the Israelites saw Jericho fall, they surely believed they would quickly conquer the entire land. From Jericho, they went to fight against the small city of Ai. Joshua sent men to spy out the land. They reported back that Ai had only a few people and advised that Joshua should not trouble all the soldiers but send only 2,000 or 3,000 men. These people, at that time, had no guns or missiles.

✿ When the men went to battle, they were severely defeated; 36 of them were killed, and the rest fled. When they reached the slope, their hearts melted in fear and became like water. Seeing this, Joshua tore his clothes, overwhelmed with distress, and fell face down before the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD until evening, along with the elders of Israel. They put dust on their heads. Joshua asked the LORD, who had brought them across the Jordan

River, why He had done so only to hand them over to the Amorites to be destroyed. He lamented, “If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan!” He feared that after the Israelites had fled before their enemies, the surrounding nations would hear about it, surround them, and wipe out their name from the earth. “What will You do for Your great Name?” Joshua asked.



✿ The LORD answered Joshua, “Stand up! Why have you fallen face down?” He told him that Israel had sinned, broken the covenant, stolen some of the devoted things, and hidden them among their possessions. This was why they could not stand before their enemies and had turned their backs in defeat—because they were under a curse. The LORD told them He would not be with them anymore unless they destroyed the stolen devoted things. Joshua was instructed to consecrate the people and prepare them for the next day. God told Joshua that the stolen devoted thing was among them and that they would not be able to stand against their enemies until it was removed. Perhaps Achan was hiding in his tent, thinking no one knew about his wrongdoing.

✿ The following morning, the tribes were brought forward, and the tribe of Judah was chosen. Then, clan by clan, the Zerahite clan was selected. Family by family, Achan was finally singled out. Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and confess to Him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” Achan admitted his sin against the LORD, explaining that he had taken a beautiful Babylonian robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a gold bar weighing 50 shekels. “I coveted them and took them,” he confessed. “They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.” Joshua sent men to Achan’s tent, and they found the stolen items. They brought them before Joshua. Achan, his stolen goods, his livestock, his family, and all his possessions were taken, and Joshua declared, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.” Achan and his family were stoned to death, and a large pile of stones

was placed over him. Today, we cannot hide our sins—God calls us to confess and forsake them.

✿ After this, the Israelites went to Ai with 30,000 soldiers and captured the city by following the LORD's instructions. They set an ambush and pretended to flee as they had before. When the people of Ai pursued them, the hidden ambush forces entered the city and set it on fire. When the people of Ai saw their city burning, they were trapped, surrounded by the Israelites. God delivered Ai into their hands. Joshua built an altar to the LORD on Mount Ebal and offered a thanksgiving sacrifice.

✿ There are many lessons in this chapter. First, it appears that Joshua did not seek God's guidance before attacking Ai; he assumed it would be easy because it was a small city. Only after the disaster did he become confused and fearful and then cry out to God. This shows that their strength was not in their military power but in God's help. Achan, on the other hand, did not take God's commands seriously, which brought destruction upon the nation and his family. Sin has severe consequences, and we need God's help every moment to take the right steps to avoid it. Lord Jesus, we need You to live sinless lives in this corrupt world. We all need to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6). Let us be a source of blessing to our families and not a source of trouble. Do you agree? No one is an island—our decisions affect others. Everyone should rely on God as their guide. Achan put his interests above others, and his choice caused the deaths of 36 soldiers and dishonored God's work.

✿ True revival and reformation, led by the Holy Spirit, transform our minds to reflect the mind of Christ. What once attracted our sinful nature becomes unimportant. Our main goal becomes pleasing God and blessing others who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us never delay confessing our sins until things fall apart, and let us avoid coveting what belongs to others. Success cannot come if sin is in the camp. "You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3). We must follow God's plans, not expect Him to follow ours.

✿ Let us watch and pray, asking at every step, "Lord, what should I do about this? Please show me what I am missing, and reveal Your will to me." May our prayers reach heaven and not just the roof of our house! The greatest danger in the church is not from open enemies, unbelievers, or those who mock it, but from those who claim Christ with their lips yet live contrary to His ways.

These people hinder God's blessings and bring weakness to His people. When sin is confessed, God takes human mistakes and turns them into blessings.

✿ A prayer does not need to be long, loud, or filled with groaning to be effective. Praying does not mean informing God of something He does not already know. The Lord knows the secrets of every heart. Our prayers do not need to be lengthy or shouted. God reads hidden thoughts. We can pray in secret, and the One who sees in secret will hear and reward us openly.

✿ Questions: Why did Joshua fall face down? What was Achan's sin, and who saw him commit it? What method did God tell Joshua to use to find the sinner? Why is coveting a sin? What did Joshua say to Achan? Why was Achan's family also destroyed? How many soldiers were sent to capture Ai? What does this story teach us? To whom did the possessions of Jericho belong? Why is the 10th commandment difficult to recognize when broken?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Joshua 7:20-22

[20-22] Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylon, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath.

Prayer: Lord, keep us from greed for wealth and from lies. Thank You for Your generosity today. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama of Joshua falling facedown, the hidden sin of Achan, and the choice he made. Taking money and hiding it in bags, etc. Tell that everything will be exposed in the end (Luke 12:2-3).

DAY 58 (February 27)

TOPIC: Joshua Deceived by the Gibeonites and the Sun Stands Still

(Joshua 10-21)

✿ The Canaanites lived in many small kingdoms. When the Gibeonites saw how nations were falling before Israel, they devised a scheme. They gathered supplies and set out to deceive Israel. They carried worn-out sacks on their donkeys, old and patched wineskins, worn-out and mended sandals, and old clothes. They also took dry, moldy bread. When they reached the Israelites, they approached Joshua, pretending to be messengers from a distant land, and requested to make a covenant with them. At first, Joshua was suspicious, asking how they could make a treaty if they lived nearby. The Gibeonites claimed they had come as servants because they had heard of the LORD's great deeds in Egypt and against Sihon and Og.

✿ Joshua Did Not Ask the LORD for the Truth About the Gibeonites, and So He Made a Covenant With Them

Even today, this remains a problem for us—we make decisions without asking the LORD through prayer, going against His instructions, and only turn to Him when we face trouble. After three days, the Israelites discovered that the Gibeonites had lied because, after traveling for three days, they reached their cities. The Israelites did not attack the Gibeonites because they had already sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, that they would not harm them. The leaders decided to punish them by making them servants—water carriers and woodcutters for the entire assembly.

Joshua called them and asked, "Why did you deceive us?" They responded that they were afraid because they knew the LORD had given the land to Israel as He had commanded His servant Moses.

The Gibeonites accepted their fate, saying, "We are in your hands; do with us whatever seems good and right to you." As a result, they served by carrying water for the assembly and the altar for many years. Working at the altar was a blessing because it allowed them to see the picture of salvation firsthand. Many believe that Gentiles were never allowed into the temple, but here we see that they were given a unique opportunity to serve God, as His presence was there!

✿ The Five Kings of the Amorites Attack Gibeon

The king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek, heard that Joshua had taken Ai and destroyed it completely, just like Jericho. He also heard that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, even though Gibeon was a great city with mighty warriors. So, he sent messages to four other kings, forming a total of five Amorite kingdoms, to attack Gibeon.

The Gibeonites sent a message to Joshua at Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon us, your servants! Come quickly, save us, and help us!” The LORD gave Joshua permission to go, and Joshua marched with his army overnight and surprised the enemy. The LORD threw the Amorites into confusion, and the Israelites defeated them. Many more were killed by a great hailstorm from the LORD. As the battle continued, Joshua saw that darkness was approaching. He prayed to God and commanded, “Sun, stand still!” And the sun stopped, and the moon stood still until the Israelites had defeated their enemies.

How did this happen? We don’t know, but God, who created the sun, has the power to command it. The sun remained in the sky and did not set for about a whole day. The moon also stood still. There has never been another day like it, before or since, when the LORD listened to a human being in such a way. The LORD fought for Israel.

The five kings fled and hid in a cave at Makkedah. When Joshua heard this, he ordered the cave entrance to be sealed with large stones. Later, the kings were brought out and punished. Israel then continued to conquer all the cities of these five kingdoms—Jerusalem, Hebron, Lachish, Jarmuth, and Eglon—bringing them under Israelite control.

✿ Trusting in God’s Miracles

Everyone in Canaan at that time knew that the sun had stood still. God had intervened. Joshua and his army did not have the strength to win on their own. Likewise, we should not try to fight our battles with our own strength but trust in God’s supernatural intervention.

Do you believe that God still performs miracles today? If so, look to Him with faith—He is the God who acts! This great miracle shows that creation is under the control of the Creator. Satan tries to hide God’s greatness, but when humanity works with divinity, the result is a lasting victory.

Joshua did his part as a leader and fully trusted in God’s promises. He was not afraid. When we walk with the LORD in the light of His Word, we will accomplish the impossible. The LORD never fails in His promises.

Our prayer today is:
“LORD, fight our battles for us, and we will stand still and see Your salvation. Thank You for fighting for us and giving us victory. Just as You stopped the sun for an entire day so that Your people could complete the task You gave them, You are also willing to perform any miracle needed to help us complete the work of spreading the Gospel to the world. You long to see the mission accomplished. Let us cooperate with You!”

✿ The Division of the Land
After the battles, Joshua divided the land among the tribes. The Levites did not receive a land inheritance because they were dedicated to serving God. Cities of refuge were established for those who killed someone accidentally, where they could stay until the high priest died.
Joshua himself received an inheritance—a city in the mountains of Ephraim, which was once desolate. He rebuilt it and settled there. He demonstrated humility by not choosing the best land for himself.
The Levites eventually received their cities and lived there with their livestock. Joshua declared, “Not one of the LORD’s good promises to Israel has failed; every one was fulfilled!”
The Book of Jasher, which is available online, describes this event in chapter 88!

✿ Caleb’s Faith and Strength at 85
At 85 years old, Caleb still had his strength and said, “Give me this mountain” (Joshua 14:12). He had been promised this inheritance at 45 years old, and the promise was fulfilled 40 years later because he continued to love and serve God.

The lesson for us is that whatever God has promised will surely come to pass. We just need to be patient, trust Him, and obey Him. His will shall be accomplished!

✿ The Boldness of Caleb’s Daughter, Aksah
Caleb’s daughter, Aksah, boldly asked her father for land, and later she married Othniel, the future judge.
Likewise, we should not hesitate to ask our Heavenly Father for what we need. God’s plan for Israel was for every person to have land to avoid poverty and learn the value of work.
However, we must be careful not to command God in our prayers. Our prayers should not be demands but humble requests, seeking His will.

✿ Questions for Reflection:

Why was Joshua deceived?

What was the punishment of the Gibeonites?

Which nations did the five kings come from?

Why did the sun stand still?

How did Joshua say God fulfilled His promises?

What mistake did Joshua and the elders make?

How did they resolve the case of the Gibeonites?

How did the Gibeonites feel about their punishment?

Why is it important to ask God for guidance and allow Him to rule over every aspect of our lives, even in small matters?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Joshua 10:10-12

[10-12] On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the miracles You perform for us each day. Forgive our sins, help us to know that You have all power and hear our prayers. We glorify You, our Lord. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama of the journey of the Gibeonites and their deception – wearing old clothes and carrying moldy bread.

DAY 59 (February 28)

TOPIC: The Last Days of Joshua

(Joshua 21-24)



Elder Caleb and Joshua were at the edge of the Jordan, ready to cross for the first time, but they had to return with the people for 40 years, even though they were not the ones who had sinned. Now, after wandering in the wilderness, they were dividing Canaan. Caleb was now 85 years old. This mighty warrior requested a mountain so he could conquer it. The mountain was Hebron, inhabited by the Anakim, and he took it. He declared that whoever would help him capture another city, Kiriath-sepher, would receive his daughter Achsah as a wife. Othniel, who became Israel's first judge, conquered the city and was given Achsah. She then asked her father for land with springs of water, and he granted it.
Joshua and Caleb did not ask for the most fertile or best places, nor were they greedy, even though they were the eldest among the Israelites.

✿ God wanted everyone to have land for farming, so there would be no poverty, and agriculture was meant to be the foundation of education. No human should ever fear farming. In heaven, people will have homes in the city of Jerusalem and also in the countryside, where each person will have a garden. This was God's original plan from Eden. Adam was a king, yet the

first command he received—even before being given a wife—was to tend the garden. However, this work will not be burdensome; it will bring great joy to see things grow, with beautiful gardens full of food and flowers!
Our prayer today is that God grants us the grace to remain faithful until the end, for He who promised is faithful and will surely fulfill His word. As long as we continue in obedience, our salvation is secure. Making decisions by voting is not always necessary today, as we are not led in the same way as in biblical times. Instead, we must pray and have a committee of carefully chosen representatives to vote on behalf of others, while everyone prays earnestly that God's will be done. God will surely guide His church.

✿ Joshua ensured that cities of refuge were established, as Moses had instructed. Six cities were designated—three on one side of the Jordan and three on the other—for those who accidentally killed someone. These cities were well-known and easily accessible, about a day's journey away, and possibly located on hills so they could be seen. This law taught people patience and self-control, protecting the innocent or those who had killed unintentionally. Such cases could include accidental deaths, such as road accidents or a tree falling on someone unexpectedly.

✿ Many people ask why a loving God would destroy the Canaanites. These people were given 400 years of probation—the door of mercy was open to them—but they clung to their idolatry, which would have negatively influenced Israel and others. Joshua executed judgment upon them, which they had brought upon themselves. "Joshua took all the cities of these kings and struck them with the sword, destroying them completely, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded" (Joshua 11:12).
Why did God give these instructions to Moses? The Canaanites (also called Amorites) had a set probationary period of 400 years. At the end of this time, they were to be destroyed (Genesis 15:13-16). Indeed, there is a certain level of wickedness that, once exceeded, brings divine judgment. Just as in the time of the Flood, Sodom, or Canaan, their sins had reached extreme levels of cruelty and immorality.

✿ The Canaanites practiced child sacrifice, serpent worship, and temple prostitution of both genders. God endured these evils for 400 years! Can you imagine how many children were burned alive in those centuries? Truly, the Almighty was patient and sorrowful. Today, we hear similar atrocities in the news, such as child abductions, rape, and killings by terrorist groups like Boko Haram.
One key lesson is that God is always just and merciful. Sometimes, a few must die to prevent the death of many. A human left unchecked, armed with weapons and evil intentions, would commit unspeakable horrors without the

restraint of God's Spirit. God is not unjust—let us trust Him. One day, He will explain what He was dealing with, and we, like children who do not understand our Father's challenges, will sit at His feet, knowing He always acted in the best way possible. Sin will never rise again!

✿ There is a limit to evil that this world cannot surpass—God has set that boundary. Currently, God is patiently enduring the increasing rebellion of the world. Soon, in the Great Cry, God's people will give a final warning, saying:

> "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins or receive her plagues. For her sins have reached heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:4-5).

After this, "the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. The heavens will disappear with a great noise, the elements will melt with intense heat, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).
Let us not forget that the same God who will destroy the world is the one who came down and died a cruel death on the cross to save it. His judgment does not mean His love has diminished. He is perfect, and He is love—not just that He has love, but He is love.

✿ When Joshua grew old, he gathered the people, just as Moses did before his death. He reviewed the history of Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldeans, to Israel's enslavement, their deliverance, the crossing of the Red Sea, and all of God's miraculous victories. He then called the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, telling them that they had kept the Lord's commands and could now return to their cities across the Jordan. He urged them to carefully obey the laws given by Moses, to love the Lord, walk in His ways, keep His commands, and serve Him wholeheartedly. Joshua blessed them and sent them home with livestock, gold, silver, bronze, iron, and other riches to share with their brothers.

✿ These two and a half tribes later built a large altar, though there was supposed to be only one at Shiloh, where the Levites lived. When the rest of Israel heard this, they gathered at Shiloh and sent a delegation. Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron, along with ten leaders, confronted them:
"What is this trespass against the Lord of Israel? How could you rebel against Him by building another altar? Was the sin at Baal-Peor not enough? If you turn away from the Lord, He will be angry with all of us!"
They reminded them that Achan's sin had caused disaster for many.

✿ The Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh responded, saying:
"The Lord knows! If this is rebellion, do not spare us. This altar is not for

sacrifices but a witness for us and future generations that we worship the Lord of Israel."
Phinehas acknowledged this, saying otherwise, Israel would have punished them. He and the other leaders returned in peace, and Israel continued to worship God at Shiloh during Joshua's time.

✿ Joshua called the people again, saying:
"I am now old. Be strong and obey everything written in the Law. Do not turn aside or follow the gods of these nations. The Lord has driven them out before you. One of you will chase a thousand, for the Lord fights for you. But if you turn back and mix with these nations, He will no longer drive them out. Instead, they will be snares, thorns, and whips in your sides."

He added:
"I am about to go the way of all the earth. Choose today whom you will serve—whether the gods of your ancestors or the gods of the Amorites. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
The people quickly vowed to serve the Lord, but they did not remain faithful. This is our problem today—may we pray for the grace to both speak and act. Joshua made a covenant with them and set up a large stone as a witness.

✿ Pray with Faith
Align your life with your prayers so you can receive the blessings you seek. Do not let your faith weaken—blessings are received according to the faith exercised. "According to your faith, let it be done for you" (Matthew 9:29). "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Matthew 21:22). Pray, believe, and rejoice!
Let the sincerity of heart, honesty, and faith be the hallmark of your prayers. The Lord is ready to do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." (Ephesians 3:20) Speak it; pray for it. Do not talk about unbelief. We cannot afford to let Satan see that he has the power to darken our faces and sadden our lives.

✿ Questions:

1. What is Othniel remembered for?

2. Why were the Israelites upset when they heard that an altar had been built in Shiloh?

3. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge?

4. Why is it important to give our hearts to the Lord?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Joshua 21:44-45

[44-45] The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as He had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving us rest on every side. I am grateful that not one of Your good promises to us has ever failed. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama of Joshua bidding farewell to the Israelites and telling them: "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

DAY 60 (March 1)

TOPIC: Choose for Yourselves Today

(Joshua 24 & Judges 1)

✿ God made a covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3-6 and 20:1-7), and Moses renewed this covenant with them before his death (Deuteronomy 29 & 30). In this chapter, Joshua also renews the covenant before his approaching death. He urges the Israelites to choose the Lord as their God forever. Three times, they vow to remain faithful to the Lord (24:16, 21, 24). Joshua then writes these things in the Book of the Law and sets up a stone monument as a witness to their vow (verses 26-27). The people kept their promises throughout the lifetime of all those who had witnessed the great things the Lord had done for them.

✿ Today, we must also remember the many gifts that the Lord has given us. Jesus came to live and die for us. He became our Mediator in heaven. He promised that He would return and take us to our heavenly Promised Land.



We should constantly reflect on His gifts with grateful hearts, renewing our dedication to Him. Joshua then blessed the people and later died at the age of 110, just like Joseph. He was buried in his city, Timnath Serah. The Israelites continued serving the Lord throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lives of the elders who outlived him—those who had witnessed all the great works the Lord had done for Israel. Eleazar, the high priest, also died, and Phinehas took over as high priest.

✿ It seems that the Israelites grew weary of driving out their enemies and destroying their idols. They were supposed to make this part of Palestine a holy land of righteousness so that they would shine and reflect the glory of God in a land filled with wickedness. The tribe of Judah drove out the people of the mountains. After Joshua's death, they pursued Adoni-Bezek, the cruel king of the Canaanites, cutting off his thumbs and big toes. He admitted that he had done the same to many others and caused much suffering. The people of Judah fought and captured the mountain city, but they failed to do the same in the valley because they feared the iron chariots of their enemies. They forgot that it was God who fought for them, not their own strength or the chariots of their enemies.

The first chapter of the Book of Judges shows that the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of the land. The Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, the place of weeping, and told them that the Lord had promised never to break His covenant, but they had broken it by failing to destroy the idols of the land. "Why have you not obeyed My voice?" the Angel asked. Then He declared that because of this, their enemies would not be driven out but would become like thorns in their sides. The people wept loudly and offered sacrifices to the Lord there.

✿ Questions:

1. What is Othniel remembered for?

2. Why were the Israelites upset when they heard that an altar had been built in Shiloh?

3. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge?

4. Why is it important to give our hearts to the Lord?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Judges 1:28

[28] When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely.

Prayer: Thank You for protecting us from the evil one. Help us to be people who do what You want and not what we ourselves desire. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss the work of the Judges and the tasks they performed.

DAY 61 (March 2)

TOPIC: The First Judges and Israel's Rebellion

(Judges 3-6)



✿ The judges served as leaders of the nation under God's guidance. Israel did not have a president or a king; rather, the LORD Himself was their King. There were 15 judges mentioned in the Bible. A seemingly endless cycle is observed in the book of Judges: abandoning God, becoming captives of enemies, crying out to God for help, deliverance granted by God, and then returning to disobedience. Selfishness recurred when they stopped caring and narrating the great deeds of God's faithfulness! Moses and Joshua had died. This generation seemed to have a great opportunity since they had reached the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey. However, they became complacent and did not continue driving out their enemies. Likewise, if we allow anything in our lives that God has commanded us to completely destroy, it will become a thorn in our flesh. If we let the enemy of selfishness and idolatry grow stronger, he will ultimately destroy us. What "Baal" in your life

are you tempted to worship today? Obedience out of fear is always short-lived, but obedience driven by love is lasting. Let us fix our eyes on the cross so that we may develop love for God and people. Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15).

✿ The first judge was Othniel, who married Caleb’s daughter, Achsah, and ruled Israel for 40 years. After he died, Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and He delivered them into the hands of Moab, and they served its king. When they cried out to the LORD, who is full of mercy, He raised up a judge named Ehud from the tribe of Benjamin. Ehud blew the trumpet and declared that the LORD had given their enemies into their hands. They struck down the Moabites, and Israel had peace for 80 years. After Ehud, the Israelites did evil again, and the LORD delivered them into the hands of King Jabin of Canaan, whose army commander was Sisera. When the Israelites cried out to God, He raised up Deborah, a prophetess, to be their judge. She sat under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. Deborah called Barak and told him to go fight Sisera, assuring him that God would give him victory. Barak hesitated and asked Deborah to go with him, saying, “If you don’t go with me, I will not go.” Deborah agreed but told him that the honor would go to a woman.

✿ Deborah went to battle with Barak. She told Barak, “Get up! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?” The LORD confused Sisera and all his chariots and army before Barak. Sisera fled on foot and reached the tent of Jael. Jael welcomed him and assured him not to be afraid. He asked for water because he was thirsty, but she gave him milk. Sisera asked Jael to stand at the tent’s entrance and deny his presence if anyone asked. He then fell into a deep sleep, likely exhausted from battle and distress. Jael took a tent peg, approached him quietly, and drove it into his forehead. When Barak came searching for Sisera, Jael called him and showed him the dead Sisera with a tent peg in his head. This is how God defeated King Jabin of Canaan. Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory, glorifying God for delivering them from their enemies.

✿ Deborah judged Israel for 40 years. Again, the Israelites did evil, and the LORD handed them over to the Midianites. They fell into idol worship and wickedness, and when they were enslaved and oppressed, they cried out to God and were given a judge. But they soon forgot their mission to be a light to the nations, and the cycle repeated itself over and over. Are you feeling weak today? Has your own disobedience crushed your heart? Do not lose hope. Not only does God discipline those He loves, but He also delights in setting them free. Will you surrender your weakness to God? He has plans not only to deliver you but also to empower you to rescue others.

✿ Israel's story is our story, and the God of Israel is also our God. When we call upon Him, He hears us and comes to save us. Can you testify to this in your own life? John summarizes it by saying, "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world." (1 John 2:16). Let us clearly understand our place in the world: we are born in sin, and God knows this. He is not waiting to catch us in our guilt but is seeking a way to save us. If we do not live by God's Word, we invite disaster upon ourselves. Are you feeling weak today? Has your own disobedience crushed your heart? Do not lose hope. Not only does God discipline those He loves, but He also delights in setting them free. Will you surrender your weakness to God? He has plans not only to lift you out of the pit but also to enable you to rescue others.

✿ Like the Israelites, we often have to go through hardships before we turn back to God. This is also the story of the prodigal son. As we pray for those who are lost, God does everything He can to bring His children back, but we are free to reject His call. Ignoring messages that God sees as important for His people in these last days is self-destructive. That is why the Bible commands, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets and you will be successful."

✿ While we should sing about what God has done in the past, we should also sing a new song about what God is doing in our lives today. Too often in my life, I fail to write down or even recognize the great works of God happening right now. And when I fail to remember how God is leading me today, I start to fear the future. Let us sing to the LORD a new song—a personal song of deep experience, testifying to how God is working in our lives today. Even God Himself sings over us: "The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17). The God of war fought for Israel—not because of their military skills, numbers, or weapons, but because of His divine intervention.

✿ Questions: Yes, Christ has become the mediator between man and GOD (the veil between). He is also the channel of blessing between GOD and man. He has united divinity and humanity. People should cooperate with Him for their own salvation and then make every effort, with steadfast and sincere dedication, to save those who are perishing.

What was the name of the first judge?

How many years did the second judge rule?

How can we compare a judge to a country's president?

Who was Jael?

How many years did Deborah rule?

Why did Sisera get off his iron chariot?

What things, if not abandoned or destroyed, will bring us destruction?

✿ May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus! 

Memory Verse: Judges 17:6

[6] In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

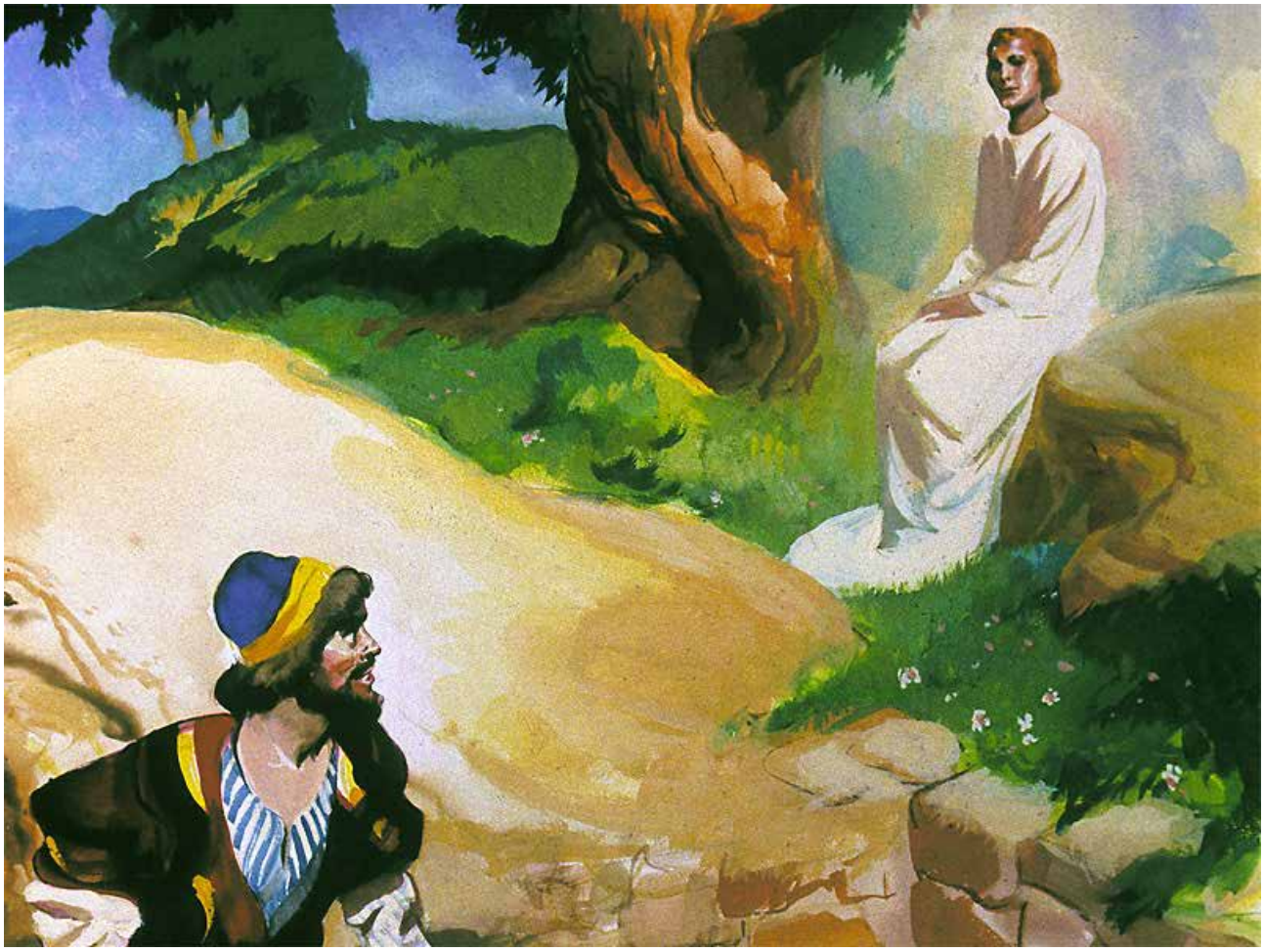
Prayer: Lord, help us to seek Your face and not just do what seems right in our own eyes. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Tell the young people and children that in the Book of Judges there was a season known as "The Days of the Judges." There was no one in authority or leadership, so people did whatever they wanted, which led to bad things happening. Play a game such as soccer or another group activity. Set rules and boundaries, then let everyone play doing whatever they want – without following the rules!

DAY 62 (March 3)

Gideon – Are You Ready to Remove 31,700 Things from Your Life?

(Judges 6-9)



✿ After seven years under the oppression of the Midianites, things became so bad that people fled their homes and lived in caves or holes in the ground. Whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and Amalekites would invade, destroy their produce, and take their livestock—sheep, donkeys, and cattle. They entered their land and ruined it. Israel was greatly impoverished by the Midianites, and they cried out to the LORD. The LORD sent a prophet to remind them that He was the LORD their God, who had brought them out of slavery.

An angel of the LORD sat under the oak tree in Ophrah, where Gideon, also called Jerubbaal, was threshing wheat in secret to hide it from the Midianites. The angel greeted him, saying, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” Gideon

questioned why they were suffering if the LORD was truly with them. He asked, “Where are His wonders that our ancestors told us about?” The LORD turned to him and commanded him to go in His strength and save Israel from the hand of the Midianites, assuring him, “Am I not the one sending you?”

Although Gideon was called a mighty warrior, he was fearful. He made excuses, saying that his clan was the weakest and that he was the least in his father’s household. The angel assured him that the LORD would be with him and that he would strike down the Midianites as if they were a single man. The battle belongs to the LORD!

What battle are you facing today? What enemy has gathered against you? Look up, my friend! The One who helps in times of trouble is the LORD! The battle is not ours; it is the LORD’s, and He will save us.

We often count numbers: How many teachers? How many pastors? How many elders? How much money is in the bank account? Is there enough food? Are there enough volunteers? Like Gideon and Philip (when feeding the 5,000), we rely on numbers and resources. Humans see strength in numbers. But it is not by numbers but by the power of God that the work will be accomplished. We must choose to be among the few that God will use.

✿ Gideon asked the angel for a sign that he had found favor. He prepared a young goat, unleavened bread, and broth, then brought them to the angel. The angel touched the offering with the tip of his staff, and fire came from the rock, consuming the sacrifice. Then the angel disappeared. Gideon realized it was the angel of the LORD and feared he would die, but he was reassured, “Do not be afraid; you will not die.” Gideon built an altar to the LORD.
That night, the LORD told him to tear down his father’s altar to Baal and offer a bull as a sacrifice. Fearing his family and the townspeople—because his father worshipped idols—he did it at night. In the morning, the people saw Baal’s altar destroyed and the bull sacrificed. They asked, “Who did this?”

✿ The Midianites gathered in the valley to attack, but the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew the trumpet to call the people. Gideon asked God for a sign to confirm that He would save Israel. He placed a fleece on the threshing floor and prayed that if the fleece was wet with dew while the ground remained dry, he would know that God would save Israel. In the morning, the fleece was soaked, and he wrung out a bowlful of water. He asked for another sign—this time, that the fleece would be dry while the ground was covered in dew. The next morning, it happened just as he had asked.



✿ People gathered under Gideon's leadership, reaching 32,000. But the LORD said the army was too large. If they won with such a large force, they might boast that they had saved themselves. So, Gideon told those who were fearful to leave—22,000 left, leaving only 10,000. Even then, the LORD said the army was still too large. He instructed Gideon to take them to the water and separate them based on how they drank. Those who lapped like dogs were kept; those who knelt to drink were sent home. Only 300 remained. The LORD gave the Midianites into their hands.

The 300 were divided into three companies, each given a trumpet and an empty jar with a torch inside. At Gideon's signal, they blew their trumpets, broke the jars, and held up their torches. The LORD caused confusion in the Midianite camp, and they turned their swords against each other and fled.
The Israelites wanted Gideon to rule over them, but he refused, saying, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you." The land had peace for 40 years.

✿ Sometimes, suffering is caused by sinful choices. Sometimes, it happens because we live in a broken, sinful world. Other times, there is no obvious reason. Do you want to know why suffering exists? The truth is, humans often do not have complete answers. One day, God will explain everything. But the more important question is, "How can I grow through this suffering?" This

perspective transforms suffering into a treasure.
One clear lesson in this story is that God does not call the strong or the most qualified—He calls those who will bring Him glory. There is nothing in us that makes us worthy, but when we surrender to Him, He directs us. We need gentleness, patience, and kindness, but we also need courage!

Even though the Israelites repeatedly brought trouble upon themselves by doing evil, God responded with grace and delivered them when they cried out. God is merciful and compassionate. This gives us hope. Life on this planet keeps getting worse, so let us cry out to the LORD for deliverance.

✿ What we need now is the latter rain of the Holy Spirit to finish the work of the gospel. When the work is complete, Jesus will return.
Let us pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. But we must confess, humble ourselves, repent, and pray earnestly to meet the conditions for receiving His blessings. Revival comes in response to prayer. We have been entrusted with a mission, and we must run with it to bring restoration!

✿ The disciples still did not understand the limitless power and resources of the Savior. Jesus told them, “Until now, you have not asked for anything in My name.” (John 16:24) He explained that their success would come through praying for strength and grace in His name. He would stand before the Father and intercede for them. The humble prayer of a believer is presented by Jesus as His own desire on their behalf.

Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. Even if it is not eloquently spoken, if it comes from the heart, it ascends to the Holy Place where Jesus ministers. He presents it to the Father in perfect words, free from offense, harshness, or stuttering.

Questions for Reflection:

How did the angel appear to Gideon?

What three signs did Gideon request?

How did the army reduce to 300? What percentage is that of 32,000?

Why was Gideon afraid of his father’s household?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Judges 6:12-14.

[12-14] The Angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

Gideon said to him, "Pardon me, my lord, but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all His wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for helping us even when we have sinned and failed You like the people we read about in the Bible. We pray that You protect us from sin as You promised in Genesis 3:15. Thank You that You are always ready to help us and to remind us to ask for forgiveness and repent. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Drama
Materials: Use chairs for the Midianite camp, paper trumpets, and paper torches.
Instructions:

Arrange the chairs for the Midianite camp.

Tell the children that they are Gideon's army.

Lead them in quietly sneaking around the camp.

When you blow your trumpet, they blow theirs and shout, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon! (Judges 7:20)."

Tell them to "pick up" their torches, then "drop" their jars (cups), and shout battle cries.

DAY 63 (March 4)

TOPIC: Jephthah and the Vow of Sacrifice

(Judges 9-13)



✿ Gideon was wise and did not like conflict. When the people of Ephraim confronted him, asking why he had not called them to fight against the Midianites, he responded humbly. He told them that their contribution was greater than his and that they had already defeated two Midianite kings. He asked, "What have I done in comparison to you?" This answer calmed their anger. Often, when someone accomplishes something great, people want to elevate them as leaders, just as they did with Gideon. We tend to glorify men and women who have done great things, expecting even more from them. This puts them at risk of pride and slows down the progress that God desires in their lives and ours.

✿ Have we put our leaders in greater trials by praising them excessively, leading them to pride? Why is it so difficult for us to make God our leader? He has proven His faithfulness, guidance, and commitment to fulfilling His covenant again and again. Let us continue to lift our leaders in prayer so that they may remain humble servants of God. May the Lord forgive any

leader among us who has developed pride that ruins their testimony of God's goodness and lead them to repentance. Time is short, brothers and sisters—let our lives be a testimony of the joy of our salvation in Christ Jesus.

✿ Gideon avoided civil war with his fellow Israelites by responding to the Ephraimites wisely (Judges 8:2-3). The essence of his response was that his accomplishments were nothing compared to what they had achieved in killing the two Midianite commanders, Oreb and Zeeb. This pacified their anger. The Bible says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1). Could arguments, divorces, and conflicts among friends be avoided if someone responded gently? It is not easy to give a soft answer when someone accuses you unfairly. Our natural reaction is to retaliate, leading to explosive conflicts.

✿ However, if we pray for the grace to respond with gentleness, as Gideon did, many conflicts can be avoided. When angered, ask for the grace to calm tensions with a gentle response. "You cannot change how people perceive you or what they say about you. What you can change is how you respond." Only by God's grace can we react positively to negativity without exploding in anger. "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." This is my prayer today.

Although Gideon later fell into the sin of making an ephod that became an idol for Israel and had many concubines in his later years, God still used his broken humanity for His purposes and glory. This does not excuse sin, for God desires to save us from our sins and build a relationship with us step by step, helping us seek His righteousness through sanctification.

✿ When Gideon died, the Israelites turned away from God and worshipped other gods like Baal. They forgot the Lord who had saved them from their enemies. Then came Abimelech, who sought power. He hired worthless and reckless men to follow him and killed all his seventy brothers. This was evil and sinful. The youngest brother, Jotham, escaped and hid in fear of Abimelech. Abimelech later died when a woman dropped a millstone on his head from a tower. Thus, God avenged the evil Abimelech had done to his brothers and the people of Shechem.

Desiring greatness can be dangerous—it is wise to prioritize honoring God rather than seeking self-glory. Some seek positions not to serve but to dominate or for financial gain. We must understand Scripture, know God, and comprehend what it means to be a true believer on the path to heaven.

One of the judges after Gideon was Jephthah. When the Ammonites threatened Israel, the Israelites called Jephthah to help them. He reminded them that they had previously rejected and expelled him from his father's house. They pleaded with him and promised to make him their leader. Jephthah agreed and spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah.

✿ Jephthah then sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, asking why they were attacking Israel. The king replied that Israel had taken their land when they came out of Egypt. Jephthah explained how God had helped Israel possess the land. He asked, "Are you better than Balak son of Zippor? Did he ever fight against Israel?" He declared, "I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the Lord, the Judge, decide the dispute between Israel and Ammon." However, the Ammonite king did not listen.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and before going to battle, he made a vow: "If You give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph will be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." This was a rash vow because God does not require human sacrifices.

✿ Jephthah had only one child, a daughter whom he loved dearly. She also loved her father. Every person is born to glorify God by fulfilling a unique purpose that no one else can accomplish. If those around you do not support what God has called you to do, continue praying about it. Many people judge God's calling through human reasoning, traditions, or experience, which can be discouraging. If you work with people who do not understand your calling, they may doubt you. However, you do not need to be overly attached to them. If God has sent you, He will bring people who understand and support you. After knowing God's will through prayer and Scripture, move forward in faith. Opposing voices do not last forever; people may be transferred or retire. When they leave, God will provide supporters. The key is to dedicate yourself to God and avoid sin, as wrongdoing attracts criticism and hinders God's work. Sometimes, those who opposed you may later confess their mistakes when the Holy Spirit convicts them. But even if they do not, keep moving forward with courage and humility, involving others as much as possible.

✿ Jephthah went to battle against the Ammonites and defeated them. Upon returning home to Mizpah, his daughter was the first to come out to greet him with tambourines and dancing. Seeing her, he tore his clothes and lamented, "Oh no, my daughter! You have brought me down and made me miserable because I have made a vow to the Lord that I cannot break." His daughter, though joyful, saw her father in sorrow. She told him, "Father, if you have

made a vow to the Lord, do to me as you have promised, for the Lord has avenged your enemies." She then asked for two months to mourn her virginity with her friends. Afterward, Jephthah fulfilled his vow.

✿ The Ammonites angered God by offering their children as burnt sacrifices to their god, Molech. However, God does not require such sacrifices. Instead, we should offer our talents, time, resources, and hearts to His service. We cannot say that Jephthah was imitating the Ammonites, but this is one of the questions we will ask in heaven to understand fully. Until then, we must strive to reach heaven. The key lesson here is to seek God's guidance before making vows. God does not demand vows from us—it is we who sometimes speak hastily without thinking and later regret it.

Jephthah judged Israel for six years and then died. After him, other judges ruled, and the cycle repeated—whenever a judge died, the Israelites returned to evil, and God delivered them into the hands of their enemies, such as the Philistines.

✿ The disciples were to carry out their work in the name of Christ. Every word and action was to focus on His name, the essential power through which sinners could be saved. Their faith was to be firmly rooted in Him, the source of mercy and strength. In His name, they were to present their prayers to the Father and receive answers. They were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The name of Christ was to be their protection, identity, bond of unity, authority, and source of success.

✿ Questions: Who was the judge after Gideon? What good and bad things did Gideon do? Why was Jephthah's vow unusual? What led him to make it?

God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5.

[4-5] When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for giving us wisdom. We ask You to protect us from making foolish vows, or those too difficult to keep, or even those that are not Your will for us to declare. Thank You for being willing to help us even when we don't make promises to repay Your goodness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Who has the truth about this story? Divide the children into teams. Each team writes down truths about this story. The team with the most correct truths wins. Discuss with the children about making vows or promises wisely, without rushing or acting on emotions.

DAY 64 (March 5)

LESSON: The Man Who Was Once Mighty Over All

(Judges 13 and 14)

Now when the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, he delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years. There was a man named Manoah, and his wife was barren, she had no child. The angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and told her that she would conceive and bear a son, and no razor should come upon his head, for this child would be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. This lesson shows that the food we eat is important for both spiritual and physical life. Manoah's wife went and told her husband, "A man of God came to me, and his face was like the face of an angel of God, very awesome man, but I did not ask him where he came from."

She continued to explain the message she had said that she would conceive and bear a son. The child must not drink wine or strong drink or anything unclean, because this child will be a Nazirite to God from the womb until the day of his death. Then her husband prayed to the Lord that the man who appeared to his wife, would come again and teach them what they should do for the child who would be born. It is very important for parents to know how God wants us to care for our children. The Bible is the first book for beauty, child care and parenting. We should not parent children by chance, trial and error or by the dictates of the people of the world. The Lord listened to the voice of Manoah and the angel of God appeared to his wife, a second time while she was alone in the field. It is a great blessing, to receive instructions on how to raise the child for the second time. This mother ran to call her husband and told him to follow her because the man who appeared to her, had returned again.

So Manoah went with his wife and when he came to the man he asked him if he was the one who spoke to his wife before, and he said 'Yes, I am.' Manoah said when those words come true, what kind of child will he be, and what will his job be? The angel of the Lord told him all the prohibitions he had told his wife, and insisted that they keep them. "Your wife must do all that I have told her. She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her." Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the Lord. And



the Lord did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. When the angel of the Lord did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the Lord. Angels are servants of God, so they refuse to bow down and take the glory that only God deserves. Everyone has their own Angel. Manoah did not know that this was an Angel, so he asked him his name and the Angel said why are you asking me my name is strange for you to understand.

Even today there are parents who ask that question, that is, how will we raise a child! Manoah had an important request. When Manoah offered a kid of the goats and a grain offering to the LORD on a rock, and the Angel did a wonderful thing in their sight, for when the flame of fire ascended to heaven from the altar and the Angel ascended in the flame of fire, Manoah and his wife fell on their faces and worshiped. The angel did not return to them again, and Manoah said to his wife that they would die because they had seen God. His wife wisely said, if God wanted to kill them, why had he shown them all this and accepted their offering, for sure he would not tell them that they would have children, if they were going to die! Manoah's wife bore a son and called his name Samson, and he grew, and the LORD blessed him and the Spirit of the LORD began to come upon him. Manoah and his wife did a good job of taking care of their son. However, Samson was not faithful. When he grew up, he went down to the city of Timnah to marry a daughter of the Philistines, and she spoke to his parents to get him a wife.

When we discover our weaknesses, let us cry out to God to give us the strength to overcome the sins that easily beset us. So Samson's father and mother asked him, is there no woman from our tribe or relatives that you can marry but insist on marrying the Philistines who do not worship the God of heaven? And Samson responded by saying, "Get her for me, for she pleases me very much." It seems that Samson had peer pressure and improper concept of love that God wants us to have for marriage. If a person wants to marry, he should not look a wife that pleases him only, but the Will of God first. Many people get into trouble by marrying someone who does not believe in God because people say that lust is blind, but true love is not blind. At this time, the Philistines were ruling Israel and perhaps the LORD used this method to seek a lesson from the Philistines. Samson and his parents went down to Timnah to the vineyards and a young lion roared. The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him and he tore apart a young lion like a goat without any instrument in his hands. People did not know how he could have killed the lion. Samson went down and talked to the woman again another day and she became more interested in Him, which is a sin to marry an unbeliever. When he passed by the lion's carcass he saw many bees on the carcass and there was honey. He gave the honey to his father and mother, without saying where he got it from.

Here is a big problem, because the Bible says that we should not be yoked with unbelievers. This means for regular members and Spiritual leaders like Samson. But there are people who meet and marry before they are believers , or there are some who leave the faith after marriage. From Paul's advice, that person should not leave his husband or wife. For we will all be judged by God's holy law, God forgives ignorance but when we understand we are fully responsible. Before marriage it is good to know if your partner is ready to follow all the instructions of the Lord, found in the Holy Scriptures. God's instructions are aimed at loyalty to Him and not at destroying the home and family. God has said that we should not have relationships with the world in a way that does not glorify Him. Our unity with the world in our habits, lifestyle, goals or dreams, often keeps us away from God. Some people have asked when they read the book of Ezra, saying, Can we today divorce an unbelieving wife as happened in Ezra 10? Our Lord Jesus gives the answer:

The Pharisees also came to him, testing him and saying to him, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause? He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and the two shall be one flesh? So then they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They said unto him, Why then

did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Moses did this because of the hardness of your hearts, he allowed you to divorce your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, save it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery (Matthew 19:3-9). Therefore let us encourage our young men to pray before entering into marriage, that they may not make mistakes, because once they have entered, there is no way out except by the cause which Jesus hath given. So “Take heed before you jump in marriage which is a holy institution,” and has to be according to God’s way. Read more in (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

🌼Things may seem difficult and the waves may be rough in choosing a spouse, but we are called to uproot any habits or behaviors that keep us away from God. Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to be completely faithful to Your Word because I know that in all things You, the Lord God, work together for good for those who love You, whom You have called according to Your purpose. (Romans 8:28)

🌼In the Holy of Holies is the ark; its top and sides are made of pure gold. On each end of the ark are beautiful cherubim, with their wings spread out above it. The faces of the two cherubim face toward each other, and they look downward. Between the angels is a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, is a very bright glory, looking like a throne where God sits. This is called Shekina. Jesus is in the most holy place now in heaven, doing atonement for us, interceding as our High Priest, and when the prayers of the saints come up to Him, the incense in the censer goes up in smoke, and He offers their prayers with the smoke of the incense to His Father.

🌼 Questions: What was the name of Samson›s father? How did the angel appear to Samson›s mother? Is it right to marry a woman or a person just because you are interested in them, even if they are not of good character? Why is it not right to marry people who do not believe in God?

God Bless You, Child and Boy Jesus🙏🙏

Memory Verse: Judges 13:3-6.

[3-6] The Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant

and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for this day, forgive us our sins. We know each of us is dedicated to You. Keep us from involving ourselves in unclean things, and help us follow Your instructions. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss marriage relationships between a man and a woman according to the guidance of the Bible. Samson was involved with three women: the first from Timnah, whom he married; the second was a prostitute from Gaza; the third was Delilah, whom he loved.

What was Samson's sin?

Is it wise to marry someone just because they please you?

Did his moral downfall begin when he joined himself to a prostitute, or when he connected with pagan/foreign women?

Did Delilah hide her plan to bring him down?

Why do you think Samson didn't run away from Delilah even though he was stronger than she was?

DAY 65 (March 6)

TOPIC: Samson's Riddle

(Judges 14-16)



✿Samson posed a riddle to his wife's relatives. Before revealing it, he told them there was a reward of 30 linen garments and another 30 outfits, making a total of 60. They listened attentively, and he said, "Out of the eater came something to eat; out of the strong came something sweet." Seven days passed, and no one could solve the riddle. They pressured his wife to coax the answer out of Samson, threatening to burn her and her father's house. They accused her of bringing Samson to take their wealth.

✿Samson's wife wept, saying that he hated her and did not love her because he had given her people a riddle without telling her the answer. Samson replied that he had not even told his parents. She continued to cry before him for seven days while the feast lasted. On the seventh day, she pressed him so much that he told her the answer. She then revealed it to her people. Before sunset on the seventh day, they answered the riddle: "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" The honey was found in the carcass of a lion, and a lion is strong. Samson replied, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle," implying that his wife had given them the answer.

✿The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he went to Ashkelon, struck down 30 men, took their belongings, and gave their garments to those who had solved the riddle. He became very angry and returned to his father's house, leaving his wife behind. His wife was then given to his friend. Later, during the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife, bringing a young

goat. But his father-in-law refused to let him in, saying he thought Samson hated her and had given her to his friend. He offered Samson her younger sister instead. Samson declared that this time, he would be guiltless in taking revenge on the Philistines.

✿He caught 300 foxes, tied torches between their tails, set them on fire, and released them into the Philistines' fields, burning their grain. In retaliation, the Philistines burned his wife and father-in-law. Samson avenged them with a great slaughter and then went to live in the cleft of the rock at Etam.

✿The Philistines pursued him, and the men of Judah asked why they were after him. They replied that they wanted to capture Samson for what he had done to them. The men of Judah confronted Samson, asking why he had brought trouble upon them, knowing they were under Philistine rule. Samson replied that he was simply repaying them for what they had done. The men of Judah said they had come to bind him and hand him over to the Philistines. Samson agreed, asking them not to kill him themselves. They tied him with two new ropes, but as he approached the Philistines, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him powerfully. The ropes on his arms became like burnt flax and fell off.

✿He grabbed a fresh jawbone of a donkey and struck down a thousand men. He then spoke a riddle: "With a donkey's jawbone, I have made heaps upon heaps; with a donkey's jawbone, I have slain a thousand men." After throwing away the jawbone at Ramath-Lehi, he became very thirsty and cried out to God, saying, "You have given this great victory through your servant, but now must I die of thirst?" God then opened a hollow place, and water gushed out. Samson drank, regained his strength, and revived.

✿Samson lacked the experience of obeying God's laws. After striking down a thousand Philistines, they later discovered his location and surrounded his house at night, waiting to kill him. At midnight, he arose and tore off the city gate with its posts and bars, carrying it on his shoulders to the hill facing Hebron.

✿Later, he went to the Valley of Sorek and fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistine rulers approached her, asking her to coax Samson into revealing the secret of his great strength so they could overpower him and bind him for torment. They promised her 1,100 silver pieces. Delilah begged Samson to tell her how he could be bound and subdued.

✿First, Samson said that if he were tied with seven fresh bowstrings that had not dried, he would become weak like any other man. The Philistines brought



her the bowstrings, and she bound him. Then she shouted, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a string breaks when it touches fire.

✿Delilah complained that he had deceived her and asked him again how he could be bound. The second time, Samson told her to use new ropes that had never been used. Delilah tied him up with new ropes and again shouted, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He broke the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

✿Delilah accused him of lying again and pleaded with him to reveal the secret of his strength. The third time, Samson said that if the seven locks of his hair were woven into the fabric of a loom, he would become weak. Delilah did as he said and pinned it down, but when she called out, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” he woke up and pulled away the pin and the loom.

✿She nagged him daily, pressing him so much that he became tired to the point of death. Strangely, he did not return to Israel or run away. He loved Delilah, but she did not love him—her goal was to destroy him. Even today, many people fall into traps because of relationships with ungodly partners, leading to pain and even spiritual or physical destruction.

✿It is not that God approved of Samson's sinful choices, but as the True Counselor, He did not abandon him, even when Samson openly made mistakes. I am always amazed at God's grace. Even more astonishing is His grace toward me. Will you join me in shouting, "Hallelujah!"?

✿If you are in a wrong relationship and are not yet married, run away immediately! If you are already married, pray more than ever before, but do not abandon your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and pour God's love into your heart to bless your spouse. Miracles still happen. Thank you, Jesus, for redeeming us from bad relationships and directing our steps on the right path! There is a saying that love is blind. This is not true. Infatuation is blind, but true love recognizes and follows God's principles rather than emotions and feelings. True love has self-control, simplicity, integrity, morality, faith, and discipline.

✿God used Samson's poor choices to fulfill His purpose, but that does not mean He approved of them. God does not break His own commandments.

✿What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Praying in the name of Christ means many things. It means accepting His character, displaying His spirit, and doing His works. The Savior's promise comes with conditions. He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." He saves people, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love through obedience.

✿Questions:

Why did Samson kill 30 men?

Why did Samson carry the city gate?

If a close friend told you they wanted to kill you and revealed how they would do it, would you agree?

Do you think God wanted Samson to be with unbelieving women?

Write the qualities of a good husband or wife.

Give an example of someone who was killed by a friend, spouse, or partner.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU, CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF JESUS

Memory Verse: Judges 16:14-16.

[14-16] She fastened it with a pin and said to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom with the fabric. Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.

Or Proverbs 23:26-27
[26-27] My son, give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways, for an adulterous woman is a deep pit, and a wayward wife is a narrow well.

Prayer: Lord, we give You praise and glory today. Thank You for the life of Samson, Your Nazirite, for it shows us how not to secretly love those who are Your enemies. Lord, give us wisdom in every relationship in our lives so that we do not tie ourselves to those who will hurt us and dishonor You. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Lessons and themes on falling into sin.

Pride and Humility: Relate Samson's loss of strength to the consequences of pride. Where did Samson's strength come from?

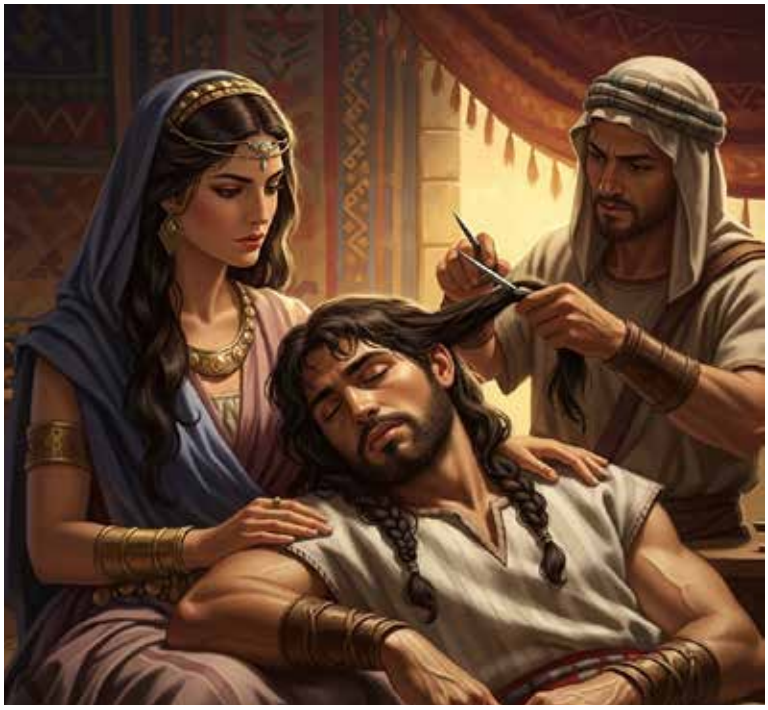
Listening to God: Discuss how Samson stopped listening to God, which led to his downfall.

Speaking the Truth: Highlight the message about having unwise friends and then lying to them, instead of protecting the secret given by God. Talk about being careful about whom you trust, because even if they want to harm you, you may have gone too far in the relationship to escape the trap.

DAY 66 (March 7)

TOPIC: The End of Samson

(Judges 16)



Samson Was Troubled by a Woman

Samson no longer mentioned that he was fighting for Israel; instead, it became a cat-and-mouse game of pursuit. Eventually, he revealed his secret to Delilah—a secret that even many in Israel did not know. He told Delilah, "No razor has ever touched my head, because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my hair is cut, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak like any other man."

Delilah realized that this time, he had told her everything in his heart. She sent word to the Philistine leaders, who were Israel's enemies and enemies of the God of heaven. She told them to come one last time, as Samson had finally revealed all his secrets. The Philistine rulers paid Delilah for betraying her companion, Samson.

Delilah lulled Samson to sleep on her lap, deceiving him. She played the role of Eve before Satan, perhaps pretending to show him love. She called a man to shave off the seven braids of his head. Then, she began to torment him, and his strength left him. Delilah shouted, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He woke up, thinking he would shake himself free as he had before, but he did not realize that the Lord had left him because he continued to love and indulge in sin.

The Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, and took him to Gaza, binding him with bronze shackles. He was forced to grind grain in prison. His parents must have grieved to see their son, who was once a Nazirite of God, now

blind because he failed to obey God's word and his parents' advice.

But the merciful God helped him, and his hair began to grow again. As his hair grew, his strength began to return. The Philistines held a great festival to offer sacrifices to their god, Dagon, celebrating that their god had delivered their enemy, Samson, into their hands. They praised Dagon for their victory. During the celebration, they brought Samson out of prison to entertain them. The hall was filled with about 3,000 men and women watching him perform. Samson told the servant leading him, "Let me feel the pillars that support the temple, so I may lean against them." Samson then remembered God and prayed, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, so that I may take revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes."

God, full of mercy, heard Samson's prayer. He placed his hands on the two central pillars supporting the temple. With all his strength, he pushed them apart, saying, "Let me die with the Philistines!" The temple collapsed, killing all the Philistine rulers and the 3,000 people inside. The number of people he killed in his death was greater than those he had slain in his lifetime. His family retrieved his body and buried him in his father's tomb.

Samson repented. Suicide is a sin, breaking the sixth commandment, but he barely escaped condemnation. He had the opportunity to repent, and even today, his name is recorded among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, alongside other judges like Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah.

God is merciful and loving, but we must be cautious and not play with sin. Samson was a strong man physically but weak in character. He could have accomplished great things for God, but he loved foreign women and did not live a life of purity. He was a judge of Israel for 20 years. He was a leader, a warrior, and a giant of strength, yet he was brought down by a weak woman.

Meanwhile, Joseph, who was a slave and powerless, overcame the temptation of Potiphar's wife when she tried to seduce him. True warriors are not those who run toward sin, but those who resist it.

Physically, Samson was the strongest man on earth, but in self-control, integrity, and discipline, he was weak. Still, his final prayer was heard, and his name is recorded in Hebrews 11. Can the Lord save sexual addicts, thieves, or wicked people facing death? The answer is simple yet astonishing: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)

I praise the Lord for His boundless love and amazing grace today. What about you? It reminds me of the song, "The overwhelming, never-ending, reckless

love of God. It chases me down, fights till I'm found..."

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." (Psalm 51:10-12)

No matter how great the trials or temptations, we must remain faithful to God. Only then can He fulfill His promise:
"You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Isaiah 43:1-2)

Let us be faithful to Him until death (Revelation 2:10)!
Jesus said, "You will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you." (John 16:26-27)
"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that whatever you ask in my name, the Father will give you." (John 15:16)
However, praying in Jesus' name is more than just mentioning His name at the beginning and end of a prayer. It means praying in His mind and spirit, trusting His promises, depending on His grace, and doing His work.

Questions:

Why did Samson choose to live with Delilah, even though he was not forced?

Why did Delilah want Samson to reveal his secret?

What lesson do Samson's powers teach us if we were given such strength?

How did Samson take revenge on the Philistines in the end?

How many years did Samson rule?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Servant of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Judges 16:28

[28] Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on one and his left hand on the other…

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your mercy, even when we have gone far from Your will. Awaken us Lord to true heart reformation, and to do only Your will. Help us, when the time comes, to find life partners according to Your plan. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of Samson holding the pillars of the hall, blind, and bringing down those who were on the upper floor.

Day 67 (March 8)

Topic: The Evil of One Person Spreads to the Whole Family!

(Judges 17 & 18)



During the time of the judges in Israel, there was a man named Micah who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. This man stole 1,100 pieces of silver from his mother. When she searched and inquired about it, Micah admitted, "The silver you were looking for—I have it. I took it." His mother thanked him for confessing his wrongdoing.

Micah returned the money to his mother, and she decided to dedicate it to the Lord, but in a sinful way. Instead of taking it to Shiloh, where the Lord's tabernacle was, she used it to make an idol. She said, "I am giving this silver to the Lord for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol." When Micah returned the silver, his mother took 200 pieces and gave them to a silversmith to make a carved and cast image, which was placed in Micah's house.

Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods. He ordained one of his sons to be his priest. In those days, Israel had no king, and everyone did as they saw fit.

A man from Bethlehem in Judah, who was a Levite and living there as a foreigner, set out on a journey to find a place to stay in the hill country of Ephraim. He traveled until he reached the house of Micah. Micah asked him where he was coming from and where he was going. The man told him where he had come from and that he was seeking a place to stay as a foreigner. Micah then invited him to stay with him, offering him the position of a father and a priest in his household. He promised to pay him an annual salary of ten pieces of silver, a set of clothes, and food. The Levite agreed to stay, and

Micah treated him like one of his own sons. Micah then consecrated him, and he became his priest. Micah was pleased and said, “Now I know that the Lord will do me good because I have a Levite as my priest.”

During that time, the Danites were searching for land to settle in. They sent out brave men to explore and assess the land. These men traveled and reached the hill country of Ephraim, where they stayed at Micah’s house.

✿ While there, they saw the false priest and asked him, “What are you doing here, and who brought you here?” He explained his situation, and they asked him to seek guidance from God about whether their journey to find a settlement would be successful. The false priest replied, “Go in peace; your journey is before the Lord.”

The Danite spies continued their journey and reached Laish, where they found the people living in security, careless and unsuspecting, enjoying peace and safety. There was no ruler to oppress them in any way. They were like the Sidonians, living detached from others. The spies returned home and reported what they had seen in Laish. They encouraged their fellow Danites to attack, saying, “We have seen a great land, and you are just sitting idle? Do not hesitate to go and take possession of it.”

✿ Six hundred warriors from the tribe of Dan set out to take the land. They passed through the hill country of Ephraim and stopped at Micah’s house. They asked the false priest how he was doing, then entered the house and took the carved idol, the priestly garments (ephod), the household gods, and the metal image. The priest asked them, “What are you doing?” They responded, “Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us. Be a father and a priest to us. Isn’t it better for you to be a priest for a whole tribe rather than just one man’s household?”

✿ The false priest was delighted and took the ephod and the idols and left with them. The Danites led their children and livestock ahead of them. When Micah pursued them and complained, they warned him, “Do not let your voice be heard among us, or angry men might attack you, and you would lose your life and that of your family.” Realizing that they were too strong for him, Micah turned back home.

The Danites then went to Laish, where the people were living in peace and security. They attacked them, killing them and burning down the city. They rebuilt the city and named it Dan. The Danites set up the carved idol for themselves, and as it turns out, the grandson of Moses, Gershom’s son, became their false priest, replacing the one they had taken from Micah. Soon, the

Israelites drifted further from God. This shows us that we should always rely on God to avoid falling into the traps of Satan.

✿ Even today, we see how Judges 17:13 affects our lives: "Now I know that the Lord will bless me because I have this Levite as my priest." Many people expect God's blessings while holding onto their idols—whether physical or idols of their own making—rather than following God's will. This is similar to how Balaam was hired to curse Israel and tried to buy blessings on his own terms. We cannot ignore God's commandments and expect to be blessed.

Often, when looking for jobs, we focus on good salaries rather than considering whether the income is gained honestly. Apart from physical idols, there are modern idols that are rarely condemned, such as fashion trends, alcohol, corrupt thoughts, immorality, love for wealth, uncontrolled desires, prosperity gospel, moral decay, and more.

✿ Galatians 5 contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit to show the difference: "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." The root cause of chaos is when everyone does what seems right in their own eyes—just like the world today. Our God is a God of order. The dispute between God and Satan began when Satan claimed there was no need for God's law.

✿ Since our first parents, Adam and Eve, accepted Satan as their leader, life has been filled with sorrow. Without God's law, suffering, disasters, pain, and death become our portion. The universe is watching and learning from our world, realizing that without law, there can be no peace or life. Soon, this rebellious world will come to an end, and in its place will be a land where everyone perfectly obeys God's law—that is why it will be called paradise! Those who will be there are described as "the remnant of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and hold fast their testimony about Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

✿ God is calling us to come to Him in Jesus' name.
You are invited to come, to ask, to seek, to knock; and you are assured that you will not be turned away empty-handed. Jesus says:

> "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

✿ Questions:

1. From whom did Micah steal money? What did he use it for?
2. Who was the priest, and from which tribe was he?
3. Who stole the idols from Micah's shrine?
4. What kind of people were the inhabitants of Laish?
5. What are the consequences of a life of comfort and ease?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus.

Memory Verse: Judges 18:30-31.

[30-31] The Danites set up for themselves the idol, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. They continued to use the idol Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the story of the Danites, which shows us that we are not saved because our father or grandfather was a great prophet, or because we have close connections with someone. We are saved only by Your blood, by depending and trusting in You. Help us to do that. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: Make a "Record or Journal of Judges."

Remember God's good deeds, and write them down.

Remember Israel's disobedience.
Give each child drawing paper, colored pencils, or crayons.
Let them draw themselves as God's heroes on one page and write "My Journal of Judges" at the top.
Tell them to record God's mighty deeds such as:

Giving us families.
Creating us.
Sending Jesus.

Providing food.
Explain that this project should continue so they don't forget. They can keep adding more whenever God answers prayers or does something good.

DAY 68 (March 9)

TOPIC: The Evil That Burns the Ears in Israel

Judges 19-21 (Period of 1400-1000 BC)



A man from Bethlehem in Judah, who was a Levite, lived as a foreigner there. This man traveled to the hill country of Ephraim and arrived at the house of Micah. Micah asked him where he came from and where he was going. The Levite explained where he had come from and that he was seeking a place to stay. Micah invited him to stay with him, to be a father and a priest, and promised to pay him yearly wages—clothing, food, and ten pieces of silver per year. The Levite agreed to stay and became like one of Micah's sons. Micah consecrated him, and he became his priest. Micah was satisfied and said, "Now I know that the Lord will bless me because I have a Levite as my priest."

At that time, the Danites were searching for land to settle in. They sent out valiant men to explore and scout the land. These men arrived in the hill country of Ephraim and stayed at Micah's house. They saw the false priest and asked him what he was doing there and who had brought him. He explained

his situation, and they asked him to seek counsel from God about whether their journey to find land would be successful. The false priest assured them, “Go in peace; your journey is under the Lord’s guidance.”

The spies went to Laish and found the people there living in safety, careless, enjoying life, and secure. There was no ruler to oppress them, and they lived like the Sidonians—isolated and without conflict with anyone. The spies returned home and reported what they had found, encouraging their fellow Danites to go and take possession of the land, saying, “We have seen that the land is very good. Will you just sit idle? Don’t hesitate to go and occupy it. You will find people living in security, and the land is spacious. God has given it into your hands—it is a place where nothing is lacking!”

Six hundred Danite warriors set out to conquer Laish. On their way, they passed through the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah’s house. They asked the priest how he was doing and then took the carved idol, the ephod, the household gods, and the cast idol. When the priest saw them taking these items, he asked, “What are you doing?” They told him, “Be quiet! Put your hand over your mouth and come with us. Be our father and priest. Isn’t it better for you to be a priest for a whole tribe rather than just one household?”

The false priest was delighted. He took the ephod and the idols and went with them. They put their children and livestock ahead of them. When Micah realized what had happened, he pursued them and complained, but they warned him, “Don’t let your voice be heard among us, or some angry men might attack you and destroy your household.” Seeing that they were stronger, Micah turned back home.

The Danites reached Laish, attacked the unsuspecting people, and burned the city. They rebuilt it and named it Dan. They set up the carved idol and, as it turns out, a descendant of Moses, Gershom’s son, became their false priest. This shows how quickly the Israelites abandoned God. It reminds us always to trust in God so that we do not fall into Satan’s traps.

Today, we see a similar issue in Judges 17:13: “Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as my priest.” People want God to bless them while still holding onto their idols or doing what seems right in their own eyes rather than what is right in God’s sight. This is similar to how Balaam was hired to curse Israel—he wanted to buy blessings on his own terms. We cannot ignore God’s commandments and expect blessings.

When searching for jobs, many prioritize salary over righteousness. Just as there were carved idols in the past, today’s idols come in new forms that are

often tolerated, such as fashion, alcohol, false beliefs, immorality, love of wealth, uncontrollable greed, prosperity gospel, lack of morality, and many other things.

Galatians 5 contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit so that we can see the difference:
"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."
The root cause of chaos is when everyone does what seems right in their own eyes, and this is exactly how our world is today. Our God is a God of order.
The conflict between God and Satan began when Satan claimed that there was no need for law. Since our first parents, Adam and Eve, accepted Satan as their leader, the world has been filled with sorrow. Without law, suffering, disasters, pain, and death become our portion. The unfallen worlds have learned from our example that without law, there can be no peace or life.

Soon, this lawless world will come to an end, and a new world will be established where everyone will perfectly obey God's law—that is why it is called paradise! Those who will be there are described in Revelation 12:17 as "the remnant of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ."

GOD INVITES US TO COME TO HIM IN THE NAME OF JESUS
You are invited to come, ask, seek, and knock, and you are assured that you will not leave empty-handed. Jesus says,

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8)

✿ Questions:

1. From whom did Micah steal money?

2. What did he do with the stolen money?

3. Who was the priest, and from which tribe did he come?

4. Who stole the idols from Micah's temple?

5. What kind of people lived in Laish?

6. What are the dangers of a life of ease and comfort?
God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Judges 19:30

[30] Everyone who saw it was saying, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Just imagine! We must do something! So speak up!"

Or 1 Corinthians 6:18-19
[18-19] *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.*

Prayer: Lord, receive our praise and thanksgiving. We read shocking stories and realize You do not record them just for us to wonder, but so we may search our hearts and gain wisdom, so we do not commit the evil that trapped those before us in fearful deeds. Give us love like Yours mixed with wisdom. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity: The events in Judges 19 serve as a strong warning in the Bible's narrative about the time when Israel had "no king or leader," and "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." These heavy themes of moral corruption, violence, and brutality should be explained in detail in adult lessons but can be simplified for children by describing the background of wars that arose from this event.

Drama can show tribal wars and the results of division, like two armies fighting. Teachers and guardians need wisdom, because we cannot hide everything nor tell everything! Children see these things on phones, TV, and sometimes even in their homes. Let's not bury our faces in the sand like ostriches! Find ways to discuss issues of immorality, prostitution, violence, and murder in conversations with wisdom.

DAY 69 (March 10)

TOPIC: Naomi Returns Home, and the Daughter-in-law Who Loved Her Goes with Her

(Ruth 1)



✿A long time ago, during the era of the Judges—a time filled with stories of the loss of God's glory and terrifying events—there was a hopeful story about a young woman from a nation that was an enemy of Israel. There was a famine in the land, and a man named Elimelech from Bethlehem in Judah left with his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to live in Moab. His sons married Moabite women—one named Orpah and the other Ruth. They lived there for ten years, but Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion all died. Naomi then decided to return to her homeland, Bethlehem, because she had heard that God had visited His people and the famine had ended.

✿As they set out on their journey back, Naomi realized that it would be selfish to ask these young women to completely leave their homeland, as they could still remarry since they were not old. She told Orpah and Ruth to return to their homes and said, “May the LORD deal kindly with you, just as you have dealt kindly with the dead and with me. May the LORD grant that each of you find rest in the house of a new husband.” They wept aloud because they loved their mother-in-law, and she loved them. This is a great lesson even for today—how to live with in-laws, whether they are mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, siblings, or extended family members. Naomi was a good example, as her daughters-in-law said, “No! We will go back with you to your people.”

✿Naomi insisted they return home, asking why they should follow her. She explained that she had no more sons for them to marry, and even if she were to have more, they would not wait until the boys grew up. She told them her life was much harder than theirs because she had lost her husband and two sons, and she was old. All three widows cried aloud. Orpah then kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and left. Naomi looked at Ruth and said, “Your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods; return and go with her.”

✿But Ruth responded with words that have been echoed in wedding vows: “Do not urge me to leave you or to turn back from following you. Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.”

✿When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined, she stopped insisting that she return home. Perhaps Ruth had recognized that the God of Israel was the true God and that He was worth following rather than the gods of Moab. They traveled until they reached Bethlehem. The people who knew Naomi were surprised and asked, “Is this Naomi?” She told them, “Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.” She reminded them how she had left full but returned empty.

✿They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, which was a blessing because it meant they could find food and work to keep themselves busy. However, God had an even greater gift awaiting them in the harvest fields! Naomi had a relative of her late husband, a wealthy and influential man named Boaz. He was the grandson of Rahab, the woman who helped the Israelite spies enter Jericho. Naomi advised Ruth to go and glean leftover grain in the fields. According to Israelite law, farmers were to leave some grain behind for the poor to collect.

✿Ruth went to gather leftover grain and unknowingly found herself in Boaz's field. Boaz arrived from town and greeted the harvesters, saying, "The LORD be with you." When the workers responded, he asked about the young woman in his field. The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite woman who came back with Naomi. She asked to glean behind the harvesters, and she has worked hard from morning until now, except for a short rest at home."

✿Boaz, an older man, kindly told Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Do not go to another field to glean, and do not leave this one. Stay close to my servant girls." He also ensured her safety, instructing the men not to mistreat her, and allowed her to drink from their water jars. Overwhelmed with gratitude, Ruth bowed down and asked, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me, a foreigner?" Boaz replied, "I have been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland to come and live with a people you did not know before."



✿Ruth had committed herself to Naomi and the God of Israel despite uncertainty and the hostility between Moab and Israel. Kindness, loyalty, and the ability to comfort one another in times of loss are crucial in all relationships. How can your kindness, loyalty, and comfort strengthen your important relationships today? Ruth did not give up. This story teaches us about God's provision even in difficult times. We may be tempted to think that God has abandoned us, but He has not. We do not see the end of our life's story as God does, and there is evidence around us of His goodness.

✿God desires that we trust Him and rejoice in Him as our loving Father who has good plans for us. Faithfulness, kindness, and encouragement during life's trials are essential in all good relationships. The story of Ruth took place during the time of the Judges—a period of chaos, cruelty, and lawlessness. It is easy to sink into despair during hardships, but God was ready to show Naomi that He still cared for her and would continue to provide for her in her old age.

✿Let us learn to trust in God's provision even in difficult times and to recognize His blessings and kindness even when we carry heavy burdens. We may be tempted to believe that God has forsaken us, but He has not. We have not yet seen the full story of our lives, so let us pray for open eyes to see His goodness. God desires that we trust Him and find joy in Him. While many Israelites worshipped idols, Ruth was introduced to the God of Heaven and chose to remain faithful to Him at all costs.

✿Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live." We must be willing to die for Christ. Let us ensure that we will be among those who remain faithful to God until the very end. This is possible only if we allow Jesus to hold our hands (Isaiah 41:10).

We approach GOD in the Name of Jesus through a special invitation, and He welcomes us into His secret chamber of prayer. He accepts the humble and repentant soul in the faith of Christ, through which one is justified. Jesus wipes away their iniquity like a thick cloud, and the comforted heart lifts its voice in joy, saying, "O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger has turned away, and You have comforted me." (Isaiah 12:1)

✿ Questions:

What was the name of Naomi's husband?

Why did they go to Moab?

How many years did they live in Moab?

What was the name of the daughter-in-law who returned to Moab?

Why were people allowed to gather leftover grain in the fields?

What should people do today to help those in need, as they did in those days?

What did Naomi say when she saw the food Ruth had gathered?

How did Boaz learn about Ruth?

May God bless you greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Ruth 1

[16,17] But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

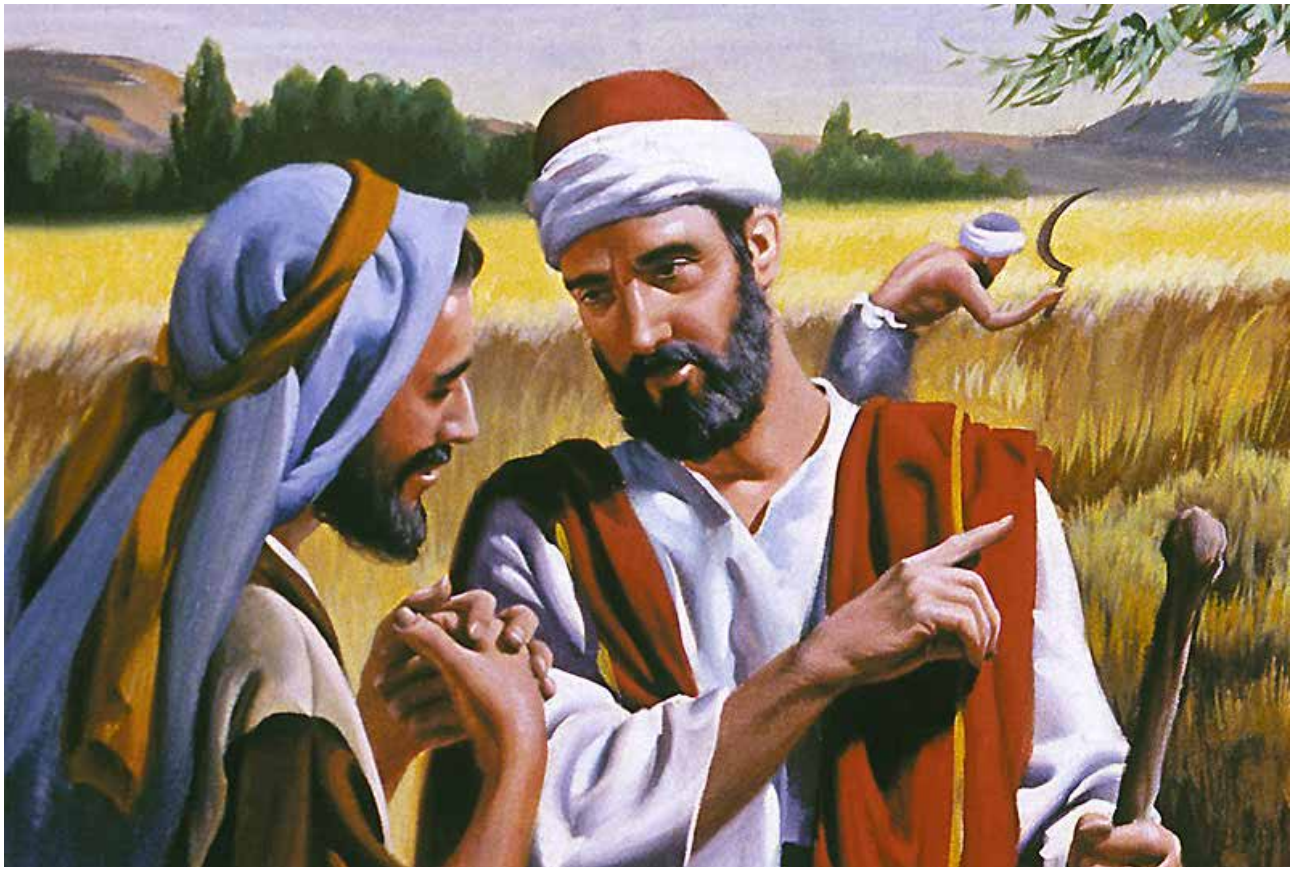
Prayer: Thank You Almighty God for the story that shows us You care. Forgive our sins and help us to do good to others, especially the elderly, widows, orphans, and those with special needs. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Gathering leftover food:
Scatter small things like groundnuts, rice, or beans on the ground and let them be collected, symbolizing Ruth gleaning in the fields to provide for herself and Naomi. Or visit a field of someone they know and help in collecting the leftover produce.

DAY 70 (March 11)

LESSON: Boaz Marries Ruth

(Ruth 2-4)



✿Boaz blessed Ruth, saying, "May the Lord repay you for your work, and may you receive a full reward from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." Ruth replied, "My lord, may I find favor in your sight, for you have comforted my heart and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

At mealtime, Boaz invited Ruth to eat with his workers. She sat with the harvesters, and they offered her roasted grain like popcorn. She ate, was satisfied, and even had some leftover. Boaz instructed his workers to let her gather among the sheaves without reprimanding her. He also told them to leave extra grain for her to collect without hindrance. Ruth worked in the fields until evening, then threshed the barley and gathered about an ephah (approximately 22 liters or a large bucketful). She carried it back home to Naomi, who was amazed at the large quantity.

Naomi asked, “Where did you glean today? Blessed be the man who has helped you so much!” Ruth shared the name of Boaz, and Naomi praised God, saying, “This man is our close relative, our kinsman-redeemer.”

✿Naomi deeply loved Ruth and told her, “My daughter, should I not seek a place of rest for you, so that it may be well with you?” According to their tradition, when a woman became a widow, it was the duty of a close relative to provide for her, including marriage. Since Boaz was a close relative, Naomi advised Ruth to prepare herself, bathe, anoint herself, wear her best clothes, and go to the threshing floor where Boaz would be working that night. She told Ruth to wait until he finished eating and drinking, then to lie down at his feet without revealing herself to anyone. This was a customary practice in those days and had nothing to do with wrongdoing.

✿Boaz, after eating and drinking, lay down at the end of the grain pile. Ruth quietly lay at his feet. Around midnight, Boaz awoke startled and asked, “Who are you?” Ruth answered, revealing her identity and intention according to their customs. Boaz, filled with kindness, told her, “My daughter, may you be blessed by the Lord. You have shown greater kindness now than at the beginning by not chasing after young men, whether poor or rich. Do not be afraid; I will do all that you ask, for everyone in town knows that you are a virtuous woman.”

✿However, Boaz explained that although he was a close relative, there was one who was even closer. He promised Ruth that if this other man was unwilling to fulfill his duty, then he himself would do it. Boaz was a man of integrity, wisdom, and righteousness. He was respected by his workers and valued honesty over haste. Before sending Ruth home, he filled her shawl with six measures of barley and told her, “Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.” Naomi, upon hearing everything, reassured Ruth, “Boaz will not rest until he settles this matter today.”

✿Boaz went to the city gate and met the closer relative, summoning ten elders as witnesses. He explained that Naomi was selling land that had belonged to Elimelech, her late husband. The man agreed to buy the land but hesitated when Boaz informed him that acquiring the land also meant marrying Ruth to continue her late husband’s lineage. The man declined, fearing it would compromise his own inheritance.

✿In those days, confirming such agreements was done by removing a sandal and handing it over as a sign of witness. Even today, in some Middle Eastern cultures, throwing a shoe at someone is a sign of contempt. Boaz publicly declared, “You are witnesses today that I have bought everything

that belonged to Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon from Naomi, and I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess as my wife to preserve the name of the dead with his inheritance."

✿The elders and people blessed them, saying, "May the Lord make Ruth like Rachel and Leah, who built the house of Israel." Boaz and Ruth married, and the Lord blessed them with a son named Obed. The women praised God, telling Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May his name be famous in Israel!" They also said, "Ruth loves you more than seven sons!" Naomi took Obed and raised him as her own. Obed became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David. Through David's lineage came King Solomon, and ultimately, Jesus Christ.

✿Ruth is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospels, alongside other remarkable women such as Rahab, Bathsheba, Tamar, and Mary. God's plans are mysterious and beyond human understanding. Even a small sparrow does not fall to the ground without His knowledge. "All things work together for good to those who love God." (Romans 8:28)

✿When we pray for the sick, no matter the outcome, we must not lose faith. Even if we must drink a bitter cup of suffering, we should remember that our Heavenly Father's hand holds it to our lips.

✿But why would a virtuous woman like Ruth endure the sorrow of widowhood before bearing a child? The answer will be revealed when we meet Christ face to face! Trials may seem unbearable, making us feel abandoned by God, but He promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) Ruth faced a great test, yet God proved He had not abandoned her. He never forsakes any of His children!

✿How do you welcome and bless people from different backgrounds in your church, workplace, or family? What do your actions teach those around you? When we help the poor, we are serving Jesus Christ. On Judgment Day, He will say:

"I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed Me; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

✿Pray in the Name of Jesus and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God promises to hear prayers offered with sincerity and faith, saying, "Ask, and it will be given to you." Never cease praying, for God is faithful to answer.

In the Name of Jesus, we can come before the presence of GOD with the confidence of a child. No one is needed to act as a mediator. Through Jesus, we can open our hearts to GOD as to the One who knows and loves us.

✿ Questions:

Why did a man inherit his deceased brother's wife in those days?

Why did Boaz go to the city gate?

What role did Naomi play in the relationship between Ruth and Boaz?

Why did people celebrate Naomi?

Name five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus.

Why is a mother-in-law considered a mother?

What is the connection between Boaz, David, and Joseph, the husband of Mary?

How has God turned disasters you know into unexpected blessings?

Memory Verse: Matthew 1:5,6

[5,6] Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab; Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth; Obed the father of Jesse; and Jesse the father of King David; David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You our King, for You are able to lift up the lowly, even to be part of the lineage of Your Son the Messiah. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Do a play of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah focusing on the theme of loyalty and commitment. Read the story of Ruth (Ruth 1:16–17) with the children and discuss Ruth's strong statement: "Don't urge me to leave you… Where you go I will go…" Ask the children to reflect on what "being loyal" and "commitment" means for them in their own relationships.

DAY 71 (March 12)

TOPIC: The Child Samuel, A Blessing to a God-fearing Mother

(1 Samuel 1-3)



✿ There was a man in Ramah, in the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah, and his wife was Hannah. Hannah had no children. Then Elkanah took a second wife named Peninnah. This man went to worship and offer sacrifices every year in Shiloh, where the sons of the high priest Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas, were present. Every time they went to worship, he gave offerings to his wives, and he always gave Hannah a double portion because he loved her deeply, even though she had no children. Often, Peninnah, her co-wife, mocked and provoked her for being childless.

✿ This humiliated and saddened her so much that she would weep bitterly. Mocking someone who has a problem, disability, illness, or any form of suffering is a sin. When her husband saw this, he tried to comfort Hannah, expressing his love for her and asking why she was crying, why she wasn't eating, and why her heart was troubled. "Am I not better to you than ten

sons?" Those who do not have children have a tough time. We emphasize that children are not marriage itself but a gift from God. A husband and wife do not produce children; they are given by the Lord. Marriage remains marriage even without children because marriage and children are two different things, though children add joy to marriage. Therefore, leaving a spouse because of barrenness is against God's will. However, who knows whether those children would be a blessing or a source of sorrow, like Hophni and Phinehas!

✿ While in Shiloh, Hannah, deeply troubled in her heart, prayed to the LORD with great weeping. She made a vow to God, saying that if He granted her a son and looked upon her affliction, remembering her and giving her a male child, then she would dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor would touch his head. This meant that the child would be a Nazarite, someone consecrated to the LORD. A Nazarite is a person set apart for a special work of the LORD from birth, childhood, and into adulthood. Jeremiah was told that from his mother's womb, the LORD had chosen him. When the high priest Eli saw her praying silently, he thought she was drunk and rebuked her because he could not hear her voice.

✿ Hannah was speaking in her heart, pouring out her soul only to the LORD, for even her husband did not understand. Eli said, "How long will you remain drunk?" But Hannah explained that she was not drunk but deeply troubled and was pouring out her heart before the LORD. She pleaded with Eli, saying, "Do not think of your servant as a wicked woman, for I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow." Eli then blessed her, telling her to go in peace and that the God of Israel would grant her request. Hannah thanked him, left, and ate, and her face was no longer sad because she believed the LORD would give her a child. In those times, having sons was crucial, as they were seen as heirs and helpers in various tasks. A daughter was considered part of the community she would marry into.

✿ The next morning, they worshiped and returned home to Ramah. Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, naming him Samuel, meaning "I asked the LORD for him." Each year, they went up to Shiloh to offer sacrifices, but Hannah stayed home until the child was weaned so that she could take him to the LORD to remain there forever. This was a great sacrifice for a mother, as parting with a young child was not easy. Elkanah allowed Hannah to do as she wished. Hannah had an important responsibility to teach her child essential lessons before leaving him, just as Moses' mother did. She knew that Eli's sons were wicked and disobedient, and their father failed to correct them. However, Hannah did not use this as an excuse.

✿ When Samuel was weaned, his parents took him along with a sacrifice of three bulls, flour, and a flask of wine. Samuel was still a little child when they offered a burnt offering. Hannah reminded Eli that she was the woman who had been praying in anguish for a child. She said, “I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the LORD; for his whole life, he is given to the LORD.” Then they worshiped the LORD there.



✿ Hannah then sang a song of praise: “My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in Your salvation. There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no Rock like our God. The barren woman has borne seven children. The LORD brings poverty and gives wealth; He humbles and exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. The foundations of the earth belong to the LORD, and He has set the world upon them. He will guard the feet of His faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.”

✿ We are on a journey in this world, a place of opposition against God. Let us cry out to Him like Jacob, clinging to Him and saying, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.” This is the nature of our God—He is always ready to listen to the cries of our hearts. Whether His answer to your prayer is “yes,” “no,” or “wait,” be assured that He hears.

✿ We need to learn to claim God’s promises in our prayers. No human fully understood what Hannah was going through, but God did. The One who collects our tears in His bottle understands and hears us. We should pour our hearts before Him because He cares. We do not need to respond to mockery with resentment. Elkanah disturbed the peace in his home, like Abraham, when he tried to solve childlessness by taking a second wife. Perhaps he was tired of waiting for God to answer his prayers and lost faith. Whenever we try to solve our problems in ways that are not acceptable to God because we are impatient, we create even bigger problems. Therefore, let us wait upon the Lord, no matter how long it takes.

✿ Hannah prayed for a son so that she could return him to the LORD—this was a selfless prayer. If you are in pain, read this prayer again. You will feel her deep sorrow. Maybe your prayer was not for a child like hers, but if you have been praying for something without an answer, this story shows what to do. The invitation is to keep praying. Hannah stood before the LORD in the temple, praying with all her heart, so intensely that her words were silent—her lips moved, but no words came out! She lost herself in prayer, realizing she was in the presence of the Almighty God.

✿ God understands and hears our prayers. Whether His answer is "yes," "no," or "wait," we can be assured that He hears.

✿ Questions:

What do we learn about keeping vows, as Hannah did?

Why did Hannah sing?

What was the name of the high priest?

Where did people attend worship and offer sacrifices?

If you had a five-year-old child, what would you teach them before they left home?

Why did Elkanah tell Hannah not to cry?

If you were Peninnah, what would you have done differently?

Why did Eli think Hannah was drunk?

What does the name Samuel mean?

Who later repeated Hannah's song?

At what age was Samuel taken to the temple?

Have you been blessed with a praying mother or father? Explain!

Why does polygamy bring sorrow?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 2:1,2

[1,2] "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God."

Prayer: Thank You good Father, You are our Rock. Our mouths praise You; we rejoice in You for helping us when the situation seemed impossible. You are Almighty. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Hannah praying in the temple. Hannah's song. Sewing a robe for young Samuel.

DAY 72 (March 13)

LESSON: The Boy Samuel in the Temple

(1 Samuel 2-3)



✿ Elkana and his wife Hannah returned home, and the boy Samuel served the Lord before Eli. I imagine Samuel cried when parting from his mother, and his mother also cried. However, when we make vows, we should not mock God by failing to fulfill them. This mother made a small robe for him and brought it when she visited him once a year. Eli blessed Elkana and prayed that God would give Hannah more children. Indeed, she bore three sons and two daughters. Can you picture Samuel running to greet his parents when they visited him? Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord, and God was with him.

Samuel's righteousness is contrasted with the wickedness of Eli's sons, who served as priests in the temple. These two Levite young men abused their positions by deceiving the Israelites and engaging in evil schemes. They acted this way because they did not know God personally and disregarded the holiness of their duties.

✿ Eli's sons were worthless men who neither honored the Lord nor respected others. They stole sacrificial meat brought for offerings in Shiloh and greedily ate it even before the consecration ceremony. When people tried to correct them, they responded arrogantly, saying that if they were not allowed to do as they pleased, they would take it by force. Their sin was great before the Lord because they despised His sacrifices and slept with the women who served at the temple.
Eli, being old, heard about his sons' wickedness in the temple. He asked them why they committed such evil and caused the people to sin against the Lord. He warned them, saying that if one person sins against another, God can mediate, but if someone sins against the Lord, who will intercede for them? However, they did not listen to their father's voice. It is sad when children ignore the voice of their parent and a priest of God. Parents should discipline their children when they are still young. Obeying parents is the fifth commandment of the Lord, promising a long life. God intended to punish them because He saw they had no repentance.

✿ Meanwhile, Samuel continued to grow in favor with both the Lord and people. It is essential to gain favor with God and people, as people observe you and live with you daily. They spread good news about you, bless you, and pray for you.
God spoke to Eli, reminding him that He had chosen the Levites to serve Him in the temple. He asked, "Why do you scorn My sacrifices and offerings in My dwelling place? Why do you honor your sons more than Me, fattening yourselves on the best of My offerings?" God declared, "Those who honor Me, I will honor, but those who despise Me will be disdained." If we honor God, He will honor us in return. God essentially said, "Let's honor each other!" Although we are small, He respects us when we respect Him. Isn't that amazing?
Therefore, God determined to cut off Eli's family from the priesthood. He said Eli's descendants would die, and He would raise a faithful priest who would do according to His heart and mind. He would establish a lasting house for this priest, and he would serve before His anointed one forever—ultimately referring to Christ as the eternal High Priest. God also foretold that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, would both die on the same day.

✿ Samuel continued serving the Lord under Eli. At that time, the word of the Lord was rare, and there were no frequent revelations. One night, Eli was lying down, his eyes failing due to age, and the temple lamp was still burning. Samuel was lying down in one of the temple rooms when he heard a voice calling, "Samuel, Samuel!" He responded, "Here I am!" thinking Eli had called him. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But Eli replied, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Samuel went back to bed, but he was called a second time, "Samuel, Samuel!" He again ran to Eli, sure



that the voice had called him. Eli once more told him, “I did not call, my son. Go back and lie down.”
Samuel did not yet know how the Lord communicates with someone, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

✿ When the Lord called Samuel the third time, he once again went to Eli. This time, Eli realized that it was the Lord calling the boy. Despite being the High Priest and the highest ruler of Israel, Eli had lost his connection with God because he failed to discipline his household properly, allowing his sons to dominate him.

Eli then instructed Samuel, “Go and lie down. If you hear the voice again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.’” Samuel went back to sleep, and when he heard the voice again, he responded as instructed. The Lord then told Samuel that He was about to do something in Israel that would make the ears of everyone who hears it tingle. He would fulfill the judgment He had declared against Eli’s house because his sons had brought a curse upon themselves, and Eli had failed to restrain them. Their sin was so great that no sacrifice or offering could atone for it.

✿ They had blasphemed against the Spirit of God, repeatedly rejecting His warnings until His voice ceased speaking to them. Someone once said that this kind of indulgent parenting is false love. Their hearts had become numb, and their consciences no longer convicted them of their evil deeds.

After receiving the Lord's message, Samuel lay down until morning, though he likely struggled to sleep because he loved Eli and did not want to bring him bad news.



✿ The next morning, Eli called Samuel and asked, "What did the Lord say to you? I urge you not to hide anything from me." Samuel told Eli everything, without concealing a word. Eli responded, "The Lord—let Him do what He sees as good."
Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him. None of his words fell to the ground unfulfilled. The people of Israel recognized that Samuel was a true prophet of the Lord. The Lord continued to appear in Shiloh and revealed His word to Israel through Samuel.
Samuel became the 15th and last judge of Israel. No one should despise your youth—God can choose to use you instead of older individuals.

✿ It is said, "Better a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king." The important thing is to listen to God's voice and obey His will. He will speak to you, even if you are just a child. Samuel brought joy to many because he accepted God's call and served faithfully.
God has a plan for your life. Will you pray and ask Him to help you follow Him, bringing joy to yourself and others?

✿ It is possible to raise a child well at home and still have them become wayward. For example, Cain and Abel had the same parents, yet one became a murderer while the other was a godly child. However, good home training is a crucial foundation for building good character in children. Eli suffered the consequences of his failure to discipline his sons, while Hannah and Elkana's training of Samuel ensured that even the negative influence of Eli's sons could not corrupt him.
Let us remember to bring our children before God in prayer. A weak mother and father, on their knees, are a great strength. Let us pray for one another in this journey, especially in a world filled with digital distractions, social media, television, and computers.

✿ May God Honor the Name of Jesus in Our Prayers!
Every promise in God's Word gives us something to pray for, presenting Jehovah's promises as our assurance. Whatever spiritual blessing we need, we are privileged to claim it through Jesus.

May the Lord bless you, child and youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: Proverbs 22:6

[6] Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Prayer: O Lord, we praise Your Name. Hear the prayer of parents who want to raise us in the right way. Give them wisdom from above, and give us hearts to listen and obey the instructions they give us. Thank You for being our Salvation in all troubles. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Play-acting Samuel being called by God. Write down the best ways of upbringing you want a child to be given and discuss.

DAY 73 (March 14)

TOPIC: The Philistines Capture the Ark of the Covenant (Ichabod)

(1 Samuel 4-7)



✿The Philistines gathered to fight against Israel, and the Israelites went to battle, camping near Ebenezer. The Philistines attacked, and 4,000 Israelites were killed, while only 2,000 Philistines died. The Israelites wondered, “Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines?” They decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh, believing it would save them from their enemies. They brought the Ark of the Lord of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim, with Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, accompanying it. When the Ark arrived at the camp, the Israelites shouted loudly. The Philistines, upon hearing the noise, realized that the Ark of God had entered the camp and became afraid. They cried, “Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hands of these mighty gods?” They remembered how the Lord had struck Egypt in the wilderness.

✿The Philistines encouraged themselves, fought harder, and defeated Israel. The Israelites fled to their tents, and 30,000 foot soldiers were killed. The Ark of the Lord was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas died the same day. A Benjamite ran to Shiloh with torn clothes and dust on his head to deliver the sad news to Eli, the high priest. Eli, who was 98 years old and blind, was sitting on a chair trembling in his heart. The whole city was crying. When Eli asked about the noise, the messenger told him what had happened. When Eli heard that the Ark of God had been captured, he fell backward from his chair, broke his neck, and died, for he was old and heavy. He had judged Israel for 40 years.

✿Phinehas' wife was pregnant, and upon hearing about the Ark's capture and the death of her husband and father-in-law, she went into labor and gave birth to a son. She named him Ichabod, meaning "The glory has departed from Israel," because the Ark of the Covenant had been taken.

✿The Philistines took the Ark of God to Ashdod and placed it in the temple of their god, Dagon, who had the head of a man and the tail of a fish. The next morning, they found Dagon had fallen face down before the Ark of the Lord. They set the idol back in place, but the following morning, they found Dagon fallen again, this time with his head and hands broken off, leaving only the torso. The Lord's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, striking them with severe boils. They declared, "The Ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is heavy on us and our god!" They sent their leaders to decide what to do with the Ark. The decision was made to send it to Gath. But as soon as the Ark arrived, the Lord's hand was also heavy upon Gath, and the people, both young and old, were struck with boils. They decided to send the Ark to Ekron, but the people of Ekron cried out, saying, "They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel to kill us!" A great panic spread, and those who did not die were afflicted with boils. The cry of the city reached the heavens.

✿The Ark of the Covenant remained with the Philistines for seven months. They called their priests and diviners, asking how to send the Ark away to stop the plague. The leaders decided to return the Ark with a guilt offering. They sent five golden tumors and five golden rats, representing their five cities, and honored the God of Israel, hoping He would lift His hand from them, their gods, and their land. They were instructed to build a new cart, place the Ark on it with the gold offerings, and let two milking cows pull it without guiding them. If the cows went straight to Israel, it would confirm that the Lord had struck them. The cows took a direct path, lowing as they went, until they reached Beth-Shemesh, where Israelites were harvesting wheat in the valley. Seeing the Ark, they rejoiced greatly.

✿The cart stopped at the field of Joshua, where they broke the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as burnt offerings. The Levites took down the Ark and the gold objects and offered more sacrifices. The Philistine leaders watched and then returned to Ekron.

✿However, the Israelites of Beth-Shemesh made a grave mistake. They looked inside the Ark of the Lord, something only the priests were permitted to do. As a result, 50,070 people died. Even today, we must respect the house of the Lord. We should not make noise, run around, or behave disrespectfully. The people mourned and said, "Who can stand before the Lord, this holy God?" They sent messengers to Kiriath-Jearim to come and take the Ark. The men of Kiriath-Jearim brought the Ark to the house of Abinadab and consecrated his son Eleazar to guard it. The Ark remained there for 20 years as Israel mourned before the Lord.

✿Samuel then spoke to the people, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, remove the foreign gods from among you, prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only, He will deliver you from the hands of the Philistines." The Israelites removed the Baals and Ashtoreths and served the Lord alone.

✿Although Israel was God's chosen people, their example was poor. Their neighbors would have accepted their God more easily if they had been faithful, but their sins made them captives. We also have this weakness—seeing many signs from God but struggling to believe. Let us pray for God's help. We mourn corruption in our governments, but it is even worse when corruption is in the church. We must be led by the Spirit to understand that true success is depending on, believing in, loving, and obeying God.

✿Both Joseph and John came out of prison—Joseph went to the palace, while John went to the grave. From a worldly perspective, John was not successful, but his mission as the forerunner of Christ made him victorious. True success for God's people is putting God first. The world needs people who cannot be bought or sold, who are truthful and faithful in their hearts, who fearlessly call sin by its name, and whose conscience is as firm as a compass pointing north. Even if the heavens fall, they will stand for what is right.

✿Hearing God's voice is like learning a new language; we must be attentive to distinguish His voice. The Holy Spirit is God's speaker. God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth." God is speaking today! "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." (Hebrews 3:7-8). Samuel brought joy to many because he answered God's call and served faithfully. God has a plan

for your life today. Will you ask Him to help you follow Him and find true joy?

✿Samuel dedicated himself to his calling and found favor with God and people. As pastors, elders, and church leaders, we may work diligently for God's work yet neglect our own families. We can run the church successfully and appear holy while our homes are in disarray. This is why Paul asks, "If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:5). Job set an example by praying for his children in case they had sinned unknowingly (Job 1:5), but there can be no atonement for intentional sin.

✿We should not only pray in Jesus' name but also be led by the Holy Spirit. This explains what "The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26) means. God delights in answering such prayers. When we pray earnestly in Jesus' name, God promises to answer beyond all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

✿ Questions:

What does Ichabod mean?

What was Eli's mistake?

How did Eli die?

Why were the Philistines struck with boils?

Why did 50,070 people die?

Why is it wrong to talk or play in church?

What did Samuel tell the people when they returned to the Lord?

Why is it harmful to spoil children?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 7:3.

So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

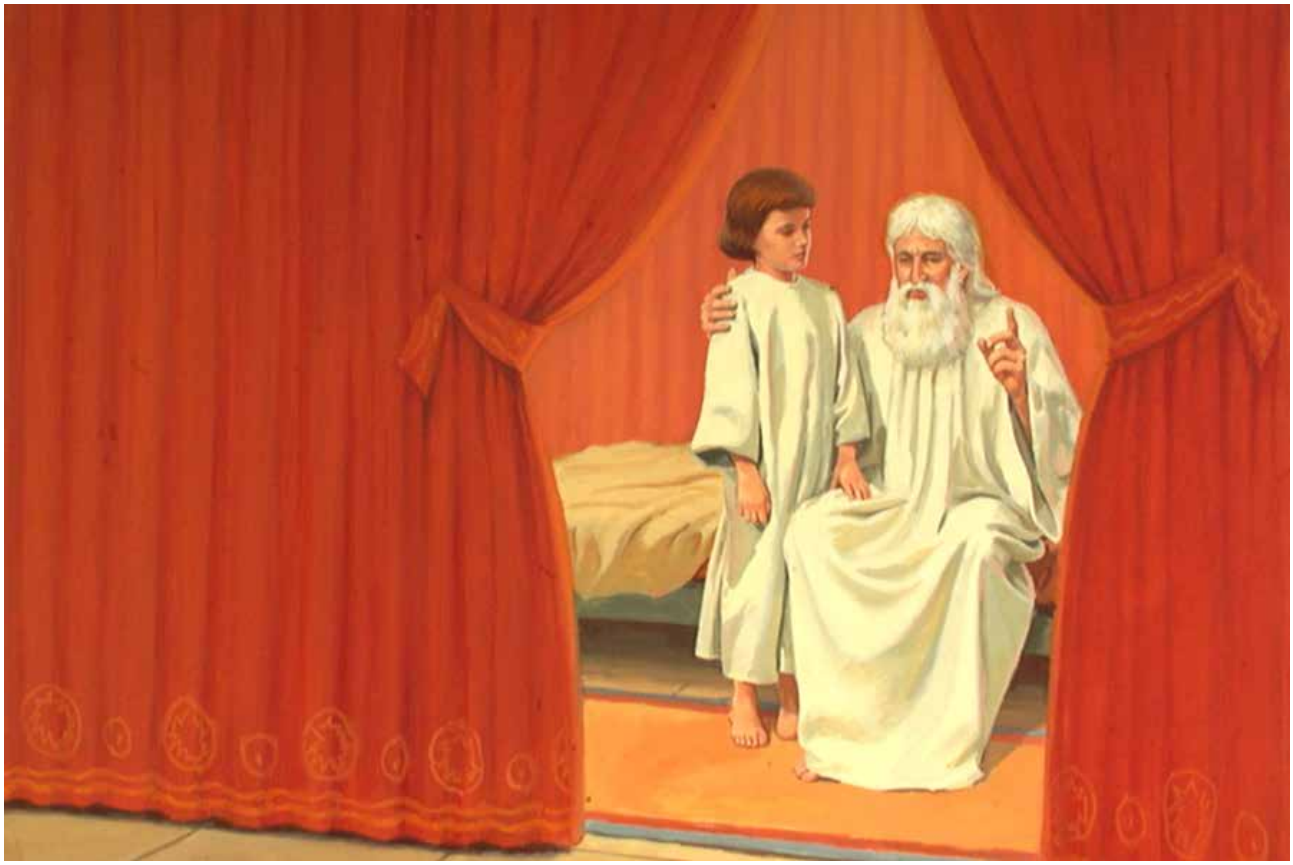
Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for caring for us. We ask that You help us not to have any other gods besides You. Help us to hear Your voice and obey it, and to love You with all our hearts. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Discuss 1 Samuel 2:24 through 1 Samuel 3, concerning the behavior of Eli's sons. Do such behaviors exist in today's churches, and if we see them, what should we do?

DAY 74 (March 15)

TOPIC: Samuel, the Last Judge of Israel

(1 Samuel 7-9)



✿ When the Ark of the Covenant was taken, Samuel was still a child. After several years, when the Israelites returned to Samuel and removed their idols, Samuel told them to gather all Israel at Mizpah so that he could pray for them before the Lord. The Israelites gathered at Mizpah, drew water, poured it out before the LORD, fasted, and confessed, “We have sinned against the Lord.” Samuel judged Israel at Mizpah.

✿ When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, they came up to fight against them. The Israelites, seeing this, went to Samuel and pleaded, “Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” Samuel offered a burnt offering to the LORD, and as the Philistines approached, the LORD thundered with a mighty sound, throwing them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. The Israelites pursued them from Mizpah and struck them down.

✿ Samuel set up a stone and named it Ebenezer, meaning “The LORD has helped us.” The Philistines were defeated and did not enter Israel’s territory again throughout Samuel’s lifetime, and there was peace. Samuel judged Israel all his life, traveling between Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah to judge, and returning to Ramah, where he built an altar to the LORD.

✿ When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. His firstborn was named Joel, and his second son, Abijah. However, his sons did not walk in his ways; like the sons of Eli, they were corrupt, sought personal gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. It was a tragedy to see Samuel’s sons stray from righteousness. Let us pray for our church leaders today, that they may always walk in integrity and righteousness. By God’s grace, let us also reject corrupt practices and live in a way that honors the LORD.

✿ The elders of Israel gathered in Ramah and told Samuel, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways. Now appoint a king to lead us, like all the other nations.” Samuel was deeply troubled by this request because the LORD was their King, but they wanted to be like other nations. Samuel prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered, “Listen to the people; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected Me as their king.” Despite all that God had done for them since Egypt, they still wanted to turn away and serve other gods. The LORD told Samuel to warn them about the consequences of having a king.

✿ Samuel warned them that the king would make them his servants:
Their sons would be taken for his chariots and horses, running before his army.
Some would become commanders, farmers, and blacksmiths to serve the king.
Their daughters would be taken as perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
The king would take the best fields, vineyards, and olive groves to give to his officials.
He would take a tenth of their grain and livestock.
They themselves would become his slaves.

✿ Samuel told them that one day they would cry out because of their king, but the LORD would not answer them. Yet the people refused to listen. They insisted, “We want a king over us! Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and go out before us to fight our battles.” Samuel reported their words to the LORD, and the LORD said, “Give them a king.” Samuel then sent the people home.

✿ God does not abandon His children even when they make poor choices.

His love is unconditional and eternal. Even in our mistakes, God provides guidance to bring the best possible outcome. If the job you chose is not the best in God's plan, yet you listen and obey Him, He will still bring the best from that situation. Even when we do not choose God's best for us, He does not leave us. His love never lets go!

✿ In the tribe of Benjamin, there was a man named Saul, son of Kish. He was a handsome and tall young man, the tallest among the people. When his father's donkeys were lost, his father told him to seek the prophet Samuel's help. Saul took a servant and searched for the donkeys but could not find them. Eventually, Saul suggested returning home, fearing his father would worry more about them than the donkeys. However, his servant suggested visiting the prophet, a man of God whose words always came true. Saul hesitated, saying they had no gift to bring, but the servant had a quarter shekel of silver. So, they went to find the prophet.

✿ As they entered the city, they met young women fetching water and asked about the seer. The women told them to hurry because he had just arrived for a sacrifice. As Saul and his servant approached the town, Samuel met them. The LORD had revealed to Samuel the day before that He would send him a man from Benjamin to anoint as ruler over Israel, to save them from the Philistines. When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "This is the man I spoke about; he will govern My people."

✿ Saul approached Samuel and asked, "Please tell me where the seer's house is." Samuel replied, "I am the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and tomorrow I will tell you what is on your heart. As for the donkeys lost three days ago, do not worry; they have been found. But the real treasure of Israel belongs to you and your father's house." Saul was astonished and asked, "Why do you speak to me this way? I am from Benjamin, the smallest tribe, and my family is the least of all."

✿ Lot chose the prosperous land of Sodom despite its wickedness and lost all his wealth and most of his family. Here, the Israelites demanded, "We want a king!" Many people today hesitate to do what is right because they fear:
Losing a friend
Losing a good job
Being different from the crowd
Losing wealth, power, or fame

✿ But no excuse can justify disobedience. If God has a plan for us, nothing we do will improve on His wisdom. If we insist on our own way, darkness lies ahead. We cannot be God's unique people while following worldly ways.

Our eating and dressing habits, education system, medical practices, and even judicial systems should align with God's will, not the world's customs. Sometimes, we fear being called extreme if we follow God's narrow path. But do we care more about what others think of us than about obeying God?

✿ Israel had the opportunity to showcase the greatness of God's government, but instead, they wanted to resemble the surrounding nations. We too seek security—financial stability, career growth, social respect, good health, and safe relationships. Our natural response to insecurity is to look at what others have and desire the same. We assume their possessions and status will make us secure. But what we truly need is Jesus Christ as King in our hearts. We must seek His Kingdom and righteousness first, and everything else will be added to us.

✿ Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:24) "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13) The apostle John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, assures us: "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15)

✿ Questions:

What cities did Samuel judge?

Why is it dangerous to misuse sacred things?

Why can't God be compared to anything?

Why did the Israelites want a king?

Why was Saul surprised by Samuel's words?

Why wasn't Samuel blamed for his sons' behavior?

What is the meaning of Ebenezer?

What were the names of Samuel's sons?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus! 

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 7:12.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

Prayer: Thank You Lord, for we know it is You who has helped us from birth until today. You are our King who cares for us more than anyone else. Remind us of this always. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Take a big stone and write on it "Ebenezer." Tell each other the story of how the name came to the Israelites. Or do a play of the Israelites going to Samuel and asking him for a king – 1 Samuel 8.

DAY 75 (March 16)

TOPIC: Saul is Anointed as King

(1 Samuel 9-12)

✿ So Samuel took Saul and his servant and seated them in a place of honor among about thirty invited guests. He then called the cook to bring the special portion of meat that had been set aside. The cook took the thigh and placed it before Saul, and Samuel said, "This has been kept for you for the appointed time." Saul ate with Samuel in amazement. Afterward, they came down from the high place to the city, where they spent the night on the rooftop. Early in the morning, Samuel called Saul and told him to rise so he could send him on his way. As they walked to the outskirts of the city, Samuel instructed Saul to send his servant ahead so he could deliver to him the word of God. Samuel then took a flask of olive oil, poured it on Saul's head, kissed him, and declared, "The LORD has anointed you as ruler over His people, Israel, to save them from the hands of their enemies, the Philistines."

✿ Samuel gave Saul several signs to confirm that his words were from the LORD. He told Saul that on his journey, he would meet two men near Rachel's tomb who would tell him that the donkeys he had been searching for had been found and that his father was now worried about him. Next, Saul would meet three men traveling to Bethel—one carrying three loaves of bread, another carrying a young goat, and the third carrying a skin of wine. They would greet him and give him two loaves of bread, which he was to accept. Then, upon reaching Gibeah, Saul would encounter a group of prophets playing harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres while prophesying. Samuel instructed Saul to go to Gilgal to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings and to wait seven days until Samuel arrived to show him what to do.

✿ As Saul left Samuel, God changed his heart, and the signs came to pass. When he met the prophets, the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he prophesied among them. Those who knew Saul were amazed and asked, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

✿ Saul's uncle later asked where he had been, and he told him everything except that he had been anointed king. Samuel then gathered the people at Mizpah and reminded them that although the LORD had rescued them from Egypt and from their enemies, they had rejected Him by asking for a king. Samuel then conducted a selection process, and the tribe of Benjamin was

chosen, then the family of Matri, and finally, Saul was chosen. However, when they searched for him, he was hiding among the baggage. They brought him out, and he stood taller than anyone else. Samuel declared, "Do you see whom the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people!" The people shouted, "Long live the king!"



✿ Many admired Saul's appearance and height rather than his character and devotion to God. Samuel explained the duties of a king, wrote them in a book, and placed it before the LORD. The people were sent home, and Saul returned to Gibeah with men whose hearts God had touched. However, some worthless men despised him and refused to bring him gifts, but Saul remained silent.

✿ Later, the people of Jabesh-Gilead cried out for help when the Ammonites attacked them. The Israelites sought peace, but the Ammonites demanded to gouge out their right eyes. When Saul heard of this, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he burned with anger. He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent them throughout Israel, declaring that anyone who did not follow him and Samuel into battle would face the same fate as the oxen. The fear of the LORD fell on the people, and 330,000 men gathered to fight. They assured the people of Jabesh-Gilead that they would rescue them by noon the next day. Saul divided his army into three divisions, attacked the Ammonites at dawn, and completely defeated them.

✿ After the victory, the people wanted to kill those who had doubted Saul, but he refused, saying, "No one shall die today, for the LORD has granted salvation to Israel." Samuel then led the people to Gilgal to reaffirm Saul's kingship before the LORD. They sacrificed peace offerings, and Saul and all the people rejoiced greatly.

✿ Samuel reminded Israel that he had listened to their request and appointed a king over them. He asked them to testify if he had wronged or oppressed anyone, taken anyone's ox or donkey, or accepted bribes. The people confirmed that he had done no wrong. Samuel then recounted the righteous acts of the

LORD, from Jacob's time to the exodus from Egypt and the era of the judges. He warned them that if they obeyed the LORD, they and their king would be blessed, but if they rebelled, the LORD's hand would be against them.

✿ To confirm his words, Samuel called upon the LORD to send thunder and rain as a sign of their wrongdoing in demanding a king. The people trembled and pleaded with Samuel to pray for them so they would not perish for their sins. Samuel reassured them, saying, "Do not be afraid. Yes, you have done evil, but do not turn away from following the LORD. Serve Him with all your heart, and do not chase after worthless things that cannot help or save you. The LORD will not abandon His people because of His great name, for it pleased Him to make you His own." Samuel also vowed, "Far be it from me to sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the right way. Fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart, remembering the great things He has done for you. But if you continue in evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

✿ We must all prepare for what is soon to come upon the world with great surprise. This preparation requires diligent study of God's Word and aligning our lives with His principles. We need revival and reformation. A revival of true godliness is our greatest and most urgent need, and seeking it must be our first priority. The time has come for deep and thorough reformation. When this begins, a spirit of prayer will awaken among believers, and divisions in the church will be overcome. "If My people, who are called by My name, humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

✿ God is always ready to fulfill this promise if His people meet the conditions. He gave this promise to Israel, and He will honor it for the church today. Have we not suffered enough under Satan's rule? Let us confess our sins, forsake our "idols," and plead for God to deliver us from this kingdom of darkness by sending Jesus to take us home. We must not compromise our faith to fit in with the world. We are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that we may declare His praises, who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

✿ Worldliness is rejecting and rebelling against God. Hardness of heart is failing to love our neighbors as ourselves, which is disobedience to God. The strongest argument for Christianity is a loving and lovable Christian. Nothing damages Christianity more than accusations of worldliness and hardness of heart among those who profess faith. Every follower of Christ must be careful not to bring reproach upon their faith. Gandhi once said, "If it weren't for

Christians, I would have been a Christian." While his reasoning was flawed, Jesus taught that we have a responsibility to lead others to Him by showing love (John 13:34-35).

✿ Every family should have dedicated times for morning and evening worship. Parents should gather their children before breakfast to thank God for His protection through the night and seek His guidance and care for the day. In the evening, they should gather again to thank Him for the blessings of the day.

Questions:

How were kings anointed in those days?

Why did the people want a king?

Why was Samuel saddened?

Why did the thunderstorm come?

What did Samuel say would happen if he stopped praying for Israel?

What signs was Saul given to confirm Samuel's words?May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 12:23, 24.

[23,24] "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. 24 But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your Holy Spirit who intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words, and for doing great things for us. Help us to pray for others and not be selfish in sharing the good news with friends. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Play-acting Samuel meeting Saul and anointing him as king.

DAY 76 (March 17)

TOPIC: Sinning by Performing the Priest's Duty

(1 Samuel 13-14)



✿ Saul ruled Israel for 40 years. He took 3,000 men for war and stayed with them. After ruling for some time, the Philistines came to fight against Israel, and he sent a message for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice. He waited seven days, but Samuel did not arrive, and the people began to scatter away from him. Losing patience, Saul sinned by instructing the people to bring him the burnt and peace offerings, which he then sacrificed to the LORD himself. Just as he finished offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to greet him, but Samuel asked, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "I saw that the people were scattering from me, and you did not come within the appointed days, while the Philistines had gathered against us."

✿ Even today, we must learn to be patient. When we pray to God and do not see immediate answers, we should have faith that He will act for our good.

Sometimes, impatience leads us to make bad decisions that are difficult to correct. Saul said he feared the Philistines would attack before he had sought the LORD's favor, so he forced himself to offer the burnt sacrifice.
Samuel told him that he had acted foolishly by not keeping the LORD's command. Because of this, the LORD would not establish Saul's kingdom forever. Instead, God had sought out a man after His own heart to be the ruler over His people. Samuel then left for Gibeah, and Saul counted his remaining men, only 600, and set out with his son Jonathan.

✿ No one in Israel had any weapons or armor except for Saul and Jonathan. Jonathan and his armor-bearer went secretly to the Philistine outpost without informing his father. Jonathan said, "Let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will act on our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." His armor-bearer agreed, saying, "Do all that you have in mind; I am with you heart and soul."

✿ They moved forward and revealed themselves to the Philistines. The Philistines mocked them, saying, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they were hiding!" They then told Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us, and we will teach you a lesson!" This was the sign Jonathan was waiting for—he knew the LORD had given the Philistines into Israel's hands.

✿ So they climbed up to the outpost and attacked, killing about 20 men. Then, the LORD caused a great panic among the Philistines—there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among the entire army. The Israelites saw the Philistines scattering, and Saul asked, "Who has left our camp?" When they counted their men, they realized only Jonathan and his armor-bearer were missing.

✿ Saul then ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be brought, but as the chaos among the Philistines grew, he decided to go into battle immediately instead. The Israelites pursued the Philistines in a great victory. That day, the LORD saved Israel.

✿ However, Saul had made a foolish oath, saying, "Cursed is anyone who eats food before evening, until I have avenged myself on my enemies." Because of this, the people did not eat, even though they were exhausted. In the forest, there was honey dripping from the trees, but no one dared to eat it because of Saul's oath.

✿ However, Jonathan had not heard about the oath. He dipped the tip of his staff into the honeycomb and tasted it. Immediately, his eyes brightened. A

soldier who saw him warned him about his father's oath, saying, "Your father made the people swear not to eat today, and now they are weak because of it."

✿ Jonathan replied, "My father has brought trouble to the land! See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little honey? If the people had been allowed to eat freely today, we would have won a much greater victory!" The people were so hungry that they later ate meat with the blood still in it, violating God's law. Saul told them not to sin and had them slaughter the animals properly before eating.

✿ Later, Saul wanted to continue pursuing the Philistines at night, but when he inquired of the LORD, there was no answer. He then cast lots to find out who had sinned. The lot fell on Jonathan, and he admitted, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of my staff. Now I must die."

✿ Saul declared, "You shall surely die, Jonathan!" But the people intervened, saying, "Shall Jonathan die, who has brought about this great victory in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair on his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God today." The people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

✿ This story teaches us that making reckless vows is unwise. Saul continued fighting against Israel's enemies, including Moab, Ammon, Edom, Amalek, and the Philistines, showing great bravery in battle. His army commander was Abner, his uncle's son. As long as Saul reigned, there was constant war, and whenever he found a strong warrior, he recruited him into his army.

✿ Jonathan teaches us that victory does not depend on the size of an army, wealth, or weapons. Instead, when we stand with the LORD, we are assured of victory. Most fathers would not want to kill their own sons, but Saul valued his pride and reputation more than his son. However, heaven's angels protected Jonathan and his servant, and they fought until the Philistines fell before them.

✿ David had many flaws, just like Saul. However, the difference between these two sinful kings was that one clung to his kingdom while the other clung to the King of Kings. Only when we acknowledge our weaknesses and accept God's true rule over our lives can we become people after God's own heart.

✿ We should not make excuses like, "I must work on the Sabbath because my employer forces me," or "I must accept a bribe because I need money urgently," or "I must lie because I was pressured to," or "I didn't return my

tithe and offerings because my budget was too tight." These are all excuses without integrity. We are only safe when we fully obey God's Word.

✿ Dedicate Yourself to God Each Morning
Make it your first task every morning to commit yourself to God. Your prayer should be:

"Take me, O Lord, and make me entirely Yours. I lay all my plans at Your feet. Use me today in Your service. Be with me, and let all my work be done in You."
This should be a daily practice. Every morning, dedicate yourself to God for that day. Entrust all your plans to Him, so they can be carried out or adjusted according to His divine will. By doing this, you will be placing your life in God's hands day by day, and your character will be shaped more and more to reflect the life of Christ.

✿ Questions:

1. Why did Samuel tell Saul that his kingdom was lost?
2. How did Jonathan help Israel win the battle?
3. Why did Saul want to kill Jonathan?
4. Who saved Jonathan?
5. Who was the commander of Israel's army?
6. Why is it a sin to stop praying for a sinner?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 14:6.

[6] Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

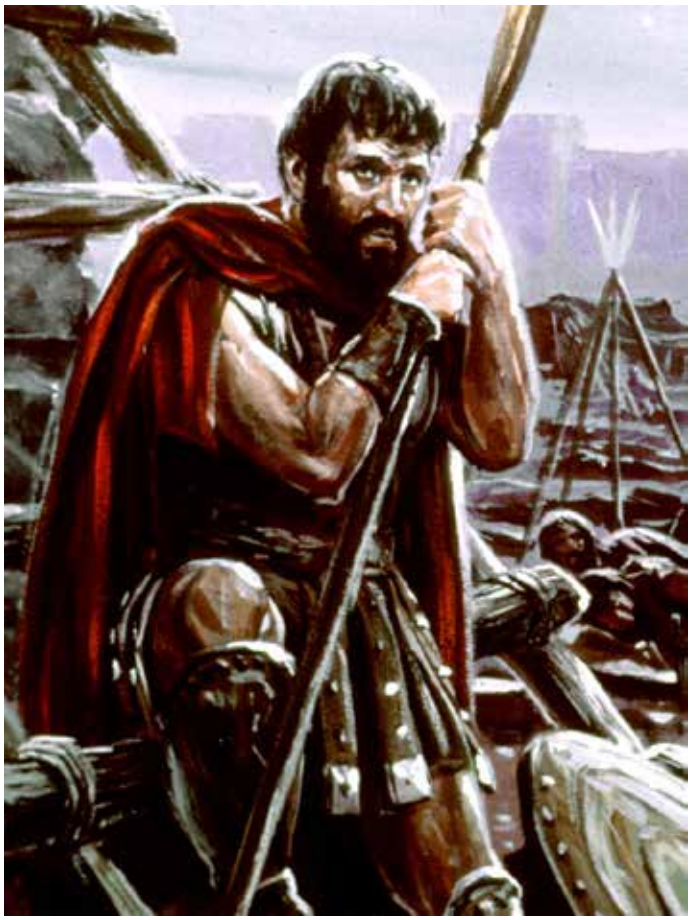
Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You can give us victory whether we are many or few. Thank You for salvation; forgive us our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Compare the faults or sins of Saul and David.

DAY 77 (March 18)

TOPIC: God Regrets About Saul, Who Valued Traditions More Than Obedience

(1 Samuel 15-16)



✿ Samuel delivered a message from the Lord to Saul, instructing him to attack the Amalekites because they had mistreated the Israelites when they were coming out of Egypt. He was given specific instructions to completely destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions. Saul gathered and counted 210,000 men and went to war. He defeated the Amalekites, captured their king, Agag, alive, and killed his people with the sword. However, Saul spared Agag and took the best sheep, cattle, and valuable items instead of destroying everything as commanded. Only the worthless and weak things were completely destroyed.

The word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." Samuel was grieved and cried out to the Lord all night. Early in the morning, he went to see Saul. When Saul saw Samuel, he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have obeyed the command of the Lord." But he was lying. Samuel responded, "Then why do I hear the sound of sheep and cattle?" Saul replied, "I spared these animals to offer them as sacrifices to the Lord, but everything else was destroyed."

✿ Samuel then told Saul a message from the Lord, saying, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did I not make you the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you as king over Israel. He then sent you on a mission, commanding you to completely destroy the sinful Amalekites and

fight against them until they were exterminated. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Instead, you took the plunder and did evil in the sight of the Lord." Saul argued that he had obeyed and had only brought King Agag and the best animals to sacrifice to God.

✿ Samuel replied, "The Lord does not delight in sacrifices as much as in obedience. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness is as bad as idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you as king." At that moment, Saul realized Samuel was serious and that he had been the one to anoint him as king. Saul did not care much about his disobedience to God but was more concerned about his position as king. He admitted, "I have sinned by disobeying the Lord's command and your words. I was afraid of the people, so I listened to them instead." Saul then pleaded, "Please forgive my sin and come back with me so I may worship the Lord."

✿ Samuel refused to go with him, saying, "You have rejected the word of the Lord, and He has rejected you as king over Israel." As Samuel turned to leave, Saul grabbed the edge of his robe, and it tore. Samuel then declared, "Today, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you and has given it to someone better than you. The Strength of Israel does not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man that He should repent." Saul, still concerned about his reputation, begged Samuel to honor him before the elders and the people by returning with him to worship the Lord. Samuel agreed, and they worshiped together.

Samuel then ordered Agag to be brought before him. Agag thought his execution had been forgotten. However, Samuel told him, "Just as you have made many women widows, so shall your mother be bereaved today." Samuel then cut Agag into pieces in Gilgal. After that, Samuel went to his home in Ramah, while Saul returned to his home in Gibeah. Samuel never went to see Saul again until the day of his death, though he mourned for him. The Lord regretted making Saul king over Israel.

✿ The Lord told Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing that I have rejected him as king of Israel?" It is a sorrowful thing when the Creator regrets giving us His blessings. God then instructed Samuel to fill his horn with oil and go to Jesse of Bethlehem because He had chosen one of his sons to be king. Samuel was afraid, saying, "If Saul hears about this, he will kill me." The Lord told him to take a heifer and say he was going to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. He was to invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Samuel obeyed, and when he arrived in Bethlehem, the town elders trembled and asked, "Do you come

in peace, man of God?" Samuel assured them it was in peace and that he had come to offer a sacrifice. He told them to sanctify themselves and join him in worship. He also sanctified Jesse and his sons and asked Jesse to bring his sons before him. Jesse had seven sons.

When Jesse brought his first son, Eliab, who was tall and handsome, Samuel thought, "Surely, this must be the one." But the Lord told him, "Do not look at his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not see as man sees; man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Jesse then presented his second son, Abinadab, but Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." Jesse then presented his third son, Shammah, but again Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen him."

✿ Obedience is better than sacrifice. Good deeds can never replace obedience. Many people believe that God cares more about tithes and offerings than about obedience, but that is not true! Rebellion places us in agreement with the devil. When we act according to our own opinions instead of following God's will, we worship ourselves rather than Him.

✿ Prayer: Lord, help me to love You more deeply, follow You more closely, humble myself completely before You, and hear Your voice more clearly. Amen!

✿ You must learn to see with both your mind and your eyes. Your decisions must be educated, effective, and appropriate. You must pray for guidance and commit your ways to the Lord. You must close your heart to foolishness and sin while opening it to every influence from heaven. Use your time and opportunities wisely to develop a balanced character.

✿ Questions:

1. Why did God want the Amalekites to be punished?
2. What excuse did Saul give for not destroying the Amalekites?
3. What did Samuel tell Saul when he made excuses?
4. Who was Jesse's father?
5. Why is rebellion like witchcraft, and stubbornness like idolatry?
6. What is wrong with judging someone based on their appearance rather than their character?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22, 23.

[22,23] But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help us to obey You and to listen to Your voice. Help us to abandon arrogance, idolatry, witchcraft, and rebellion. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: How can a person have a heart that pleases the Lord? Focus on these verses: "Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command.'"

Activity: Compare the faults or sins of Saul and David.

TOPIC 78 (March 19)

LESSON: David is Chosen as King

(1 Samuel 16-17)



✿ Then Jesse made his seven sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The LORD has not chosen these.” Samuel then asked Jesse if all his children had been presented. Jesse replied that his youngest son was still tending the sheep. Samuel commanded someone to go and bring him, saying, “We will not sit down until he comes here.” Surely, he must have been a young man of good character and one who loved God, for if an elderly man of God refused to sit until he arrived, this young son of Jesse must have been special.

So David was brought in; he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes, and a handsome appearance. The LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is the one.” Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David, and the Spirit of the LORD came upon him powerfully from that day forward. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

✿ David went on to become a strong king, a man after God’s own heart. Even the Messiah was later called by his name, “Son of David.” Meanwhile, the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit tormented him.



His servants noticed that he was being troubled by an evil spirit or demonic forces. They suggested bringing in a skilled harp player so that whenever the evil spirit from Satan tormented him, the musician could play and soothe him, bringing relief. Even today, many people are tormented by evil spirits and depression, and what helps them find healing is the name of Christ.

One of Saul's servants mentioned that he had seen David, the son of Jesse from Bethlehem, who was skilled in playing the harp, a brave and mighty warrior, wise in speech, and a handsome man with whom the LORD was present. At this time, David was not yet 18 years old, meaning he was still considered a child by today's standards. People recognized David's bravery, wisdom, and even his beauty. Indeed, even a child is known by their character.

✿ Saul sent a message to Jesse asking for David, and Jesse sent bread, a goat, and wine as a gift to the king along with his son. Interestingly, kings in those days were highly honored; today, if you are called to the palace for a musical performance, you get paid, but in those days, a king was given gifts, and his children could be taken as servants, as the LORD had foretold through the prophet Samuel. Saul sent another message to Jesse asking him to allow David to stay with him, for he had grown fond of him. Whenever the evil spirit came upon Saul, David would play the harp, and Saul would be refreshed, and the evil spirit would leave him, for the Spirit of God was with David.

Children, today, when we see people possessed by evil spirits, we must understand that they need prayers to be delivered. Those who acknowledge the God of heaven and live righteous lives have helped many people by casting out demons or jinn, which are servants of Satan—fallen angels that torment people greatly. But in the name of God or Christ, they can be cast out.

✿ At that time, the Philistines gathered for battle in Judah, and Saul and the Israelites camped in the valley to fight against them. The Philistines stood on one hill, and the Israelites on another, with a valley between them. Then a champion came out from the Philistine camp, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was over nine feet. He would not have fit through an ordinary doorway. He wore a bronze helmet, a coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels of bronze, bronze armor on his legs, and a bronze javelin on his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels.

✿ His shield-bearer went before him. Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, mocking them: "Choose a man to come down and fight me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will be your slaves, but if I prevail against him and kill him, you will be our slaves and serve us." The Philistine continued

to defy the armies of Israel. When Saul and the Israelites heard these words, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

David, the son of Jesse, had three older brothers in Saul's army. At this time, he was moving back and forth between Saul and tending his father's sheep in Bethlehem. For forty days, Goliath came forward, morning and evening, to challenge and intimidate the Israelites.

✿ One day, Jesse told his son David to take roasted grain, cheese, and bread to his three brothers in battle and to check on their welfare and bring back news. David rose early in the morning, left the flock with a shepherd, took the food, and set out. He arrived just as the army was going out to fight, and they were shouting the war cry. The Israelites and Philistines had drawn up their battle lines, facing each other. David left his supplies with the keeper of baggage and ran to greet his brothers—Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah.

While he was talking to them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped forward and repeated his usual defiance, and David heard it. When the Israelites saw him, they fled in great fear, discussing how this man had come to defy Israel. They said the king had promised a great reward for whoever killed him, including riches, his daughter in marriage, and freedom for his family.

✿ David asked about the reward and questioned why this uncircumcised Philistine should be allowed to defy the armies of the living God. The people told him about the king's promised rewards. However, David's eldest brother Eliab overheard him talking and became angry. He scolded David, accusing him of abandoning his responsibilities to come watch the battle or gossip. Eliab said, "I know you have left your duties just to watch the battle." But David responded, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?"

✿ A Prayer for God's Guidance Can Be Made Anytime and Anywhere

There is no time or place where it is inappropriate to pray to God. Nothing can prevent us from lifting our hearts in sincere prayer. In the midst of crowds on the streets, in the middle of work or business, we can send a request to God for guidance, just as Nehemiah prayed before King Artaxerxes. A close fellowship with God can be found wherever we are. We should always keep the door of our hearts open, continuously inviting Christ to come and dwell within us as our heavenly Guest.

✿ Questions:

How many brothers did David have? What were their names?

Why did David dislike Goliath's words?

What did Goliath wear when he went to battle?

How can you help someone possessed by evil spirits or jinn?

Why do people focus so much on outward beauty, even to the point of buying it if possible?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Disciple of Jesus 👨‍👨‍👦



Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7.

[7] But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Prayer: Holy Father in Heaven, help us not to judge people by their outward appearance when we deal with them. Increase our faith and discernment to recognize the people You have chosen and to work together with them in Your service.

Activity: Game "Outer Appearance vs. Inner Qualities."

1. Tell the story: Read 1 Samuel 16:6–7, focusing on how Samuel looked at Jesse's sons based on appearance but God reminded him, "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

2. Describe Jesse's sons: Let children take turns describing one of Jesse's sons (as a brother, friend, or even themselves).

3. Play "Who is it?" or guess who? The other children try to figure out who is being described. The main goal is to guide them to describe both outward features (height, strength, good looks) and inner qualities (kindness, faithfulness, bravery, generosity).

4. David: Emphasize that finally Samuel found David, the youngest son, who was not even considered by his family as a candidate to be anointed, but was chosen by God because of his heart.

DAY 79 (March 20)

TOPIC: The Battle Belongs to the Lord, Not to Us

(1 Samuel 17)

✿ David was shocked that not a single skilled warrior dared to defend God's Name after 40 days of Goliath's insults and boasting. Even King Saul, the tallest man in Israel, had cowered in fear. But David had a heart to defend Jehovah's Name! He didn't focus on his youth or short stature; instead, he asked God for strength. If we focus on our weaknesses, we fail to see what God sees in us—imperfect vessels that need to be filled with His power and strength so that we may glorify Him. When the devil mocks us, saying that God is not real or trustworthy, we must remember the times we have triumphed with God's help.

God calls us into impossible situations so that He may be glorified through our weaknesses. David used the skills he already knew—his slingshot. He took action without knowing the outcome, but he stepped forward in faith. God does not need military expertise to secure victory; all He requires is complete surrender. Before our enemies surrender to us, we must first surrender to God.

✿ God has gifted each of us with unique talents for His glory. Do not worry if you are young, weak, or lack technological skills. Just come to Jesus as you are and ask Him to transform you. When David's words reached King Saul, he sent for him. David assured Saul that no one should lose heart because of Goliath; he was ready to fight the Philistine. Saul doubted him, saying, "You are only a young man, and he has been a warrior since his youth." But David recounted how he had fought lions and bears while tending his father's sheep.

✿ He declared that the Philistine who defied God's army would meet the same fate as the wild beasts he had slain. "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul then said, "Go, and may the Lord be with you." Saul tried to dress David in his armor, but it was too heavy, like a child trying to wear his father's clothes. So, David removed them and instead took his shepherd's staff, selected five smooth stones from the stream, and placed them in his pouch.

✿ With his sling in hand, he approached Goliath. The Philistine, seeing David, despised him for being young and handsome. He mocked, "Am I a dog that



you come at me with sticks?" He cursed David by his gods, threatening to feed his flesh to the birds and wild animals. But David responded with powerful words that still echo today: "You come against me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."

✿ David boldly declared that God would deliver Goliath into his hands so that "the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel." He emphasized that "the Lord does not save by sword or spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

✿ As Goliath advanced, David ran toward him. This probably shocked Goliath, as all the other Israelites had fled in fear. Perhaps he thought David was insane. But David placed a stone in his sling, swung it, and struck Goliath in the forehead. The giant fell face down. Though Goliath was well-armored, God guided the stone to the small exposed area on his forehead.

The Israelites were amazed that David, a young boy, had defeated a warrior without even using a sword. David then took Goliath's own sword and killed him. When the Philistines saw their champion fall, they fled, and the Israelites pursued them to Goliath's hometown of Gath and beyond, looting their camps.

✿ Saul then asked his commander, Abner, "Whose son is this young man?" Even though David had played the harp for Saul to drive away evil spirits, Abner did not know.

Even today, the Lord fights for His people. God can do incredible things through someone as young as David. No challenge is too big for God if we let Him lead us and obey Him. Everything we undertake will succeed if He is number one in our lives. David saw Goliath not as an unbeatable giant but as too big to miss when God was with him.

✿ The Bible says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12). When God's children are attacked for defending righteousness, it is Satan attacking them. They must ensure that God is with them and believe that He will fight for them, as He promised in Exodus 14:14. However, they must use God's way to fight their enemies.

What is God's way? "But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes

His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matthew 5:44-45).

✿ A prayer for God's guidance can be made anytime and anywhere. There is no time or place where prayer is inappropriate. Nothing can stop us from lifting our hearts in sincere prayer. Whether in a crowd, at work, or in the midst of business, we can send a silent plea to God, just as Nehemiah did before King Artaxerxes. A close relationship with God can be maintained wherever we are. Our hearts should always be open to Jesus, inviting Him to dwell within us.

✿ Questions:

1. Why did Saul give David his battle armor?
2. Why did Goliath think he would win?
3. Name five things that helped David win.
4. Why is it not good to despise people, even if they seem small?
5. Who did Saul ask about David?
6. How can we make God number one in our lives?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus! 

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 17:45.

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your goodness, protection, and favor. Help us in our deeds never to defy You, but to honor and love You. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Play-acting—David picking up five stones and going with his sling, aiming at a chosen target like a tree.

DAY 80 (March 21)

TOPIC: The Friendship of David and Jonathan

(1 Samuel 18-20)

✿ Jonathan and David's Friendship and King Saul's Jealousy



When David spoke with Saul, Saul's son, Jonathan, loved David as his own soul. Their spirits were bound together, and Jonathan loved David deeply. Saul took David into his service and did not allow him to return to his father's house, except for occasional visits. Jonathan removed his royal garments and gave them to David, along with his sword, bow, and belt. Wherever Saul sent David, he acted wisely, and Saul appointed him over his army. This pleased the people, including Saul's servants.

After David defeated Goliath, women came out to celebrate Saul with tambourines, joy, and musical instruments. They sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." This was unwise, as the victory belonged to the Lord, and their words incited conflict among the men of Israel. Saul became angry upon hearing this, as he did not want anyone to receive more praise than him. From that day on, Saul viewed David as a threat to his kingdom and became jealous of him.

✿ Saul's Jealousy and Attempts to Kill David

A harmful spirit came upon Saul, and while David played the harp to soothe him, Saul, holding a spear, tried to kill David by throwing it at him twice. David escaped both times. Saul feared David because he knew the Lord was with him. Instead of rejoicing that his son-in-law was wise and blessed, Saul became more fearful and envious.

Saul then offered his eldest daughter to David as a wife, but with the secret hope that David would be killed by the Philistines. However, when David humbly declined, saying he was unworthy, Saul gave her to another man. Later, Saul's second daughter, Michal, fell in love with David. Saul saw this as another opportunity to trap David. When David said he was too poor to provide a royal bride price, Saul demanded 100 Philistine foreskins instead. Saul hoped David would die in battle, but David completed the task, and Saul had no choice but to give Michal to him in marriage.

✿ Saul's Hatred Grows

As David continued to act wisely and gain favor, Saul's fear and jealousy increased. Instead of being grateful for a righteous and capable successor, Saul sought to kill David. Jealousy is a dangerous poison that wastes time and destroys blessings. When we feel envy, we should pray for God to remove it from our hearts and ask Him to bless those we envy.

Saul ordered his son Jonathan and his servants to kill David. However, Jonathan, who loved David, warned him of the danger and pleaded with his father to reconsider. Jonathan reminded Saul of David's loyalty and bravery in defeating Goliath. For a moment, Saul relented and swore that David would not be killed. But when war broke out again and David won another battle, Saul's evil spirit returned. Once more, he tried to kill David with a spear while David played the harp. David escaped and fled. Even when enemies continuously seek to harm us, God will protect us if our time has not yet come. No one can take us out of God's hands.

✿ Michal Helps David Escape

Saul sent men to David's house to kill him in the morning. Michal warned David and helped him escape through a window. She then placed an idol in his bed, covering it with clothes and goat hair to make it look like David was still sleeping. When Saul's men came for him, they found the decoy. Saul confronted Michal, but she lied, saying David had threatened her.

David fled to Samuel in Ramah and told him everything. Saul sent men to capture David there, but when they arrived and saw a group of prophets prophesying, they too began to prophesy. This happened three times with different groups of Saul's messengers. Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah, and even he was overcome by the Spirit of God and began to prophesy, removing his garments.

✿ David and Jonathan's Final Covenant

David then met Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What sin have I committed against your father that he wants to kill me?" Jonathan reassured

him that he would not die, as his father always informed him of his plans. However, David explained that Saul was hiding his true intentions from Jonathan because of their friendship.

Jonathan and David made a plan for David to hide during the New Moon feast and see how Saul would react to his absence. If Saul was calm, there was no danger. If he became angry, it would mean he intended to kill David. David suggested using an excuse that he had gone to Bethlehem to offer sacrifices with his family.

Jonathan and David then renewed their covenant before the Lord. No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord (Isaiah 54:17). When the Holy Spirit leaves a person, an evil spirit can take over, leading them to do terrible things.

✿ Keeping the Holy Spirit in Our Lives
We must avoid living in sin without repentance, as this drives away the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Jealousy and envy originate from Satan and lead to destruction. Many people chase power and wealth through deceitful means. Some even claim to sell land on the moon, and millions of people have paid for it, despite the absurdity. Others dream of living in space, like Elon Musk, who offers a $55 million trip to space. But we do not need to live in such illusions.

We have God's promise that if we remain faithful, He will take us beyond the moon to explore the heavens and places beyond human reach. What a glorious promise!

✿ A Friendship Like No Other
Jonathan and David's friendship was a rare example of true loyalty. Jonathan was even willing to give up his right to the throne for David. This is similar to John the Baptist, who wanted Jesus to increase while he himself decreased. A friendship built on love for God shapes character. If we look to Christ as our example, we will become humble, loving, and peaceful. Heaven sees those who carry love and peace as its ambassadors, and they will receive their reward.

✿ Angels Are Near to Guide Us
Like Nathanael, we must study God's Word for ourselves and pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. The same Jesus who saw Nathanael under the fig tree sees us in our secret place of prayer. Angels from the kingdom of light are near those who humbly seek God's guidance.

✿ Questions:

Why did Jonathan give David his garments?

What words did the women sing that angered King Saul?

How can you avoid causing conflicts among people?

What bride price did Saul demand from David to marry his daughter?

What was the name of David's first wife?

How did Michal help David escape from death?

Why was Saul afraid of David?

What excuse did David give for missing the New Moon feast?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Disciple of Jesus 

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 18:4.

[4] Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow, and his belt.

Prayer: Dear Lord, is there anything too hard for You? Please help me to have a friend whom I love and who loves me, so that together we may support one another in life, do Your work, and build each other up. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss how to find good friends—for example, attending worship and spiritual events, joining small groups and Bible studies, and taking part in church-related service activities. You can also make Christian friends by joining various hobby groups. Volunteer in faith-based organizations, and attend Christian social gatherings. To build friendship, introduce yourself to people, ask open-ended questions, show interest and care, and invite others to do things with you, such as sharing a drink or meal. Focus on a lifestyle that honors the Creator, serve others, pray for guidance, and have a generous heart.

DAY 81 (March 22)

TOPIC: The Slaughter of the Priests

(1 Samuel 20-22)



✿ Jonathan promised not to hide anything from David that would be of benefit or for his safety. He added, "May the Lord deal with me, Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if my father intends to harm you and I do not tell you and send you away in peace. May the Lord be with you as He has been with my father." Jonathan, knowing that God had given the kingdom to David, reminded him to show kindness to him and his descendants when the Lord had completely cut off all David's enemies from the face of the earth. Jonathan made a covenant with David again because of the love he had for him, for he loved him as his own soul. He told him that the next day, during the new moon festival, he should hide, and he would shoot three arrows as though aiming at a target. Then he would send a boy to retrieve them. If he told the boy, "The arrows are on this side of you; bring them here," then David would know it was safe. But if he said, "The arrows are beyond you," then David should flee because danger was near. Jonathan assured David, "The Lord is between you and me forever concerning this matter we have spoken."

✿ David hid and did not attend the meal. Jonathan and Abner were seated in their places, along with the other officials, but David was missing. Saul said nothing at first, thinking David might be unclean. However, on the second day, when Saul noticed David's absence, he asked Jonathan, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat either yesterday or today?" Jonathan explained that David had asked for permission to go home and offer a sacrifice. At this, Saul's anger burned against his son, and he said, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame?" He told Jonathan that as long as David lived, he would never be king and ordered him to bring David so he could be killed.

✿ Jonathan asked, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" But Saul hurled a spear at him in a fit of rage. Jonathan, deeply grieved for David and ashamed of his father's actions, refused to eat. Saul had once been a commoner, with no royal lineage, yet he had become arrogant, wanting his kingdom to last at all costs. Even today, power and authority intoxicate many; before they attain them, they are humble, but once they do, they oppress others. Some in power desire to be worshiped and revered. Even as a child, one day, if the Lord tarries, you may have authority over your children, spouse, family, school, or even a government position. How will you use that authority? Pray for humility so that you do not oppress others.

✿ The next morning, Jonathan went out as agreed and used the arrow signal to inform David of the danger. The boy retrieving the arrows was unaware of the secret message. After sending the boy away with his weapons, Jonathan and David met. David bowed three times, and they wept together. Jonathan told David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me and between your descendants and mine forever.'" This was the last time they saw each other at the palace. Despite facing years of hardship, David found peace in God and continued to praise Him in the Psalms, knowing that God was his Father and protector. Let us also take comfort in knowing that God is our Father.

✿ David then fled to Nob and met the high priest Ahimelech, who trembled when he saw him, wondering why he was alone, perhaps expecting him to have an escort or even the king himself. David lied, claiming he was on a mission from the king, and asked for five loaves of bread. The priest told him there was no ordinary bread, only the consecrated showbread that was replaced weekly. He asked if David and his men had kept themselves pure, to which David assured him they had. That day, there was a spy of King Saul present, Doeg the Edomite, who later reported these events.



✿ David also asked the priest for a weapon, and the priest offered him the sword of Goliath, which was kept as a memorial. David took it and fled from Saul in fear, heading to King Achish of Gath in Philistine territory. However, the people of Gath recognized him and said, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Wasn’t it about him that people sang, ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands’?”

✿ When David heard this, he became very afraid of Achish and pretended to be insane. He scratched at the doors and let saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his servants, “Why bring this madman to me? Do I lack madmen that you have brought him to behave like this in front of me?”

✿ David then escaped to the cave of Adullam, where his family and others in distress, debt, or bitterness of soul joined him, and he became their leader—gathering about 400 men. He took his parents to the king of Moab for safety, saying, “Let them stay with you until I learn what God will do for me.” This showed his deep love and care for his parents. Moab was the homeland of his great-grandmother Ruth. Here, David set an example of honoring and protecting one’s parents in their old age. The prophet Gad later told him to move to Judah, and he went to the forest of Hereth.
✿ Meanwhile, Saul, in his paranoia, accused his own tribe of conspiring with David, saying David could not help them like he could. He lamented that no one sympathized with him or informed him that Jonathan had allied with

David. Saul falsely claimed David was waiting to ambush him, even though it was the other way around. He wanted people to hate David and pity him instead.

✿ Doeg the Edomite then informed Saul about David's visit to Nob, where he received food and a weapon from the priest Ahimelech. Saul summoned Ahimelech and the other priests, accusing them of conspiring against him by helping David. Ahimelech defended himself, saying that David was a loyal servant, his son-in-law, and a man of honor. He admitted that he had consulted God for David multiple times and had done nothing wrong. Despite this, Saul ordered his men to kill the priests, but they refused. Instead, Doeg carried out the execution, killing 85 priests that day. He also attacked the entire city of Nob, slaughtering men, women, children, infants, and livestock. Only one son of Ahimelech, Abiathar, escaped.



✿ David was not perfect, though he was a man after God's own heart. Only Jesus was perfect. Jesus, unlike David, prayed for His enemies (Luke 23:34), and while David had multiple wives and concubines (2 Samuel 16:21-22), Jesus taught monogamy (Matthew 19:4-6). Among all who have ever lived, only Jesus was without sin. He is our ultimate example. Those who use David's life to justify cursing enemies or polygamy are mistaken. God did not set David as our example—Jesus is. Follow Jesus, for He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. The good examples of biblical figures should be followed only where they align with Christ.

✿ The understanding of truth depends less on intellectual power and more on purity of heart, sincerity, and faith in God. Those who humbly seek God's guidance are accompanied by His angels. The Holy Spirit reveals the treasures of truth to them.

✿ Questions:
What did Jonathan swear to David?
What words did Saul use to rebuke Jonathan?
Why did Saul kill 85 priests of the Lord?
Why was Doeg's action evil?
Why did David find a place for his parents to live?
Why was Ahimelech afraid when he saw David?
Why do people change when they gain power?
Why was Jonathan willing to risk his life?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: Proverbs 18:24.

[24] A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Prayer: Thank You Father who dwells on high in heaven. Thank You for good friends who support one another in many ways and comfort each other. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Reflection:
Show how two different people can be joined together and support one another side by side, like David and Jonathan.

Important Points to Emphasize:

Faithfulness: David and Jonathan were true friends who stayed united even when times were difficult.

Loyalty: Jonathan kept his promise to David by warning him and making David's safety a priority.

God's Love: God uses friendship to protect us and sustain us, showing His love through the loyalty of other people.

Promise: Later, David, as king, showed his loyalty to Jonathan by taking care of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, who was lame.

DAY 82 (March 23)

LESSON: Abiathar Flees to David

(1 Samuel 22-24)

✿ When Abiathar saw that his relatives and family had been killed, he fled to David and told him what had happened. David remembered that Doeg the Edomite was there on the day he had gone to ask for food and a sword. He was deeply saddened because his actions had led to the deaths of his father's family. David told Abiathar, "Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life also seeks yours, but with me, you will be safe." He encouraged him.

When they heard that the Philistines were attacking Keilah and stealing grain from the fields, David inquired of the LORD whether he should go, and the LORD told him to go and rescue Keilah. His men were afraid, but David asked the LORD again, and the LORD assured him, "I will give the Philistines into your hands." They went and, through fierce attacks, plundered the enemy and saved Keilah.

✿ Abiathar had brought priestly garments with him. When Saul heard that David was in Keilah, he thought God had delivered him into his hands and went down there. David learned that Saul intended harm. He asked Abiathar the priest, who had an ephod, to inquire of the LORD whether the people of Keilah would hand him over to Saul. The LORD confirmed that they would. So David and his 600 men left, and he continued to live in the wilderness, in strongholds and mountains, fleeing from the ruthless King Saul. Though Saul searched for him daily, God did not deliver David into his hands.
David remained in the wilderness of Ziph, where Jonathan visited him and encouraged him, saying, "Do not be afraid, for my father Saul will not find you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father knows this." They renewed their covenant before the LORD, and Jonathan returned home. This friendship demonstrates remarkable loyalty—loving and defending someone because they are good, without favoritism or choosing evil simply because of family ties.

✿ The people of Ziph sought to gain favor with Saul in Gibeah by offering to betray David, saying he was hiding in their strongholds. They urged Saul to come down and promised to deliver David into his hands. Saul blessed the Ziphites for showing concern for him and sent them to gather more intelligence on David's exact location, knowing that David was cunning. The Ziphites went

to spy while David remained in the wilderness of Arabah.

As Saul's men closed in on David in the mountains, David hid in fear, not wanting to kill the LORD's anointed. Just as Saul and his army were about to capture David, Saul received news that the Philistines had attacked his land. He had to abandon his pursuit of David and return to fight the Philistines. Afterward, David moved to the strongholds of En Gedi.

✿ Saul later resumed his pursuit of David in En Gedi with 3,000 men. He entered a cave to relieve himself, unaware that David and his men were hiding inside. David's men urged him to kill Saul, saying, "This is the day the LORD has delivered your enemy into your hands; do to him as you wish." Instead, David quietly cut off the corner of Saul's robe but refused to harm him. He said, "Far be it from me to lay a hand on the LORD's anointed." He rebuked his men, preventing them from attacking Saul.

After Saul left the cave, David called out to him and showed him the piece of his robe. Saul, realizing that David had spared his life, bowed down and wept.

✿ David asked Saul why he believed people who said David wanted to harm him. He explained that he could have killed Saul that very day but chose not to, saying, "I will not lift my hand against the LORD's anointed." He showed Saul the piece of his robe as proof that he had no evil intentions. Though Saul had been hunting him, David refused to retaliate.

✿ David declared, "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may He avenge me on you, but my hand will not touch you." Saul, deeply moved, admitted, "You are more righteous than I, for you have treated me well, but I have treated you badly."
✿ Saul blessed David, saying, "May the LORD reward you for the good you have done to me today." He acknowledged that David would be king and asked him to swear not to destroy his descendants or erase his family name. David swore, and Saul returned home while David stayed in his stronghold.

✿ Forgiving and Not Seeking Revenge is a Gift. People like Saul, who are filled with jealousy and hatred, may not recognize grace even when they are forgiven. We must remember that God will not forgive those who refuse to forgive others. No one is without fault—we all offend or are offended. If someone refuses to acknowledge their mistakes, it is difficult for them to receive forgiveness.

Saul knew he had disobeyed God's command, but instead of repenting humbly,

he was only sad because he feared losing his position as king. Saul suffered from the "Lucifer Syndrome," twisting the truth and claiming that David sought to kill him when, in reality, he was the one trying to kill David.

If we refuse to truly repent for our sins and instead blame or accuse God's people, rather than taking responsibility, we have a serious problem. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

✿ Whatever We Need, We Can Ask for in Prayer. Every promise in God's Word provides a subject for prayer (there are over 6,000 promises in the Bible!). Each promise gives us something to pray about, presenting the Word of Jehovah as our assurance. No matter what spiritual blessing we need, we have the privilege of asking for it through Jesus.

We can tell the Lord, with the simplicity and humility of a child, exactly what we need. We can ask Him about our temporary needs, such as food and clothing, as well as eternal needs, such as the Bread of Life and the robe of Christ's righteousness. Our Heavenly Father knows what we need and invites us to ask Him for everything. It is through the name of Jesus that every grace is received. God honors that name and will supply your needs out of His abundant generosity.

✿ Questions:

Why did Jonathan come to David?

Why did Saul express words of repentance to David but not stop his evil actions?

Why did Saul bless David?

Why didn't David kill Saul?

Did people truly tell Saul that David was his enemy?

Why did Saul continue to do evil despite feeling remorse?

Some people justify wrongdoing by saying, "David did it too." How would you respond to them?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus 👥

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 23:16-18.

[16-18] And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the faithfulness of good friends like Jonathan.

Activity: A play of the story of David at Engedi cutting off a piece of Saul's robe. Show how David controlled himself, respected others, and even honored Saul. —1 Samuel 24.

DAY 83 (March 24)

TOPIC: David, Nabal, and Abigail

(1 Samuel 25)



✿ Samuel died, and all Israel mourned for him and buried him in Ramah. David then went to the wilderness of Maon with his army and their families. In Maon, there was a man named Nabal who was very wealthy, owning 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. He was shearing his sheep at the time. His wife, Abigail, was intelligent, wise, and beautiful.

✿ When David and his men ran out of food in the wilderness, he sent ten young men to Nabal to greet him and request food, saying, "Your shepherds were with us, and we did not harm them, nor did they lack anything while they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Please give whatever you can to your servants and to your son, David."

✿ When the young men delivered the message, Nabal answered harshly, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread, my water, and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men coming from who knows where?"

✿ The young men returned and told David what Nabal had said. David, angered, told his men, "Strap on your swords!" Four hundred men prepared for battle, while two hundred stayed behind to guard the supplies. It is wise not to act hastily or out of emotion when someone insults you. One should

take time to reflect, reassess, and respond carefully. Although David was a good man who helped people, he should not have expected repayment or demanded a feast. He later appreciated Abigail's wisdom because it helped him reconsider and act in a way that pleased God.

✿ Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants informed Abigail about the situation, explaining how David's men had been good to them, protecting them and ensuring that nothing was lost. The servant urged Abigail to act quickly because David was planning revenge against Nabal and his household. The servant also mentioned that Nabal was a foolish man who wouldn't listen to advice.

✿ Abigail quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five prepared sheep, roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 cakes of pressed figs. She loaded them onto donkeys and set off to meet David, instructing her servants to go ahead of her while she followed behind. She did not inform her husband. This woman is a great example of wisdom in dealing with difficult people, especially in today's world.

✿ As she approached, David and his men were on their way to attack, saying, "I protected this man's property for nothing, and he has repaid me evil for good. May God deal with me severely if by morning I leave alive even one male of all who belong to him!"

✿ When Abigail saw David, she quickly dismounted from her donkey, bowed down before him, and said, "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; listen to my words. Pay no attention to that wicked man, Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means 'Fool,' and folly goes with him. But I, your servant, did not see the men my lord sent."

✿ She pleaded with David not to shed blood in vengeance but to allow God to take care of justice. She assured David that the Lord would establish his kingdom because he fought the Lord's battles and that he should not let this act of bloodshed burden his conscience when he became king. She also asked David to remember her when God had blessed him.

✿ David thanked Abigail for her wisdom, saying, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hands." David accepted Abigail's gifts and listened to her advice.

✿ Abigail returned home and found Nabal feasting like a king, drunk and joyful. She wisely chose not to tell him anything that night. The next morning, when he was sober, she told him what had happened. Nabal's heart failed him, and he became paralyzed or possibly had a stroke. Ten days later, he died.

✿ When David heard of Nabal's death, he sent messengers to propose marriage to Abigail, and she accepted. She saw it as a great honor to marry a servant of God. David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel.

✿ Prayer: May the Lord give courage to all those in difficult marriages or families, helping them to endure until deliverance comes, either through the transformation of their difficult partner or by divine intervention. Those who follow God's instructions will never fail. We should always seek partnership with the One who never fails.



✿ Parents Should Seek God's Guidance:
Parents, humble your hearts before God. Begin a complete work with your children. Plead with the Lord to forgive you for neglecting His Word by failing to train your children in the way they should go. Pray for light and guidance,

a tender conscience, and clear discernment to recognize your mistakes and failures. God will hear such prayers from a humble and contrite heart.

✿ Questions:

What does the name “Nabal” mean?

What did the servant tell Abigail about David?

How did Abigail use wisdom to prevent disaster in her household?

How did Nabal die?

Why is Jesus the only perfect example to follow and not David?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 25:26-28.

[26-28] “And now, my lord, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you. Please forgive your servant’s presumption. The LORD your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the LORD’s battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live.”

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for giving us this day. Help us to have wisdom like Abigail in our speech and conduct. Keep us from being foolish like Nabal. Forgive our sins, in the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Abigail preparing a basket of food. Discuss Abigail’s virtues and the role she played as a mediator between David and Nabal. What qualities should a mediator have?

DAY 84 (March 25)

TOPIC: Saul Pursues David Again

(1 Samuel 26-28)

✿ The Ziphites went to Saul in Gibeah to please the king, even though they knew he was evil and unjust. They told him that David was hiding on the hill, so Saul set out for the wilderness of Ziph with 3,000 men. Despite being a king with power and wealth, he was consumed by jealousy and hatred. He set up camp on the hill of Hakilah, unaware that David had already sent spies to monitor his movements. David saw Saul sleeping among his troops, surrounded by his soldiers.

✿ David told Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai, Joab's younger brother, to accompany him to Saul's camp. When they arrived, they found Saul's spear stuck into the ground near his head. Abishai whispered to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hands today. Let me strike him with the spear—just one blow, and I won't need a second strike." But David refused, saying, "Do not destroy him, for he is the Lord's anointed. His day will come—he will die in battle or perish naturally. But I will not lift my hand against the Lord's anointed." Instead, they took Saul's spear and water jug and left without being noticed, as the Lord had caused a deep sleep to fall upon them.

✿ From a distance, David called out to Abner, Saul's commander, questioning his failure to protect the king. "You deserve death because you did not guard your master," he said. He then showed them the spear and the water jug. Saul recognized David's voice and called out, "Is that your voice, my son David?" David replied, "Yes, my lord the king." He asked why Saul was hunting him without cause and pleaded that his blood should not be shed unjustly.

✿ Saul admitted his wrongdoing, saying, "I have sinned. Come back, my son David. I will not harm you again because you considered my life precious today. I have acted foolishly and have made a terrible mistake." However, despite his words, Saul did not truly repent. We must be cautious not to repeat our mistakes even after confessing them. David returned the spear through a young man and declared that the Lord rewards righteousness and faithfulness. Saul blessed David, saying, "You will do great things and surely triumph." That was the last time they saw each other.

✿ This time, David decided to flee completely, fearing that one day Saul would

kill him. He thought, “The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines, and Saul will give up searching for me.” David and his 600 men went to King Achish of Gath and stayed there. When Saul learned that David had fled to Gath, he stopped pursuing him. David asked Achish for a town to settle in rather than staying in the royal city. Achish granted him Ziklag, which later became a city of the kings of Judah. David lived there for about a year and a half, raiding the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. When Achish inquired about his raids, David misled him, saying he had attacked Israelite territories. Achish trusted David, believing he had completely turned against Israel and would be his servant forever.

✿ David’s situation was similar to Elijah’s when he fled to Mount Horeb because of Jezebel’s threats. Sometimes, our faith weakens, and we feel discouraged. During such moments, we should seek encouragement from others and meditate on God’s promises. “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12). When we feel hopeless, we should avoid making decisions without consulting God. We might think our choices are the best solutions, but they could be wrong if they do not align with God’s will. For example, a believer struggling to find a job might decide to migrate to a developed country. While this may not be inherently wrong, making such a decision without seeking God’s guidance can be risky. Many people who have moved abroad for financial stability have faced challenges that weakened their faith and family relationships. Therefore, no matter the situation, always consult God and be convinced of His will before taking any action. God has promised, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.” (Psalm 32:8). God does not lie—He will guide you if you allow Him!

✿ The Philistines gathered their armies to fight against Israel. King Achish told David to join him in battle, and David agreed, though he was secretly troubled about fighting his own people. Meanwhile, Samuel had died, and Saul had expelled all mediums and spiritists from the land, as commanded by God. When the Philistines camped at Shunem, Saul assembled his troops at Gilboa. But when he saw the Philistine army, he was terrified. He inquired of the Lord, but God did not answer him—neither through dreams, Urim, nor prophets. In desperation, Saul asked his servants to find a woman with a familiar spirit so he could seek guidance from the dead. They found such a woman in Endor.

✿ Saul disguised himself and visited the medium at night. He said, “Consult a spirit for me and bring up the one I name.” The woman hesitated, reminding him that Saul had banned such practices, fearing it was a trap. Saul swore an oath that she would not be punished. He then requested her to summon

Samuel.

✿ It is crucial to understand that no sorcerer can bring back the dead—if they could, people would revive their loved ones. There is no such thing as a soul that exists independently outside the body. The Bible teaches that "the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The body cannot function without the breath of life, and the spirit (or breath) cannot exist independently. The medium at Endor did not actually bring back Samuel. Instead, Satan's deceptive power produced a counterfeit spirit.

✿ When the woman saw the apparition, she screamed and accused Saul of deceiving her. Saul asked what she saw, and she described "a spirit coming up out of the earth" resembling an old man in a robe. Saul believed it was Samuel and bowed down in reverence. However, this was not Samuel but a demonic spirit impersonating him. The spirit rebuked Saul and declared that the kingdom had been taken from him and given to David because he had disobeyed God. Saul, already in despair, left even more confused and hopeless, realizing his relationship with God was completely broken.

✿ Many people today are deceived into believing that the dead can return as spirits. Through spiritualism, they attempt to communicate with these "souls." However, they are not speaking to their deceased loved ones but to fallen angels disguising themselves as the dead. This is how Satan continues the lie he told Eve in the Garden of Eden—that humans will not truly die (Genesis 3:1-6). Since people do die, Satan now deceives them into believing that their spirits live on in another realm. Jesus said that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).

✿ Those who believe in the existence of spirits that survive death are being prepared for Satan's great end-time deception. This deception will lead many astray. May God open our eyes to avoid being misled.

✿ Those Willing to Be Led Can Know God's Will
The Lord reveals His will to those who sincerely seek Him. Many people fail because they neglect the desire to know and do God's will. Instead, they remain ignorant of the truth.

✿ Questions:

Why did the Ziphites tell Saul where David was?

Why did David say Abner deserved to die?

Why did David go to Achish?

Why was Saul terrified and trembling?

Why was the “ghost of Samuel” not actually Samuel?

Why is it a sin to consult spiritists or mediums?

Why do people believe the dead visit them from hell?

What does “spiritualism” mean?

✿ May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 28:7-9.

[7-9] Saul then said to his attendants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.” “There is one in Endor,” they said. So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. “Consult a spirit for me,” he said, “and bring up for me the one I name.” But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?”

Prayer: Thank You very much for warning us about the dangers of spiritism and going to witches for help. Keep us from consulting fortune tellers who use the powers of darkness. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of the story of David living outside Israel. Act out how he marched with the Philistines to fight against Israel, etc. —Read 1 Samuel 27 & 28.

DAY 85 (March 26)

LESSON: The Witch of Endor

(1 Samuel 29-30)



✿ While still with the woman who had a spirit of divination in Endor, Saul was told by the spirit that appeared in the form of Samuel that the LORD would hand over Israel to the Philistines and that by the next day, he and his sons would be in the realm of the dead. Saul fell to the ground, filled with fear because of the words of the spirit and was left without strength, as he had not eaten all day and night. The woman with the spirit approached Saul, seeing that he was distressed, and urged him to eat so he could regain his strength before leaving. At first, Saul refused to eat, but his servants and the woman insisted, and he eventually listened to them. Saul got up and sat on the bed, and the woman prepared a fattened calf and baked unleavened bread, which they ate before leaving that night.

✿ It is important to understand that the one who spoke to Saul was not Samuel but Satan disguising himself as Samuel. Even today, many practice necromancy, calling upon their deceased loved ones, but it is actually Satan who appears and speaks to them. The Bible teaches that when a person dies, they are dead and await judgment. Anyone who sees or speaks with a deceased person is actually encountering a deception from Satan. Satan has the ability to perform wonders and deceive people. In some countries, such as the United States, necromancy has existed for a long time, with many priests of these practices being paid to summon spirits. If you have lost a loved one and they appear to you, know that it is a demonic deception and not your relative or friend, because the dead know nothing.

✿ Books, movies, and TV programs have perpetuated the idea that when we die, we enter a different state of consciousness. This false belief is also preached in many Christian pulpits. Even science has been involved. There are institutions in the United States working on technology they claim will allow communication with the dead, believing they are still alive in another form. Because this falsehood is so widespread, it will likely play a major role in the final events of human history. How is this lie manifested in your own culture? Why must we rely on God's Word rather than what our senses tell us?

✿ The Philistines gathered their army at Aphek while the Israelites camped by the spring in Jezreel. When the Philistine leaders passed in review, they saw David and his men marching at the rear with King Achish. The Philistine commanders questioned why the Hebrews were there. Achish responded that David, the servant of Saul, had been with him for a long time and that he had found no fault in him. However, the Philistine leaders were angry, fearing David might betray them in battle to win back Saul's favor.

✿ They reminded Achish that David was a great warrior, as people had sung that Saul had slain thousands while David had slain tens of thousands. Although Achish trusted David and saw no wrongdoing in him, he had to send him back because the Philistine leaders did not want him in battle. Achish told David he was honorable, but he had to leave early in the morning. David questioned why he could not fight against Israel's enemies, but Achish insisted that while David was trustworthy, the commanders had made their decision. So David and his men left at dawn.

✿ Like us, David made mistakes. Sometimes he won battles by trusting in God, and at other times he failed because he did not trust in Him. But the Lord is merciful to those who give their hearts to Him. God can rescue even those who have put themselves in difficult situations due to their own mistakes. No matter what troubles or trials you face, tell your concerns to the Lord, and

He will strengthen your soul. The more you acknowledge your weakness and dependence on Him, the stronger you will become in His power. The heavier your burdens, the greater the blessing when you cast them upon the Lord, who is our burden-bearer.

✿ David and his men traveled back to Ziklag, only to find that the Amalekites had raided and burned the city, taking their wives and children captive. David and his men wept until they had no strength left. Even David's two wives had been taken. The men were so bitter that they talked of stoning David. But David found strength in the LORD. He sought guidance from the priest Abiathar, asking if he should pursue the raiders. The LORD told him to go after them, promising that he would overtake them and recover everything.

✿ David set out with 600 men but left 200 behind at the Besor Ravine because they were too exhausted. They found an Egyptian man in the field who had not eaten for three days. They gave him food and water, reviving him. He revealed that he was a servant of an Amalekite who had abandoned him when he fell ill. He admitted that they had raided the Negev and burned Ziklag. When David asked if he could lead them to the raiders, the Egyptian agreed, provided that David swore not to kill him or return him to his master.

✿ The Egyptian led them to the Amalekite camp, where they found them celebrating with their plunder. David and his men attacked and fought them from dusk until the following evening, killing all except 400 young men who fled on camels. They rescued all the captives, including David's wives, and recovered all the stolen goods.

✿ When they returned, some of the 400 men did not want to share the plunder with the 200 who had stayed behind. But David insisted that everyone should share equally because the victory had come from the LORD. He established a law in Israel that those who remained behind to guard supplies would receive the same share as those who went into battle.

✿ Questions:

Many fail to make clear plans for their future. Their lives are unsettled, and they do not recognize the consequences of their actions, which often fills them with anxiety and confusion. We must remember that the lives of God's children in this world are a pilgrimage—we are travelers passing through. We do not have the wisdom to plan our own lives. It is not up to us to shape our future. By faith, Abraham obeyed when called to go to a land God promised him, even though he did not know where he was going (Hebrews 11:8).

1. Why was the spirit that appeared to Saul through the witch of Endor not truly Samuel?
2. How did God save David from fighting against Israel?
3. What did Achish say to David?
4. How did the Egyptian help David's army?
5. What law about sharing plunder was established in Israel?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Servant of Jesus 

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 30:4-6.

[4-6] Then David and the men with him wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

Prayer: Father, thank You for David's life, because we have learned many lessons from him. Help us to find strength in You, Lord, when things seem bitter and difficult. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss—What is spiritism? Are there people today who practice spiritism? Why should people not go to witches? What does the Bible say about spiritism? Should we watch movies or videos about spiritism? Read the book The Great Controversy, chapter 34 on spiritualism. This book is available at MaarifaMtandaoni.com.

DAY 86 (March 27)

LESSON: Satan's Deceptions

(1 Samuel 29-30)



✿ According to the Bible, when a person dies, they cannot communicate with the living or return to their home (Job 7:8-10). Speaking to the dead is not a biblical teaching. The Bible states that the living know they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and their memory is forgotten (Ecclesiastes 9:5,10). When someone dies, they do not immediately go to heaven but remain in the grave until Jesus returns to resurrect them.

✿ Many believe that spirits of the dead remain conscious and can interact with the living, but this is a deception from Satan. Only Jesus and Moses have been raised to heaven, and only Enoch and Elijah were taken there without experiencing death.

✿ We must reject divination, spirit mediums, and occult practices. Instead, we should seek guidance from God directly through prayer and His Word. May God keep us safe in His truth.

✿ Questions:

1. Can we talk to the dead?
2. Where does a person go when they die?
3. Can a soul exist without a body?
4. Why will graves open when Jesus returns?

May God bless you abundantly, Child and Young Servant of Jesus

Key Verse: Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

[10-12] Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for this day. I pray that You protect me and my family from being involved in any works of darkness, as declared in today's key verse. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: List remedies where powers of darkness may be involved, and which we must avoid completely—examples: astrologers, fortune tellers, witches, chakras, yoga, ayurvedic, reiki, hypnotism, spiritism, New Age, Jungian psychology, mesmerism, magnetism, ouija board, and other Eastern remedies. Discuss that the spiritual foundation of remedies like Ayurvedic comes from the Hindu religion, which has many gods and idols. Ayurvedic medicine is said to be revealed by gods and expressed through meditation—not meditation on Scripture! Some practices may look spiritual but contain elements contrary to the Bible, for example "New Age." But some herbal and plant remedies may be helpful.

DAY 87 (March 28)

TOPIC: The Death of Saul

(1 Samuel 30-32, 2 Samuel 1-3, 1 Chronicles 10)



✿The Philistines fought against Israel, and the Israelites fled before them, with many falling dead on Mount Gilboa. Since Saul was a tall man, the Philistines easily spotted him, pursued him, and killed him along with his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. The battle grew fierce against Saul, and archers wounded him severely. Saul, realizing his dire condition, asked his armor-bearer to kill him to avoid being mocked and tortured by the uncircumcised Philistines. However, the armor-bearer refused, fearing to kill the king or the Lord's anointed. So Saul took his sword and fell on it, committing suicide. He knew that if the Philistines captured him, they would likely torture him brutally. When the armor-bearer saw that his master was dead, he also took his sword and fell on it, dying with Saul. In those days, if you were assigned to protect the king and he died, you had to die with him, as it would be seen that you failed in your duty. Thus, Saul and his three sons died on the same

day.

When the Israelites on the other side of the Jordan saw that their army had fled, they too abandoned their cities, allowing the Philistines to move in and occupy them.

✿The next day, as the Philistines were looting the bodies, they found Saul and his sons lying dead on Mount Gilboa. They cut off Saul's head, stripped him of his armor, and sent word to their people and their gods. They placed his armor in the temples of their gods and hung his body for display. This was a disgrace because birds and wild animals could come and devour the bodies.

When the people of Jabesh-Gilead heard what had been done to Saul, their brave men traveled all night, retrieved the bodies of Saul and his sons, buried them, and fasted for seven days. Truly, obedience is better than sacrifice; when we sin, we should repent and turn away from our evil ways. Saul did not do this—he cried and showed regret but continued in his wickedness. The Bible states that he died because he failed to keep the word of the Lord. So Saul was killed, and the kingdom was given to David.

At the end of time, there will be only two choices: either telling God, "Let Your will be done," or Him telling us, "Let your will be done." Which one will you choose?

✿David waited patiently, hiding in caves and enduring many dangers. After Saul's death, a man came from Saul's camp to David in Ziklag with torn clothes and dust on his head, showing signs of mourning. When he reached David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. David asked him where he had come from, and he replied that he had escaped from the battle. When David asked about the outcome, the man reported that many had fled and died, including Saul and his son Jonathan.

David asked him how he knew that Saul was dead. The young man then lied, thinking he would be rewarded. He claimed that he was on Mount Gilboa and saw Saul leaning on his spear while enemy chariots closed in on him. When Saul looked back and saw him, he called him over.

✿The man said he identified himself as an Amalekite. Saul then allegedly asked him to kill him since he was in great distress and mortally wounded. The Amalekite claimed he complied, knowing Saul could not survive, and took the crown and bracelet from Saul's body to bring to David. He thought David would praise him for killing his enemy and might even reward him with a government position. However, he did not realize that David, despite all the

wrongs Saul had done to him, would never lay a hand on the Lord's anointed.

This man was lying because Saul had actually killed himself with his own sword. This teaches us that lying is never good. David tore his clothes in mourning, as did all his men, and they fasted until evening for Saul, his son Jonathan, the Lord's people, and the house of Israel.

✿David then asked the young man where he was from, and when he admitted he was an Amalekite, David questioned why he was not afraid to kill the Lord's anointed. David then ordered one of his men to strike him down, and he was executed. David told him, "Your blood is on your own head, for you testified against yourself by saying, 'I killed the Lord's anointed.'"

David mourned for Saul and Jonathan with this lament:
"How the mighty have fallen!"
"Do not announce it in Gath, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice."
"Saul and Jonathan—loved and admired in life—were not separated in death; they were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions."
"Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in luxurious scarlet and adorned your garments with gold."
"I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more than the love of women."
"How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

✿Saul could have been a great king. He had many good qualities, but he lacked obedience to God, and jealousy ruined his life. This jealousy led to tormenting spirits that afflicted him. Since he stopped obeying God, he sought counsel from dark forces instead of divine guidance.

On the other hand, David showed kindness even to his enemies and did not rejoice over Saul's death.

✿David sought guidance from the Lord, asking whether he should go to any city of Judah. The Lord told him to go, and when he asked which city, God directed him to Hebron. So David moved there with his two wives and his followers, settling in the city. The men of Judah then anointed him as their king for seven years.

David sent a message to the people of Jabesh-Gilead, thanking them for their kindness in burying Saul. He prayed that the Lord would bless and strengthen them.

✿Meanwhile, Abner, the commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth, Saul's

son, and made him king over the other tribes of Israel. Now there were two kings—David over Judah and Ishbosheth over the rest of Israel. Ishbosheth reigned for two years, but the tribe of Judah followed David.

Joab, David's army commander, met Abner at the pool of Gibeon. Joab suggested a contest between their young men, so twelve from each side engaged in combat. They killed each other, and a battle ensued, with David's men emerging victorious.

Violent games have existed for centuries, and even today, we must be cautious. Some sports, like football and boxing, promote aggression and a lack of concern for human life.

✿Some sports have become forms of idol worship, encouraging laziness and a reluctance to work. Entertainment that begins as innocent fun can turn into dangerous obsessions.

✿Abner fled, and Asahel, Joab's brother, pursued him. Abner warned him to turn back, but Asahel refused, so Abner killed him. Joab and Abishai then chased Abner for revenge. As the sun set, Abner pleaded for peace, and Joab sounded the trumpet, halting the pursuit.

The battle claimed 19 of Joab's men and 360 of Abner's. Asahel was buried in Hebron. War continued between Saul's house and David's, but David grew stronger while Saul's house weakened.

✿The surrounding nations recognized that God was with David. True success comes from obeying God and seeking His guidance. Many fail because they plan without God. Trust in His leadership—He never misguides His children.

✿Discussion Questions:
Who died with Saul?
What reward did David give the men of Jabesh-Gilead?
Why was Ishbosheth afraid to respond to Abner?
Why did Joab and Abishai chase Abner?
Why did the Amalekite youth lie?
How can modern sports promote selfishness, destruction, and sin?
What lessons can we learn from Saul's tragic downfall?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 24:10.

[10] This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD's anointed.'

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, guide us with Your wisdom to respect the leaders You have appointed over us, and not to raise our hands against them. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss violent games, competitive games, or games that involve cheating in order to win. Reflect on the game that Abner and his men played against Joab and his men. What games today resemble this, and which should we avoid as people living in the last days?

DAY 88 (March 29)

TOPIC: David Rules Over Hebron and All Israel

(2 Samuel 3-5)



✿ Knowing that David was loved by the people and was the Lord's chosen one, Abner sent messengers to David, saying, "My hand will be with you to bring all Israel to you." David agreed, but on the condition that his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, be returned to him. David then sent a message to Ishbosheth, demanding Michal, whom he had married by paying a bride price. Ishbosheth took her from Paltiel, her second husband, who followed her weeping until Abner told him to return, and he did.

✿ Abner advised the elders of Israel to make David their king, as they had previously desired. He reminded them that the Lord had said, "By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people Israel from the Philistines and all their enemies." Abner spoke to the Benjamites and the Israelites, then went to David for a feast and promised to gather all Israel under David's rule. David, showing a forgiving heart despite what Saul and Abner had done to him, made peace with Abner, who left in peace.

✿ However, Joab, David's army commander, returned from battle and heard about Abner's meeting with David. He accused Abner of deceit, claiming he only wanted to spy on David. Joab secretly lured Abner aside and stabbed him in the stomach, killing him to avenge his brother Asahel. David, shocked and unaware of Joab's plan, declared, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the Lord concerning the blood of Abner, son of Ner. May the guilt fall on Joab and his family."

✿ David ordered Joab and his men to mourn Abner by tearing their clothes, wearing sackcloth, and lamenting him. Abner was buried in Hebron, and David wept at his grave, saying, "Should Abner have died like a fool? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet in chains; as one falls before the wicked, so you fell." The people mourned, and David refused to eat until sunset, proving his sincerity in mourning.

✿ Ishbosheth, Saul's son and the king appointed by Abner, lost courage upon Abner's death, and his followers fled. Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was five years old when his father and grandfather died. His nurse fled with him, but he fell and became lame.

✿ Ishbosheth, who ruled for two years, was later murdered by Rekab and Baanah while resting at noon. They entered his house under the pretense of collecting grain and stabbed him in the stomach, then brought his head to David, expecting a reward. They said, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The Lord has avenged my lord the king this day." However, David, remembering how he had executed the man who claimed to have killed Saul, condemned Rekab and Baanah, executing them for killing an innocent man in his own bed. Ishbosheth was buried in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

✿ Unlike the time of the judges, when there was no political struggle for power, the monarchy brought violence, assassinations, and power struggles.

✿ All the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron, acknowledging that they were his flesh and blood. Even during Saul's reign, David had led Israel in battle. The elders made a covenant with David, anointed him, and made him king over all Israel. David was 30 years old when he began his reign, ruling for 40 years—7 years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. He was crowned twice.

✿ David and his men then attacked the Jebusites and captured their stronghold, which became the City of David, also known as Zion or Jerusalem. David declared that whoever struck the Jebusites first would be the army

commander, and Joab, son of Zeruiah, won the position. David grew in power because the Lord of Hosts was with him.

✿ King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers, cedar wood, carpenters, and masons to build David a house. Hiram became David's ally, recognizing that the Lord had established David's rule for the sake of His people, Israel.

✿ When the Philistines came to fight against David, he inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" The Lord answered, "Go, for I will surely deliver them into your hands." David defeated them and declared, "The Lord has burst forth against my enemies before me like a flood." The Philistines abandoned their idols, and David and his men removed them.

✿ The Philistines returned for another battle, and David again sought the Lord's guidance. This time, God told him not to attack directly but to circle behind them and strike near the mulberry trees. David obeyed and won the battle once more.

✿ In times of sorrow and confusion, David strengthened himself in the Lord. He sought divine guidance, and the Lord led him to victory. We must learn to trust in God's promises during hardships. The Lord has said, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you go through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, and the flames shall not consume you." We should not lose heart and forget this promise, for remembering and claiming it is the first step to finding a way out of difficulties or enduring them with courage.

✿ Christ never devised His own plans but followed the Father's will. Each day, God revealed His plans for Him. Likewise, we must depend on God so that our lives may align with His will. When we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps.

✿ Questions:
Why did Abner go to David?
Why was Paltiel deprived of his wife?
Why did Joab kill Abner?
What can we learn about Joab's character?
How many years did David reign?
Why do many people fail to seek God's counsel as David did?
Research about mulberry trees, a type of fig tree that grows in Africa. These healthy fruits are also used to feed silkworms for producing silk.

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Verse: 2 Samuel 3:33-34.

[33-34] "Should Abner have died as the lawless die? Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered. You fell as one falls before the wicked." And all the people wept over him again.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for this day. We ask You to keep us from harming others, protect us from all evil, including competitive games, and give us true love for others. In Jesus' Name.

Activity: Discuss 2 Samuel 2—David's anointing. 2 Samuel 5:1-5. Jeremiah 23:5-6. If possible, do a play. Pray for leaders, the blessings of anointing, and leadership. 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

DAY 89 (March 30)

TOPIC: The Ark of the LORD Returns

(2 Samuel 6-7)

✿ David continued to grow in greatness because the LORD of Hosts was with him. He gathered 30,000 men and went with them to bring up the Ark of God, which is called by the Name—the Name of the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. They placed the Ark of the LORD on a new cart and took it from the house of Abinadab, which was on a hill. The Ark had stayed there for many years since the time of Eli. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, guided the new cart. Ahio went ahead, and David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD with all their might, using songs, harps, lyres, tambourines, and cymbals.

When they reached the threshing floor of Nachon, Uzzah stretched out his hand to steady the Ark because the oxen had stumbled. Then the LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and He struck him down for his error, and he died there beside the Ark of God. Many have questioned why Uzzah was killed, but the instructions for carrying the Ark had been given and followed for over 400 years. David was distressed by God's wrath on Uzzah, and he feared the LORD that day, saying, "How can the Ark of the LORD come to me?" He refused to bring the Ark to his city and instead placed it in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months. The LORD blessed Obed-Edom and his entire household. Today, we too can be blessed like Obed-Edom if we are generous and diligent in the things of God.

✿ When David heard about the blessings Obed-Edom received because of the Ark of God, he went and brought it to the City of David with great rejoicing. He offered sacrifices and celebrated before the LORD with all his might while wearing a linen ephod. They brought the Ark with joy and the sound of the trumpet. When it entered the City of David, Michal, his first wife, looked out of the window, saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and despised him in her heart.

They placed the Ark in the tent David had prepared, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. He blessed the people in the Name of the LORD of Hosts and gave each one a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then everyone went home, and David returned to his household. However, Michal came out to meet him and mocked him,



saying, “How distinguished the king of Israel looked today, uncovering himself before the servant girls like a common person!”

✿ David explained to his wife the joy and gratitude in his heart, saying, “It was before the LORD, who chose me over your father and his whole house, to make me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore, I will celebrate before the LORD. I will humble myself even more, and I will be honored by the servant girls you speak of.” Because of her attitude, Michal had no children until the day of her death. This is a lesson for those who mock or despise someone for praising or testifying before the LORD. We should never think we are too dignified to give testimony before others! David often said, “I will praise You before the people!” Praising or thanking God privately is important, but doing it publicly is also essential! The Bible says, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11).

✿ When the king had settled in his house, free from his enemies, he told the prophet Nathan, “I live in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God remains in a tent.” He expressed his desire to build a temple, and Nathan saw no reason to stop him, telling him, “Do whatever is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.” However, that night, the LORD spoke to Nathan, saying, “Tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Will you build Me a house to dwell in? For I have not dwelled in a house from the time I brought Israel out of Egypt until today, but I have moved in a tent and tabernacle.’”

✿ The LORD reminded David that He had never asked any of Israel’s judges or leaders to build Him a house. He said, “I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over My people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make your name great, like the greatest men on earth. I will give you rest from all your enemies.”

He continued, “I will establish your dynasty, and one of your descendants will build a house for My Name. I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son. If he sins, I will discipline him with the rod of men and the blows of human hands. But My mercy will not depart from him as I took it from Saul. Your house and kingdom will endure forever before Me; your throne will be established forever.” Let us believe that God is our Father, and we are His children! Rejoice in that truth!

✿ David sat before the LORD and gave thanks, saying, “Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far? You have spoken about the future of my house, and I am overwhelmed.” He praised

the LORD, saying, “What nation on earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went out to redeem for Himself?” David often sang praises and wrote psalms, saying, “Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere.”

David realized that because he had shed much blood and been a man of war, he would not build the temple, but his son Solomon, who would reign in peace, would do so. David then began collecting materials and drawing up plans for the temple.

✿ God kept His covenant with David, and his house was blessed forever through the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled the promise, establishing David’s kingdom forever. How wonderful it is to sit and talk with the LORD as David did! We too can have sweet conversations with Him, and He will establish our households forever. The promises made to David are also ours! We do not need a grand temple to worship, but we must prepare our hearts for worship. How do you prepare yourself?

David, Solomon’s father, asked, “Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear deceitfully” (Psalm 24:3-4).

✿ We know the spiritual state of the world today and what God has sent us to do. We have put our hands on the plow to work for Him. We face opposition of all kinds, but we must not look back, be hindered, or be distracted. God is with us and will make us successful in His work. Saul and other enemies of our time have no part or right in the mission we have been given. Therefore, let us press on as soldiers of Christ!

✿ If you have dedicated yourself to serving God, you do not need to worry about tomorrow. He, whom you serve, knows the end from the beginning. The events of tomorrow, which are hidden from your eyes, are clear to Him, the Almighty.

✿ Questions:

1. The Ark of the Covenant stayed with two people. Who were they?
2. Why was Uzzah killed?
3. Why did Michal have no children?
4. Why did God tell David that his son would build the temple?
5. How can we talk to the LORD today?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 2 Samuel 6:6-7.

[6-7] When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for Your commands about the holiness of Your possessions and the order of worship. Help us to respect what is sacred. Teach us reverence in worship. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Reflect on David's words in 2 Samuel 7:18-29 after the LORD spoke to him in 2 Samuel 7:5-17.

DAY 90 (March 31)

TOPIC: Repaying Kindness Through Mephibosheth

(2 Samuel 8-10)



✿ David continued to conquer various lands. He defeated Gath and Moab, making them his servants who brought him gifts. He captured 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers from the king of Zobah. David also defeated the Arameans of Damascus, placing garrisons there, and took gold and bronze spoils, dedicating them to the Lord. He conquered the Edomites, Philistines, Ammonites, Amalekites, and others. The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. Similarly, God can help us succeed and live righteous lives, overcoming sin in every situation. Isn't that something to smile about?

✿ David ruled Israel and administered justice to his people. Joab was his army commander, Ahilud was the record keeper, Zadok and Ahimelech were priests, Benaiah was his envoy, and his sons were advisors in his kingdom.

✿ David sought to know if there was anyone left in Saul's house to whom he could show kindness for Jonathan's sake. Ziba, a servant of Saul, was called, and he informed David that Jonathan had a son who was lame in both feet. David asked where he was, and Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, who was staying with Makir, was brought before him. When Mephibosheth arrived, he fell face down and bowed before David. The king reassured him, saying, "Do not be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan." David restored all of Saul's lands to him and invited him to dine at the royal table forever.

✿ In humility, knowing this was great mercy, especially considering his grandfather Saul's schemes, Mephibosheth responded, "Who am I, your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" David then instructed Ziba to manage the land for Mephibosheth, farming and harvesting for him.

Ziba agreed, and Mephibosheth lived at the king's table as one of his own sons. He also had a son named Micah. What a wonderful thing it is not to forget kindness shown to us! Mephibosheth must have been overjoyed—wouldn't you be, if you were invited to live in the palace and dine with the king because of your father's friendship?

✿ The king of Ammon, who had good relations with David, died, and his son Hanun succeeded him. David, being a kind-hearted person, decided to send a message of comfort to Hanun over his father's death. However, some people repay good with evil. It's important to be aware of this so as not to be discouraged. When David's messengers arrived in Ammon, Hanun's advisors convinced him that they were spies sent to overthrow the city. As a result, Hanun humiliated them by shaving off half of their beards, cutting their clothes in half, and sending them away in disgrace.

✿ When David heard what had happened, he instructed the men to stay in Jericho until their beards grew back before returning home. Realizing that they had provoked David, the Ammonites hired mercenaries from the Arameans and other nations to defend themselves. David sent Joab and his mighty warriors to confront them. Joab, seeing that the enemy had surrounded him from the front and the rear, strategized with his brother Abishai: "If the Arameans are too strong for me, come and help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come to help you. Let us be courageous for our people and for the cities of our God."

✿ The Arameans fled before Joab, and when the Ammonites saw their hired mercenaries retreat, they also ran away. Realizing their defeat, these kings made peace with Israel and became their subjects. The Arameans, having learned their lesson, never helped the Ammonites again. What foolishness it is to repay kindness with hostility, only to end up being subjugated instead of building friendship and remaining free! Sin makes us slaves to the devil and to other people.

✿ Nothing can destroy God's plans. He is all-powerful, and no force can overthrow His will. No one can ruin what God has ordained for His children. David eventually took the position God had planned for him and showed kindness to Saul's household. However, one must wait for God's appointed time for His plans to unfold. David had to wait seven and a half years after Saul's death to become king over all Israel.

✿ God is the one who avenges wrongs done to His people, as He says in Romans 12:19: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' says the Lord." Our

duty is to love and pray for our enemies and their descendants. Loving them does not mean having warm feelings toward their wrongdoings, but choosing to do good despite our negative emotions about them. The love that the Bible teaches is a principle, not an emotion. Let us pray for the ability to love our enemies unconditionally so that we may be children of our Father in heaven, who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:45).

✿ When we take matters into our own hands, relying on our own wisdom for success, we burden ourselves with a weight God never intended for us. We assume a responsibility that belongs to God, essentially placing ourselves in His position (God Syndrome). This can lead to anxiety and worry, which can bring real harm upon us. But when we fully trust that God loves us and has a purpose for our good, we will no longer worry about the future. We will trust God like a child trusts a loving parent. Then, our struggles and suffering will fade away, as our will is surrendered to God's will.

✿ Questions for Reflection:

1. How can the Lord give us victory wherever we go, just as He did for David?
2. How did David repay kindness to Jonathan?
3. How did Hanun cause conflict?
4. How did Mephibosheth become crippled?
5. Examine your life—how does sin make you a slave?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus! 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 8:6 and Acts 13:22.

[22]…… And the Lord gave David victory everywhere he went. ……I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. I pray for victory everywhere I go in doing Your will. Make my heart delight in You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of King Hanun disgracing David's messengers. Or draw a picture of Mephibosheth, add crutches by the table, and plenty of food to show David's generosity.

DAY 91 (April 1)

TOPIC: The Great Sin of David

(2 Samuel 11)



✿ David stopped going to war and instead sent Joab. They fought against the Ammonites and won. Until this point, David was known for good deeds, but when he stayed in Jerusalem, he became idle, even sleeping during the day and walking on the roof of his palace. He was loved by both the people and God, winning battles and administering justice. God had exalted him, making him ruler from Egypt to the Euphrates River.

An idle mind is the devil's workshop, keeping us occupied with his traps. Since David's palace had an upper floor, he could see the people below. One day, while walking on the roof, he saw a very beautiful woman bathing. It seems that in those days, people had open-air bathing places, which could be seen from above. David was filled with desire and inquired about her. He was told her name was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his loyal soldiers. Uriah was a converted Hittite who had chosen to follow the God of Israel.

Despite knowing she was married, David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba to him, and he slept with her. Then she returned home. From this, we learn the importance of guarding our hearts—what we see, hear, touch, smell, and where we go. The Israelites had morning and evening worship to help guard their hearts. If we do not have personal worship in the morning and evening and focus on God throughout the day, we may fall into temptation.

After some time, Bathsheba realized she was pregnant and sent a message to David. He then tried to cover up his sin by making it appear that the child belonged to Uriah. David summoned Uriah from the battlefield, pretending to ask about the war, and then told him to go home and rest. However, Uriah, being a loyal and disciplined soldier, slept at the palace entrance with the other servants instead of going home.

David was informed that Uriah had not gone home. When questioned, Uriah responded, “The Ark, Israel, and Judah are camping in the open fields, and my master Joab and the soldiers are at war—how can I go home to eat, drink, and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing.”

David kept Uriah in Jerusalem for another day, giving him food and getting him drunk, hoping he would go home, but Uriah still did not. Seeing that his plan had failed, David wrote a letter to Joab instructing him to place Uriah at the front lines where the battle was fiercest and then withdraw so he would be struck down and killed. Joab followed the order, and Uriah was killed along with other soldiers.

Joab sent a report to David, saying, “Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.” David responded coldly, saying, “Do not let this trouble you; the sword devours one as well as another. Continue the battle and overthrow the city.”

When Bathsheba finished mourning for her husband, David brought her to the palace and made her his wife. By doing this, David acted like a king of a nation that did not know God. It is easy to become arrogant and forget that we were once poor when we gain wealth and success.

David truly loved God—he was even called “a man after God’s own heart.” The Bible tells both the good and bad about people. If we were to write about our loved ones, we would make them look good, but the Bible tells the truth to teach us lessons. Although God is merciful, sin has consequences. When we repent and forsake our sins, He forgives us completely, but discipline follows.

David thought everything was settled, but the thing he had done displeased the Lord.

The Bible records the sins of even the greatest leaders in history. Their mistakes are not hidden but written truthfully, along with the consequences that followed. These stories serve as warnings to future generations, showing that God’s Word is true, faithful, and accurate. God does not cover up people’s sins, no matter who they are, because He wants both the sinner and the reader to learn and hate sin.

These men were tempted by Satan, and their weaknesses and sins are openly recorded, along with the reproof and discipline they received. These things were written for our warning because we are living in the last days.

God did not allow the Bible to be filled with praises of people's goodness without also recording their failures. All victories and good deeds were attributed to God alone. Man was merely an instrument—weak in himself. All strength and excellence came from God.

God foresaw that people would be tempted to worship man rather than the Creator, so He made sure history told the whole truth.

✿ Questions:

Why did Joab, the commander, agree to help his cousin David kill Uriah?

Why didn't Bathsheba refuse to go to the king?

Why did Uriah refuse to go home?

List the commandments David broke.

Why is giving someone alcohol a sin?

Why does the Bible record both the good and bad things about its heroes?

Examine your own life—what hidden sins do you need to confess?

Why is the Bible the only biography that tells the whole truth?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:22,23.

[22,23] Guard your heart above all else, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.

Prayer: Be glorified Lord our King, we have seen that even heroes like David fall into sin. Help us to ask for forgiveness when we sin and to guard the wellsprings of life that flow from our hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Consider that even heroes like David sinned and made mistakes.

Discuss the difference between making a mistake and committing sin.

Confession of Sin: Talk about how David later acknowledged his sin and prayed for forgiveness from God.

Consequences: Explain that even after asking for forgiveness, people may still face the results of their wrong actions.

God's Forgiveness: Teach that God forgives those who repent and that we can have hope in His mercy.

Important Note: explain things according to age, but do not omit them. Simplify by explaining that marriage is between one man and one woman. Remember to simplify language for younger children while keeping the main theme of good and evil, mistakes and forgiveness.

Help children understand that this story is about corrupt or wicked people.

DAY 92 (April 1)

TOPIC: David's Punishment

(2 Samuel 12)

You might think that David had everything. The Bible says that godliness with contentment is great gain because we came into the world with nothing and will leave with nothing. Often, when we are poor, we think that we would act differently if we were rich. However, a poor person can have even more greed than a rich person, but the opportunity to fulfill their desires has not yet come. We must remember that to whom much is given, much is required.

David was not only a king but also a prophet of God and His servant. However, he gave the enemies of the LORD a great opportunity to blaspheme. The Psalms contain many prophecies about the Messiah. David spoke in great detail about God's commandments in Psalm 119, yet now he had broken all of them! No one likes to tell this story, but it must be told as a lesson to us. He had brought darkness upon Israel and his household.

Then the LORD sent the prophet Nathan to David and told him a parable about two men in a city. One was rich, and the other was poor. The rich man had many cattle and sheep, while the poor man had nothing except one small lamb, which he had bought and raised. The lamb grew up with him like his own child, ate his food, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms—it was like a daughter to him.

I can imagine how many children in Western countries sleep with their pets, such as cats, dogs, or lambs, showing love for them, just like this man did. The prophet Nathan continued: one day, the rich man received a visitor. Instead of taking one of his own sheep to prepare a meal for his guest, he took the poor man's lamb, slaughtered it, and served it.

As soon as Nathan finished the story, David, known as a man of justice, became furious and said, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay back four times the value of the lamb because he had no pity." Then Nathan courageously pointed out David's sin, saying, "You are that man!"

Nathan reminded David that the LORD had anointed him as king, saved him from Saul, given him a kingdom, wives, Judah, and Israel. If all that had not



been enough, God would have given him more if he had asked. Yet, David had despised the word of the LORD and done what was evil in His sight. He had killed Uriah the Hittite with a sword and taken his wife. Because of this, the sword would never depart from David's house, as he had despised the LORD.

The LORD also told David that calamity would arise from within his own house—others would take his wives publicly. "What you did in secret, I will do in broad daylight before all Israel." David immediately repented and admitted his sin, saying, "I have sinned against the LORD." Seeing his sincere repentance, Nathan told him, "The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die." Had David denied his sin and refused to repent, he would have been destroyed.

Nathan left, and David mourned, fasting from morning until night, lying on the ground, because he was told that the child born from his sin with Bathsheba would die. The elders of the palace tried to comfort him, but he refused to eat or get up.

On the seventh day, the child died. The servants were afraid to tell David, thinking he would be even more distressed. But he noticed them whispering and realized the child had died. Then he got up, washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went into the house of the LORD, and worshiped. When they gave him food, he ate. The servants were surprised, and David explained, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept, hoping the LORD would be merciful and let him live. But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

David also comforted his wife, Bathsheba. After the child died, they had another son and named him Solomon. This was the son who inherited the throne, and the LORD loved Solomon. David entrusted him to the prophet Nathan, who named him Jedidiah, meaning "Beloved of the LORD."

God wants us to repent. "Create in me a clean heart." This is the foundation of Christian character, for "out of the heart flow the issues of life." If ministers and believers alike ensured that their hearts were right with God, we would see greater results in the work of the Lord. The greater your responsibility, the more important it is to have a pure heart. The grace needed is provided, and the power of the Holy Spirit will work through every effort made in this direction.

If every child of God sought Him diligently and persistently, there would be tremendous spiritual growth. Divisions would cease, believers would be united in heart and mind, and purity and love would reign in our churches. By looking

at Christ, we are transformed. The more we meditate on His character, the more we become like Him. Come to Jesus as you are, and He will receive you and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to our God.

“Do not cast me away from Your presence; do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:11)

Repentance and forgiveness are gifts from God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin and feel the need for forgiveness. No one is forgiven unless they repent, but it is only by God’s grace that our hearts are led to repentance. He understands our weaknesses and will help us. We need to open our hearts to the influence of the Spirit and experience His transforming power.

The reason we do not receive more help from God is that the channel of communication between heaven and our souls is blocked by worldliness, self-promotion, and ambition. While others conform to the customs of the world, we must shape our lives according to the example of the Lord. Our covenant-keeping God will restore the joy of His salvation and uphold us by His Spirit.

Shortly after a prayer was made, an answer came immediately. Among the women who had gathered at a well, one stood out due to her kindness. As she left the well, a traveler approached her, asking for a drink from her jar. She not only agreed but also offered to fetch water for his camels, a task common for daughters of noble households in serving guests and livestock. This was the expected sign, and it was fulfilled by Rebekah.

David’s repentance is recorded in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51.

Questions:

Why was the story of David’s sin recorded?

Explain how the rich man treated the poor man’s lamb.

Why did David eat after hearing that his child had died?

What does Jedidiah mean?

Why was David’s punishment greater than that of ordinary people?

Do you remember to confess your sins daily?

May God bless you, dear child and young follower of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23.

[23] Guard your heart above all else, for it is the wellspring of life.

Prayer: Father, guard us from coveting our neighbor's possessions. Forgive our mistakes. Help us to have love. Forgive our sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

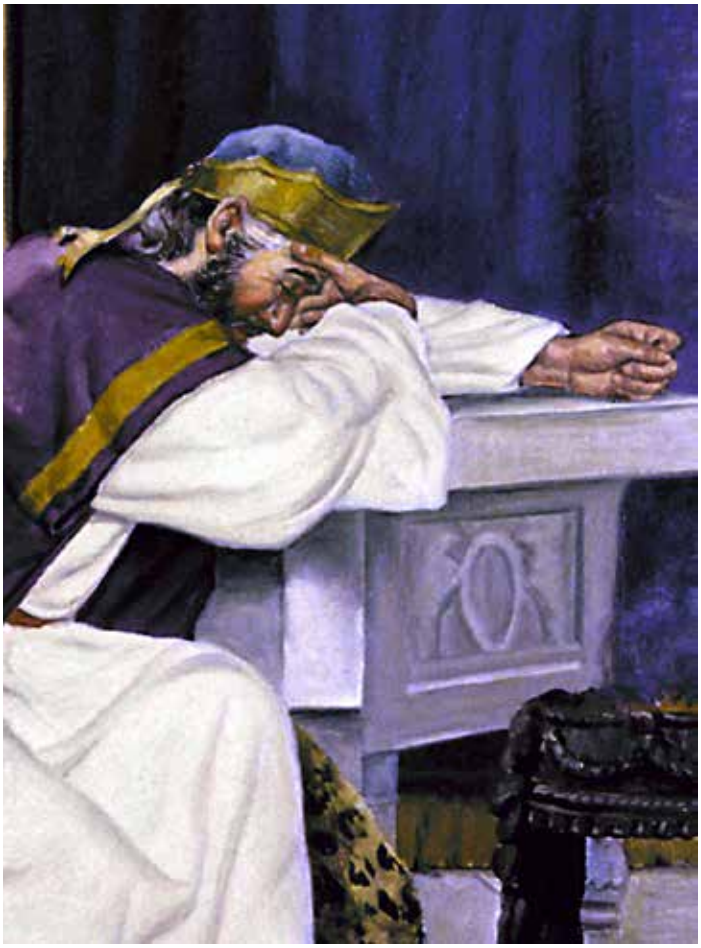
Activity: List of things to be thankful for

Help your children create a list of things they are grateful for. Encourage them to write down as many as possible to recognize the blessings they already have.

DAY 93 (April 2)

TOPIC: David's Repentance

(Psalms 32 and 51)



"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

David repented and confessed his sin, writing Psalms about it. Repentance and confession are extremely important. We will highlight some of what he said. God says, "Come now, let us reason together; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Those who have seen Mount Kilimanjaro know how white snow is. God says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed your sins." If you keep going west, you will see that it never meets the east. God forgives our sins when we have true repentance.

When the prophet Nathan revealed David's sin, he realized the depth of his wrongdoing and wrote with tears, saying:
"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your

presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise."

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the one to whom the Lord does not count iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.' And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all the faithful pray to You while You may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in Him. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!"

Repentance should be our immediate goal when we realize we have sinned. Dear child, nothing is hidden—God knows everything. Even if we sin in secret, alone, there is no secret before God, so it is best to tell Him and confess it. Once we have repented and confessed, we must believe we are forgiven, and all past wrongs are erased. We should also pray for strength to overcome that sin, as some sins take time to completely disappear. But God is faithful, and they will be overcome. The devil wants us to lose hope and feel trapped in sin. Don't let this happen—say, "God is faithful, and He has promised to forgive me."

We should also learn to forgive others when they wrong us, for God forgives us when we forgive others and let go of resentment. There is no sin that God cannot forgive except the one that is unconfessed or unrepented. When confessing, we should mention the specific sin we committed rather than just saying, "I have sinned." Then we should ask for strength to start a new victorious path.

We must understand that only God forgives sins, not humans, so we should confess our sins to God. However, if we have wronged a person, we should also go and ask for their forgiveness.

When David committed these sins, he became weak. People no longer respected him as before. Even his nephew Joab or his own children, when they committed wrongs, he feared confronting them. This is how sin destroys our joy and dignity, making us weak and ruining everything it touches. It also weakens our testimony.

“But because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child who is born to you shall surely die.” (2 Samuel 12:14)

The most important thing is that God forgives us and helps us start a new chapter without blemishes. However, if we keep repeating the same sin, it weakens our ability to overcome it in the future. May God help and save us from sin!

We should come to the Lord with a humble heart, ready to be taught. When the voice of our enemy tells us, “You have sinned, and you have no right to claim God’s promises,” we should respond by saying, “It is written: If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” (1 John 2:1)

The Psalmist says, “I acknowledged my sin to You and did not hide my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the guilt of my sin.” (Psalm 32:5) This is the kind of experience we should all have.

David was forgiven because he humbled his heart before God with repentance and sorrow, believing that God’s promise of forgiveness would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and turned back to God. Rejoicing in that forgiveness, he said, “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.” (Psalm 32:1-2)

Blessings come from forgiveness; forgiveness comes through faith, confession, and repentance. Our sins are placed on Jesus, the great sin-bearer. All our blessings come from Christ. His death is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great Mediator through whom we receive God’s mercy and favor.

We should not carry guilt all our lives—let us confess, forgive ourselves as God forgives us, and also ask forgiveness from those we have wronged, as we saw in David’s case.

As we do the great work of advancing God’s mission, we must remember two things: God will be with us, and Satan will also be there to oppose true

repentance. However, we should not be troubled by this because “Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)

OUR GOD IS WITH US, READY TO FORGIVE AND HELP US LIVE IN HIM FOREVER.

QUESTION: Am I with Him? That is the question we should ask ourselves every day!

Questions:

1. Why should we confess our sins?
2. What should we do when we wrong someone?
3. How does sin destroy our joy?
4. Who do you think David asked for forgiveness?
5. What lessons do we learn from Psalms 32 and 51?
6. Name five places in the Bible where God promises to forgive sins.

God bless you, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 John 1:9, 10.

[9,10] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Prayer: Lord, if You were to count sins, who could stand before judgment? But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.

Activity: A play of Nathan going to tell David his sin. And his confessions in Psalm 51 and 32.

DAY 94 (April 3)

TOPIC: Evil in the House of David

(2 Samuel 12-13)



Then David went to war. Joab called him to come and take over Rabbah, saying, “Lest I take the city and it be named after me.” So David went and took Rabbah, and the king’s crown of gold, weighing 34 kilograms and adorned with precious stones, was placed on his head. He also took many spoils of war and made the people servants, putting them to work with saws, iron picks, and brick-making.

It happened that Absalom, David’s third son, had a beautiful sister named Tamar. Amnon, David’s firstborn, fell in love with his half-sister. He became sick and troubled because of his sinful desire. Tamar was unmarried, and Amnon found it difficult to do anything to her. In those days, people were allowed to marry their half-sisters from a different mother. Amnon had a

cousin and friend named Jonadab, who was very cunning. Jonadab asked Amnon, “Why, O son of the king, are you growing thinner day by day? Won’t you tell me?” When Amnon confessed his love for Tamar, Jonadab gave him a wicked plan. He advised Amnon to lie in bed pretending to be sick. Then, when his father David came to see him, he should request that Tamar come and prepare food for him in his sight so that he might eat from her hand.

Amnon followed the plan, and David sent Tamar to his son. She kneaded the dough, baked the bread, and brought it to Amnon. But when she served him, he ordered everyone to leave the room. Then he seized Tamar and told her to lie with him. She pleaded, “No, my brother, do not force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel; do not commit this disgraceful act. And I, where will I take my shame? Please, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.” But Amnon refused to listen and, being stronger, forced her into sin. Shockingly, after violating her, he hated her more than he had previously claimed to love her. He ordered her to leave. Tamar protested, saying that sending her away was worse than what he had already done, but he did not listen. He called his servant and said, “Throw this woman out and bolt the door behind her.”

Even today, some people claim to love a girl, saying, “I can’t eat, I can’t sleep, I dream about you,” yet once they get her or even marry her, they mistreat, abandon, and dishonor her. This is wickedness.

Tamar cried aloud, put ashes on her head, tore her royal robe, and placed her hands on her head in sorrow. Her full-brother, Absalom, found her and asked what had happened. When she explained, he told her, “Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Do not take this matter to heart.” This was a terrible sin, and Tamar remained desolate in Absalom’s house. When David heard of it, he was very angry. However, because he himself had committed a similar sin by taking another man’s wife by force, he lacked the moral authority to correct his son.

Absalom was furious and decided to take revenge. He hated Amnon but did not say anything, either good or bad. It is very important to resolve issues with our siblings before things escalate.

Two years later, Absalom held a feast and invited all the king’s sons. He asked his father David to attend, but David declined, saying, “We should not all go, lest we burden you.” Absalom then requested that Amnon be allowed to come. The king was surprised and asked why, but after much persuasion, he allowed Amnon to go.

Absalom commanded his servants, “When Amnon is drunk, strike and kill him.” And they did. When the other sons of the king saw this, they fled. David was informed that Absalom had killed all his sons, and he tore his clothes and lay on the ground in sorrow. Jonadab, the same deceiving friend, reassured the king that only Amnon was dead because of what he had done to Tamar. The king and his sons mourned deeply.

Absalom fled to Geshur, where his maternal grandfather lived. He stayed there for three years. Meanwhile, David longed to see him, for he had now accepted that Amnon was dead. David, like many parents, was a great leader to others but failed to lead his own household.

The lack of integrity, acts of revenge, and corruption in these stories are like what we see today on television and in families. There were many conflicts—between Abner and Ishbosheth, David and Abner, Joab and Abner, and even within David’s own household. David had many wives, including Michal, whom Saul had given to another man, even though she was legally David’s wife. A series of moral failures and conflicts like these is dangerous! We must understand that God is not glorified in such situations, but His amazing grace is always available to forgive and restore us when we surrender to Him. These events are not examples of the kind of marriages God desires for us.

We must remember that no one comes to Christ with complete knowledge of His ways—that is why we are encouraged to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. What matters most is that God does not judge us based on our past mistakes but patiently works with us toward righteousness.

Oh, how wonderful is God’s love! “Father, please fill my heart with this love, for only You have it, and I can only receive it from You.” Our loving Savior was willing to die for rebellious sinners so that we might have the chance to live eternally with Him. David loved his son Absalom dearly, but Absalom took that love for granted, just as we sometimes take our relationship with God for granted. Joab’s nephew, Jonadab, was a cunning strategist but also cruel. He lived by his own rules and showed little regard for God. “Father, please help us learn lessons from the lives of David and Joab, for they were weak human beings just like us.”

Those who do house-to-house ministry will have many opportunities to serve in different ways. They should pray for the sick and do all they can to relieve suffering.

Questions:

1. Why did Absalom go to Geshur?
2. Why did Absalom hate Amnon?
3. Why is it important to avoid friends like Jonadab?
4. Why did David lack the strength to rebuke others?
5. Why is alcohol dangerous?

God bless you,child and young person of jesus

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:9,10.

[9,10] The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward everyone according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.

Prayer: Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for You are my praise and my strength. Do not be a cause of great fear to me; You are my refuge in the day of disaster. Let my persecutors be put to shame, but keep me from shame; let them be terrified, but keep me from terror. Bring on them the day of disaster; destroy them with double destruction. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Activity: Relationships between boys and girls. This is the time to teach the subject of sex in a simple way, according to the age of children. Teach your children about sex and stewardship. They have reproductive organs. They must know that sex is only for husband and wife, that is, people who are married. Teach them according to their age. Parents should not avoid teaching this subject, because otherwise youth or children will get false lessons from the enemy, due to unquenched curiosity. This subject must not be treated as taboo!

DAY 95 (April 4)

TOPIC: Absalom and Joab

(2 Samuel 14)



Joab realized that the king missed his son Absalom and longed to see him. Joab was a man of wisdom; when he sought good, he was thoughtful, but when he intended evil, he could be ruthless. This time, Joab tried to be a mediator by doing what was right. Blessed are the peacemakers, for this is a godly trait we should practice by reconciling the world with Him.

Joab sent a wise woman from Tekoa and instructed her to go to the king, wearing mourning clothes and appearing as a grieving widow. He advised her not to anoint herself with oil but to look like a woman who had been mourning for many days. He told her to present a story to the king.

When the woman of Tekoa approached King David, she fell face down and pleaded, “Help me, O king!” David, being a king and a judge in those days, asked her what was wrong. The woman explained that she was a widow whose two sons had fought, and since there was no one to intervene, one had killed the other. Now, the entire family demanded the life of the remaining son as punishment for murder.

With sorrow, she explained that if they killed her only remaining heir, they would extinguish her husband’s name and leave no descendants. The king assured her that he would take care of her case. She further pleaded that the guilt should be on her and not on the king or his throne. David then declared that anyone who tried to harm her son would have to face him, and no one would touch him again.

The woman continued to plead, asking the king to prevent the avenger of

blood from causing further destruction. David reassured her that not a single hair on her son's head would fall.

Then the wise woman of Tekoa boldly asked the king why he had devised such a thing for God's people, referring to his refusal to bring back Absalom, who had killed his brother Amnon. She praised David, saying that his words were comforting, for he was like an angel of God, able to discern good and evil.

At that moment, the king realized that Joab was behind the woman's story. He confronted her, asking if Joab had sent her. The woman admitted that she could not deny it—Joab was indeed the one who had instructed her and put those words in her mouth. She also acknowledged the king's wisdom, saying he had the understanding of an angel of God, knowing everything happening in the world.

King David then commanded Joab to bring Absalom back. Joab bowed down with his face to the ground, thanking the king for his kindness. Joab went to Geshur, brought Absalom to Jerusalem, but the king ordered that Absalom should return to his house and not see his face.

David and his nephew Joab had a relationship filled with fear and dependency. Joab helped David accomplish difficult tasks, even questionable ones, but David knew Joab was a skilled warrior and an asset as a commander. However, their philosophies did not always align, as David sought to follow God's ways, while Joab often acted pragmatically.

Absalom was described as the most handsome man in Israel, from head to toe. His hair was particularly admired, and he even had a beautiful daughter named Tamar. After returning to Jerusalem, Absalom lived for two more years—five years in total—without seeing the king. Frustrated, he sent for Joab to arrange a meeting with David, but Joab refused to come.

In anger, Absalom ordered his servants to set Joab's field on fire. This finally made Joab visit him, asking why his field had been burned. Absalom explained that since Joab had brought him back from Geshur but had not helped him see the king, he felt it would have been better if he had stayed away. He demanded to see David, even if it meant facing death.

Joab then spoke to the king, and David allowed Absalom to come before him. When Absalom entered, he bowed with his face to the ground, and the king kissed him, signifying reconciliation.

After this, Absalom began to portray himself as a leader. He acquired a

chariot, horses, and fifty men to run ahead of him. He would rise early and stand at the city gate, intercepting those who had cases to present to the king for judgment.

A Parent's Prayer and Pledge

Heavenly Father,
I am overwhelmed by the responsibilities of parenting. Without Your guidance, my efforts will be in vain. I praise You because You are the source of joy, victory, gratitude, and all good things in my life. Thank You for blessing me with children; they are a great gift.

Help me raise my children according to Your will, even though I am unworthy and have many weaknesses. Prevent me from speaking harshly or discouraging them with negative words. Instead, teach me to encourage their good efforts and embrace them with words that bring life. I know this is not easy due to my nature—please help me control my tongue and listen when they need me instead of constantly speaking.

Grant me wisdom to discipline them with patience, to help them develop good character, and to prepare them for their responsibilities in life. Help me not to demand from them what I do not practice myself. Do not let guilt from my busy schedule make me spoil them by giving in to their every desire.

May I always carry a smile on my face, and may our home be filled with laughter and joy. Help me know when to set work aside and enjoy time with my children. I trust that You will help me build a joyful home and create cherished memories that will last for generations.

Forgive me for any past failures and sins in raising my children. Help me to forgive them as well. Remove anger, resentment, envy, blame, and bitterness from my heart so that I can truly support and guide them. Let me show them love from childhood to adulthood so that they may know what love is, having first experienced it at home.

Help me not to compare them with other children, but rather to embrace Your promises for their lives. My children belong to You, Lord. I surrender them to Your mighty hand. May my love for You be their example, leading them to serve You and care for others in need.

Help me instill godly character in them, for that is the only thing they can take with them to heaven—not wealth, clothes, or possessions. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that we may not be drawn to materialism or evil. Guide

our home so that we surrender our desires to Your will.

Above all, help me develop patience and self-control. Lord, I do not presume to teach You how to bless me, for You already know what I and my children need for a better future. Thank You for answering this prayer beyond what I can ask or imagine. I love You, Lord, and I am grateful that You will provide for all our needs in Your perfect timing. Amen.

Encouraging the Sick
Our Savior desires that we bring hope to the sick and those in pain or suffering, encouraging them to rely on His strength. Through faith and prayer, a hospital room can be transformed into Bethel, the house of God—just as it was for Jacob when he encountered the Lord.

Reflection Questions

1. What story did the woman of Tekoa present?
2. Who sent her to the king?
3. Why didn't David have time to properly raise his children?
4. Why did Absalom set Joab's field on fire?
5. How can physical beauty become a stumbling block in life?
6. Why do parents continue to love their children even when they make mistakes?

May God bless you greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Psalm 51:3-5.

[3-5] For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are right in Your verdict and justified when You judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Activity: Beauty and morals should not give anyone pride. God created men and women in His own image, and He said the work He created was very good (Genesis 1:26–27, 31).

We are called to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is a kind of worship (Romans 12:1–2).

We measure beauty not by worldly outward standards, but by inner character (1 Peter 3:3–4).

Christ will make all things new—including our bodies. Though our present bodies are affected by the fall, God Himself will give us eternal bodies one day (2 Corinthians 5:1–5).

DAY 96 (April 5)

TOPIC: Unholy Desires

(2 Samuel 15)



David was occupied with royal duties such as judging disputes, leading wars, and composing songs. Somehow, he left a gap that Absalom exploited for his own benefit.

Absalom called those who came to seek justice from his father and asked them about their city and tribe. He listened to their concerns at the city gate and told them, “Your words are good and right, but there is no one assigned by the king to hear you.” He then said, “If only I were the judge in the land, then everyone with a case would come to me, and I would give them justice.” When people approached him and bowed before him, he stretched out his hand, held them, and even kissed them. He treated all who came to seek judgment from the king this way, deceiving the people of Israel and turning their hearts toward himself instead of his father.

After four years, he asked the king for permission to fulfill a vow he had made to the Lord while in Geshur, promising to serve Him if he returned safely. The

king allowed him to go in peace, and Absalom left for Hebron.

Once there, he secretly sent spies throughout Israel's tribes, instructing them that when they heard the trumpet, they should declare, "Absalom reigns in Hebron!" Two hundred men who were invited went with Absalom unknowingly, unaware of his deceitful intentions. Absalom also called Ahithophel, David's counselor and the grandfather of Bathsheba, to join him in offering sacrifices. Together, they continued conspiring to overthrow David. Perhaps Ahithophel did not approve of how Uriah was treated and decided to align himself with Absalom, despite being an older and wise man.

A messenger came to inform David that the hearts of the Israelites were now with Absalom. David realized Absalom was planning to harm him and take the throne. He instructed his servants to flee immediately, warning that if they did not escape in time, no one would survive Absalom's attack. They hurriedly left before Absalom could strike them down with the sword. His servants were ready to do as he commanded. David left with all his household, except for ten concubines who were left to take care of the palace. As they departed, they stopped briefly at Beth-Merhak.

Six hundred men who had followed him from Gath passed before him. The king then turned to Ittai the Gittite and asked why he was going with them. He urged him to stay with Absalom, the new king. "Since you just arrived yesterday, why should I make you wander with us today? I do not know where we are going. Return and stay with the king, and may mercy and truth be with you," David told him.

But Ittai replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is—whether in life or death—there your servant will be." So David told him to go ahead with his people, including the children.

The whole land wept loudly as everyone crossed over. The king and his people crossed the Kidron Valley, heading toward the wilderness.

Zadok the priest came with the Levites, carrying the Ark of the Covenant, to show their loyalty to David. Abiathar the priest also accompanied them until all the people had left the city.

The king then told Zadok to take the Ark of God back to the city. He said, "If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, He will bring me back and allow me to see the Ark and His dwelling place again. But if He says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then let Him do to me whatever seems good to Him."

David instructed Zadok to return to the city with his son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. Through these two, he would receive news about Absalom's plans. Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of the Lord back to Jerusalem.

David climbed the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered, and he was barefoot. Everyone who followed him also covered their heads and wept as they climbed.

Someone told David that Ahithophel was among those conspiring with Absalom. David prayed, "O Lord, please turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

When David reached the summit, the place of worship, he met Hushai, his friend, who came to greet him with torn clothes and dust on his head. David told Hushai that if he came with him, he would be a burden. But if he returned to the city and told Absalom, "I will be your servant, as I was your father's servant before you," then he could counter Ahithophel's advice.

David informed him that Zadok and Abiathar were in the city and could communicate with him through their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan. Hushai, David's friend, then returned to the city, and at the same time, Absalom entered Jerusalem.

Absalom deceived the people and stole their hearts, just as Satan did in heaven. Because of his love for his son, David fled to avoid bloodshed. Lust and pride drove Absalom to disregard the lives of others. These lessons should be imprinted in our hearts as we journey through life.

David remained courageous in his time of distress and gracious in his words, setting an example for us. If we are weak in body, we should truly trust in the Lord and pray to our God in our times of trouble. If we feel led to seek the prayers of others whom we trust to intercede for us before Jesus, our Mighty Healer, help will surely come if we pray in faith.

Questions:

1. How did Absalom turn people's hearts away from his father?
2. Why did David flee from Jerusalem?
3. Why didn't David take friends like Hushai with him?
4. Why did David refuse to take the Ark of the Covenant with him?
5. Who was Ahithophel?
6. Why do people seek advisors?
7. How do you choose your advisors?

God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 15:14

[14] Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword."

Prayer: Our beloved Father, help us in our cities, families, and relatives to live peaceful lives. We hear much in the media of relatives quarreling and even killing each other. Help us to have brotherly love, to help one another, and to be ready when You come again. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Ahithophel was David's counselor. Discuss what modern counselors do today, and whether a president or a queen needs advisors, and why. How do we know which advice to take and which to reject?

DAY 97 (April 6)

TOPIC: Absalom Goes to War Against His Father

(2 Samuel 15-18)



As David passed over the mountain top, he saw Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, coming to meet him with two saddled donkeys carrying 200 loaves of bread, clusters of raisins, fruits, and skins of wine. David asked him, "What are these for?" Ziba replied, "The donkeys are for the king and his men to ride, and the food is for the young men who are weary in the wilderness." David then asked, "Where is your master Mephibosheth?" Ziba answered, "He stayed in Jerusalem, saying that perhaps today the Israelites will restore his father Jonathan's kingdom to him." The king saw Mephibosheth as disloyal, but Ziba as faithful, so he declared that all of Mephibosheth's possessions now belonged to Ziba. Ziba bowed down and said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

When King David reached Bahurim, Shimei, a relative of Saul, came out cursing him and throwing stones at him and his servants. Shimei shouted, "Go away! Go away, you man of blood! You worthless man! The Lord has repaid you for all the bloodshed in Saul's house, and now He has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. Your evil has caught up with you because you are a man of blood." Abishai, one of David's men, asked, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head." But David refused, saying, "Leave him alone. The Lord has told him to curse me. Who am I to question this?" Then he added, "If my own son seeks my life, how much more this Benjaminite! Perhaps the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for this cursing today." As David and his men continued, Shimei kept cursing, throwing stones, and kicking up dust. Eventually, David and his men, exhausted, arrived at a place where they could rest.

Meanwhile, Absalom and all the people of Israel entered Jerusalem with

Ahithophel, David's former counselor. When Hushai, David's friend, approached Absalom, he greeted him, saying, "Long live the king!" Absalom was suspicious and asked, "Is this how you show loyalty to your friend? Why didn't you go with him?" Hushai answered, "I will serve whomever the Lord and the people of Israel have chosen. Just as I served your father, so I will serve you."

Absalom then asked Ahithophel for advice. Ahithophel suggested that Absalom sleep with his father's concubines, showing Israel that he had completely taken over. Absalom followed this wicked counsel in public view. In those days, Ahithophel's advice was regarded as if it came from God himself.

Ahithophel then advised Absalom to send 12,000 men to attack David that very night while he was weary and weak. He said this would terrify David's followers, causing them to flee, making it easy to strike down David alone and return all the people to Absalom. This advice pleased Absalom and Israel's elders. However, Absalom also wanted to hear from Hushai. Seeing that Ahithophel's plan would destroy David, Hushai opposed it, saying, "Your father and his men are mighty warriors, like a bear robbed of her cubs. He is experienced in battle and will not be sleeping with his troops. Right now, he is probably hiding in a cave. If we attack and suffer early losses, the people will say, 'Absalom's men are losing!'" Hushai then suggested that Absalom gather all of Israel and personally lead the attack. This would ensure total victory. Absalom and his men preferred Hushai's advice, not realizing that the Lord intended to frustrate Ahithophel's good counsel to protect David.

Hushai secretly sent a message to Abiathar and Zadok, the priests, instructing them to warn David to cross the Jordan River that night to avoid destruction. Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the priests' sons, carried the message but were spotted. They hid in a well at a woman's house. When Absalom's men came searching for them, the woman misled them, saying, "They have crossed the stream." After the searchers left, the two messengers ran to David and urged him to cross the Jordan immediately. David and all his people crossed safely.

When Ahithophel saw that his advice had been ignored, he realized that David would regain his throne and punish him as a traitor. He went home, set his affairs in order, and hanged himself. Meanwhile, Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel and appointed Amasa as his army commander. David and his followers reached Mahanaim, where the people provided them with beds, food, and supplies, as they were weary and hungry.

David divided his army into three groups under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. Everywhere we see broken families like David's. People need healing and hope. Absalom was a rebellious and undisciplined young man, possibly because

his father, occupied with royal duties, failed to correct him. This serves as a warning to parents and grandparents who love their children excessively but fail to discipline them. Unresolved grievances lead to bitterness, hatred, and destruction. Lord, help us deal with sin before it takes root and destroys us.

A parent's love can be compared to God's love for us. "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). After paying for our sins, He calls us: "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18, NKJV). No matter how great our sins are, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

We humbly prayed for those who are sick and suffering, even those on the brink of death. As we laid this before the Lord, we felt the assurance of God's love even in the midst of trouble.

Questions:

1. What advice did Ahithophel give?
2. Who were the three commanders of David's army?
3. What was the role of Ahimaaz and Jonathan?
4. Who was hidden in a well by a woman?
5. Who were the two priests?
6. What did Shimei say to David?
7. What did Absalom want from his father?
8. Why is suicide never a solution, even when life seems unbearable, considering that we do not own ourselves?

May God bless you, dear Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Psalm 71:10-12.

[10-12] For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." Do not be far from me, my God; come quickly, God, to help me.

***Prayer:** Lord, I have fled to You, be my stronghold and my dwelling place, heal me from wicked people. Thank You for being with me since birth. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

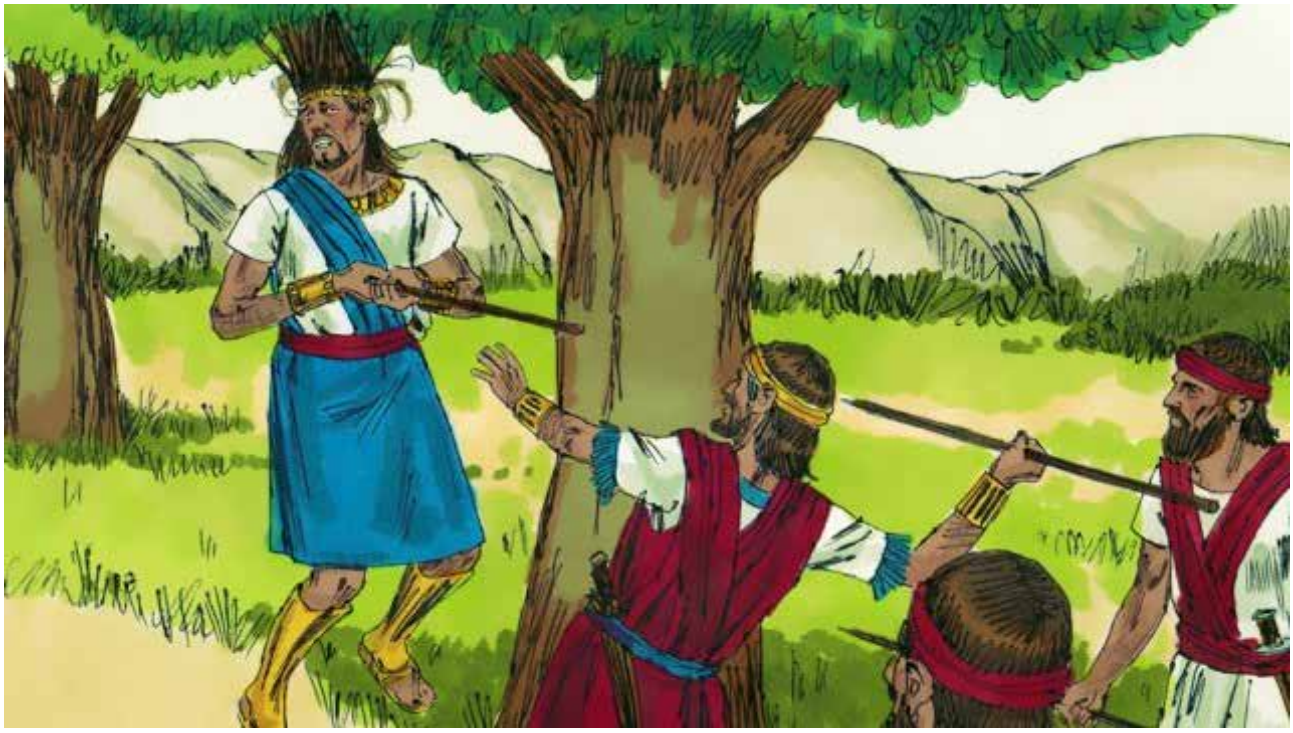
Activity: How to honor your parents.

- Discuss, for example: helping your parents without being told.
- **Goal:** To develop a spirit of service and help young people meet their parents' needs in practical ways.
- **Obedience:** To keep the fifth commandment God gave in Exodus 20.
- **Materials:** A list of chores or tasks to be done.
- **Instructions:** Tell the youth or children to think of a list of tasks their parents do regularly. Encourage them to choose one or two from this list that they can complete without being asked. This will show genuine effort and gratitude toward their parents.

DAY 98 (April 7)

TOPIC: Absalom is Killed

2 Samuel 18-19



David was ready to go into battle with his people, but they told him not to go because if they fled, the enemy would not care much. However, if David fled, the enemy would surely pursue him. They said he was worth more than ten thousand of them, so they advised him to stay in the city and handle matters from there. The king listened and agreed to do what seemed best in their eyes. It was a good thing that the king feared God, and the prophet was also valued by his people.

As the king stood at the gate while his troops marched to war, he remembered his son, even though Absalom had no regard for him and was ready to destroy him. David commanded, “Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake.” This was a deep expression of a father’s love. If a human father could love this much, how much more does God love us?

The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim, where David’s army defeated the Israelites with great destruction. That day, 20,000 men died. The battle raged throughout the night, and many died in the forest. Absalom, riding a mule, encountered David’s servants. As his mule passed under thick branches

of a great oak tree, his head got caught in the branches, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth.

A soldier saw him and reported it to Joab but did not harm him because of the king's command. However, Joab, who seemed to have had enough of Absalom and bore a grudge against him, rebuked the soldier for not killing him, saying he would have rewarded him with ten silver pieces and a belt. The soldier reminded Joab that he could not harm Absalom despite any reward because the king had strictly commanded that no one should harm him.

Joab, unwilling to wait for further discussion, took three javelins and pierced Absalom's heart while he was still alive, hanging from the tree. Then Joab blew the trumpet for victory, and his troops stopped pursuing the Israelites. They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit in the forest.

Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, wanted to run and inform the king of the Lord's justice against his enemies, but Joab told him that he would not be the messenger that day. Instead, Joab sent a Cushite to deliver the news. The Cushite bowed before Joab as a sign of obedience and went on his mission.

Despite Joab's warning, Ahimaaz insisted on running, even if he would arrive second. Joab allowed him to go, and Ahimaaz, taking a shorter route or perhaps running faster, outran the Cushite.

King David was waiting at the gate when a watchman saw a man running alone and informed the king. David assumed the runner must be bringing good news. The watchman saw a second runner and identified him as Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. Since Ahimaaz usually brought good news, the king expected his report to be positive.

When Ahimaaz arrived, he bowed before the king and praised the Lord for delivering David's enemies into his hands. However, David immediately asked about Absalom's well-being. Ahimaaz hesitated, saying he had seen commotion when Joab sent him, but he did not know what had happened. Realizing the report was incomplete, David asked him to step aside while the second messenger arrived.

The Cushite arrived and announced, "I have good news for my lord the king! The Lord has avenged you today against all who rose up against you." However, the king was more concerned about his son. When he asked about Absalom, the Cushite wisely responded, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man."

Hearing this, David was deeply moved and went up to his chamber, weeping as he cried, “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!” This was a powerful expression of a father’s love, reflecting God’s great love for us, even when we sin against Him.

Joab rebuked David for mourning the son who had betrayed him and tried to kill him. Because of David’s sorrow, the victory turned into mourning, and the soldiers felt ashamed instead of celebrating. They returned quietly, as if they had fled from battle in disgrace.

Joab confronted the king, telling him he had shamed his servants who had saved his life, his sons, his wives, and his concubines. Joab accused David of loving those who hated him and hating those who loved him. He said David’s actions showed that his commanders and servants meant nothing to him, and if Absalom had lived while they all perished, it would have pleased David more. He warned David to go out and encourage his people, or else they would all abandon him that very night, leading to a disaster worse than anything David had ever faced.

David listened, took courage, and sat at the city gate, where the people came to see him. Those who had followed Absalom remained silent, uncertain of what to do. The people of Israel debated about bringing David back as their king, realizing that although he had fled from Absalom, he had always been their leader.

David sent a message to the elders of Judah, asking why they were the last to invite him back to Jerusalem. He also assured Amasa, Absalom’s commander, that he would be the new leader of his army. The people of Judah reconciled and sent for David to return.

As David crossed the Jordan River, Shimei—the man who had previously cursed him—came with the Benjamites and Ziba to meet him. Shimei fell at David’s feet and begged for forgiveness. He pleaded with David not to remember or take to heart the insults he had spoken against him.

Abishai, one of David’s men, suggested that Shimei be put to death for cursing the king, but David refused. He declared that no one in Israel would die that day because it was a day of celebration. David then swore to Shimei that he would not be put to death.

David wished he could have died instead of Absalom. Our Creator did not only wish to die for us; He actually died in our place. When did He die for us?

While we were still sinners and His enemies—just as Absalom was to David. Nothing Absalom did could stop David from loving him. Likewise, nothing we do can make God stop loving us. Even when we crucified Him, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Even at the final judgment, when unrepentant sinners face destruction in the lake of fire (because God will respect their choices), He will mourn for them, saying, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11).

We dedicated a child and prayed for them, believing that the Lord would grant peace to the mother and the child. And it happened. The baby stopped crying, and we left them both doing well.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why did the people refuse to let David go to battle?
2. What mistake did Absalom make?
3. Did his father still love him? How do you know?
4. What wrong did Shimei commit?
5. God is always merciful and offers hope—have you seen this in your life?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Disciple of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 18:33

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for You are my strong refuge, even when those closest to us hurt us deeply and bring us sorrow. My mouth will be filled with Your praises. Do not forsake me when my strength fails, nor leave me alone. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Dealing with Grief
Death confuses and troubles all of us. For children who have experienced the death of someone important, grief may bring many challenging and unfamiliar feelings such as guilt, isolation, and anger. When grief remains unaddressed, these feelings may dominate childhood and negatively affect how they respond to loss in adulthood.

It is important that bereaved children can acknowledge the death of this person as significant and that their feelings are validated. Children also watch and imitate how adults model responses; showing healthy behaviors helps them in healing. This expression activity aims to provide opportunities for adults to listen attentively and help children grieve at their own pace. Professional support, such as pastors and counselors, is also recommended.

Reading: Use literature that addresses death and grief guided by the Scriptures. This provides children with a chance to share their stories and ask questions.

Memory Box: Create a box to hold items connected with the loved one (such as photos). If unavailable, children can write or draw memories. They can return to the box to talk with God about their sorrow and their hope of reunion after resurrection.

Sentence Completion: Some children may struggle to open up. Provide sentence starters, e.g., "When I think of my brother who died, I feel…"

Letter Writing: Encourage children to write a letter expressing what they would want to say if they could meet their loved one again at the resurrection. Use Scripture to explain that death is a sleep until Jesus comes.

DAY 99 (April 8)

TOPIC: David Returns to the Kingdom

(2 Samuel 19-21)

Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet David. He had neither trimmed his nails nor his beard, nor had he washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. The king asked him why he had not gone with him. Mephibosheth explained that he was crippled, and though his master the king was like an angel of God, he would accept whatever the king decided. Since his family was doomed to death before the king, but the king had loved him and given him a place at his table, he felt he had no right to ask for more. The king then said that the land should be divided between Mephibosheth and Ziba. But Mephibosheth responded that Ziba could take everything; what mattered to him was that the king had returned safely to his home.

Barzillai the Gileadite, who was 80 years old and had provided for the king, came to help him cross the Jordan. The king invited Barzillai to live with him in Jerusalem, promising to care for him. However, Barzillai declined, saying he was too old to enjoy the luxuries of the palace—he could no longer distinguish between good and bad, nor enjoy the taste of food or the sound of music. He thanked the king for his generosity but requested to return to his hometown near the graves of his ancestors. Instead, he asked the king to take his servant Chimham. The king agreed and took Chimham. The people crossed the Jordan, and the king kissed and blessed Barzillai before he returned home.

A dispute arose between the people of Judah and Israel. Sheba, a worthless man, blew a trumpet and declared that he was taking leadership over the tribe of Benjamin. Many Israelites followed him, but the people of Judah remained loyal to the king. When David returned to Jerusalem, he found the ten concubines he had left behind alive. However, they were never again considered his concubines but were taken care of for the rest of their lives.

David instructed Amasa, who had been Absalom's army commander but was now on David's side, to gather the army and pursue Sheba before he caused more trouble than Absalom. Joab also set out on the mission. When Joab met Amasa, he deceitfully greeted him, saying, "Peace, my brother," while holding Amasa's beard with his right hand as if to kiss him. Amasa did not



realize Joab had a sword in his hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach, causing his intestines to spill out, and he died. Joab and Abishai then pursued Sheba and besieged him in the city of Abel Beth Maacah.

There, a wise woman called for Joab and negotiated with him. She declared that she was a woman of peace and faithfulness in Israel and questioned why they were attempting to destroy the city. Joab responded that they were only after Sheba, who had rebelled against the king. The woman promised to resolve the issue and advised the townspeople to throw Sheba's head over the wall. They followed her advice, beheaded Sheba, and threw his head to Joab. With that, Joab sounded the trumpet of victory, and everyone returned home while he returned to King David in Jerusalem.

Joab remained in charge of Israel's army, Benaiah was over the Kerethites and Pelethites, Adoram was in charge of forced labor, Jehoshaphat was the recorder, Sheva was the secretary, Zadok and Abiathar were priests, and Ira was David's personal priest.

There was a three-year famine during David's reign. When David sought the Lord, he was told that it was due to Saul's massacre of the Gibeonites. David called the Gibeonites and asked how he could make amends. They refused silver or gold but requested that seven of Saul's descendants be hanged because of his crimes against them. Due to his covenant with Jonathan, David spared Mephibosheth but handed over two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and five sons of Merab, Saul's daughter. They were hanged during the barley harvest.

Rizpah mourned for her sons, wearing sackcloth and staying on the mountain, protecting their bodies from birds until rain fell. Her devotion reminded David to retrieve the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh Gilead and give them a proper burial. After this, God relented, and the famine ended.

Rizpah was not personally responsible for the wrongdoing, yet her offspring suffered, causing her great sorrow. As a concubine of the former king, she had little power, and her fate seemed tragic. With her two sons dead and Saul's family nearly wiped out, she could have succumbed to despair. However, she acted with dignity, refusing to be passive in her grief. Her presence in two significant moments of David's reign makes her a nation-builder.

We can all learn something from Rizpah: Faithfulness is not dependent on circumstances or good fortune. Faithfulness is an unconditional commitment to doing what is right, regardless of the cost, while relying on God for guidance.

The Gospel is a message of peace. Christianity, if accepted and obeyed, would spread peace, harmony, and joy throughout the world. Christ's religion unites all who accept His teachings. Jesus' mission was to reconcile humanity with God and with one another.

Once again, war broke out between Israel and the Philistines at Gob. David went into battle but grew weary. Ishbi-Benob, a descendant of the giants, attempted to kill David, but Abishai came to his aid and struck down the Philistine. After this, David's men told him not to go to battle again, lest he extinguish the "lamp of Israel." The Israelites continued to fight the Philistines from Gath, the land of Goliath, and secured victory.

Patients are brought to Christ through the care of nurses who consider their needs and pray for them, asking the Great Physician to look upon the suffering with mercy and grant healing.

Questions:

How were the Gibeonites satisfied?

What do you learn from Rizpah?

Why did Abishai kill the Philistine?

Who was Barzillai?

Why did Joab kill Amasa?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Romans 15:4–5.

[4,5] For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

Prayer: Thank You, Father in heaven. Some parts of the Bible we read and do not understand, but they were written to teach us so that we may have encouragement and hope. Help us in this journey of life to be patient, comforted, and united. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Children should be taught how to live with people with disabilities, so they can be a source of help, not sorrow. Since many children do not

realize that disabilities are not chosen, they often laugh at or sadden those who are disabled. Show them they have many reasons to thank God for being able-bodied. Use stories of people with disabilities, then discuss together.
Plan an inclusion activity day, such as wheelchair races or blindfolded games, to help children understand challenges faced by people with disabilities. Teach children to include peers with disabilities, foster empathy, respect, and open conversations. Invite people with disabilities to share their experiences directly. Emphasize friendship, compassion, and not fearing those with mental illnesses—especially within homes, schools, and churches.

DAY 100 (April 9)

TOPIC: David's Mighty Warriors

(2 Samuel 22-23)



Then David sang a song on the day the Lord delivered him from the hands of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul:

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; yes, the God of my rock, I will trust in Him. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold, and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I will be saved from my enemies.

For the waves of death surrounded me,
The floods of wickedness made me afraid.
The cords of hell encircled me;
The snares of death confronted me.
In my distress, I called upon the Lord;

I cried out to my God.
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry entered His ears.

He took hold of me and drew me out of many waters;
He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me,
For they were too strong for me.

The Lord was my support.
For You are my lamp, O Lord;
The Lord shall lighten my darkness.

For by Your help, I can run against a troop;
By my God, I can leap over a wall.

For who is God except the Lord?
And who is a rock, except our God?

God is my strong fortress,
And He leads the upright in His way.
You have girded me with strength for battle.
My enemies turned their backs to me.

You have saved me from the strife of my people;
You have kept me as the head of the nations;
People I did not know shall serve me.
Strangers shall submit to me as soon as they hear of me.

Let the God of my salvation be exalted!
He is the One who gives great deliverance to His king.
He has made an everlasting covenant with me."

These were among the last songs of David, the son of Jesse, the sweet psalmist of Israel. Even today, whenever you are in distress, sing these Psalms of King David.

David's kingdom listed thirty-seven mighty warriors. Among them, three were chosen as the greatest warriors of all. The first was Josheb-Basshebeth, the chief of the officers, who raised his spear against eight hundred men and killed them in one battle.

A Philistine garrison had taken a stronghold in the Valley of Rephaim. David, feeling thirsty, longed for water, saying, “Oh, that someone would bring me water from the well of Bethlehem, near the gate!” So these three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine camp, drew water from that well, and brought it to David. But David poured it out as an offering, refusing to drink it, saying, “Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Is it not the blood of these men who risked their lives?”

Among these three warriors was Abishai, the brother of Joab, who killed three hundred men with his spear. There was also Benaiah, who struck down two lion-like warriors of Moab and killed a lion in a snowy pit. He later became David’s bodyguard. Asahel was also among the thirty warriors, along with Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba.

The Lord is the One who makes us mighty. If we trust and rely on Him, He will accomplish great things through us and strengthen us, even in times of trouble. The true heroism of today is not in killing lions or enemies, but in having God’s character—helping those in need, reading God’s Word daily, praying, and repenting of our sins. That is the true heroism of today: fearing God and glorifying Him, for His judgment is near. It means hating sin and warning others about the soon-coming Messiah!

Even if you do not have an opportunity to accomplish great things in God’s work, but you desire to, God knows your heart and intentions to do much for His glory. Do not be discouraged if, by His will, you are unable to fulfill those noble plans for His honor. He sees your desires and pours out His blessings. He knows you. He has carried you through many things and sees your potential even before you begin planning for His glory. He is pleased with your heart alone—the heart that loves Him and is contrite. That is the only gift He desires. Then you can continue bringing your thoughts and inspirations to Him and listen to what He says. He will glorify Himself through you.

We live in a world where we need to be heroes because Satan roams like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Though we are weak, if we are on our knees, filled with His Word in our hearts, we will be mighty warriors and set apart.

Missionary nurses, when caring for the sick and relieving the burdens of the poor, will have many opportunities to pray with them, read God’s Word to them, and speak of the Savior. They can bring the light of hope into the lives of the weary and the hopeless.

Questions:

Read a few verses from David's Psalms in today's vigil.

What did the three mighty warriors do together?

How was David's kingdom made everlasting?

How can we be heroes today?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Psalm 104:33–35.

[33-35] I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to Him, as I rejoice in the LORD.

Prayer: Beloved Father in heaven, thank You for everything. You are my shield, my strength, my salvation, and my refuge. In my distress I called upon You, and You delivered me. Keep me away from evil, for You alone are my hope. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: In our country we have Heroes' Day. You can name five national heroes and explain what they did. The Bible also has three mighty men and thirty others. Teach about these biblical heroes and what made them courageous.

DAY 101 (April 10)

TOPIC: David Counts Israel

(2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21)



David angered the Lord by counting the people of Israel. Satan influenced him, and he called Joab, instructing him to go and count Israel and Judah. Even Joab, who had many spiritual struggles and was known for his brutality, recognized this as a mistake. He warned David, saying, “May the Lord increase the number of His people a hundredfold before your eyes, my lord the king. But why does my lord the king desire to do this? Why should he bring guilt upon Israel?”

However, the king’s command overruled Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the army leaders left the king’s presence and went to count the people of Israel.

They crossed the Jordan and conducted the census, traveling through all the tribes, even to the borders. It took nine months and twenty days. During those times, with limited technology, counting people took time, as they had to travel on foot and go house to house. The king wanted to count the people eligible for the army so he could take pride in having a large military, perhaps believing that his victories were due to his strategy, technology, or the size of his army.

Joab reported that there were 800,000 men in Israel and 500,000 in Judah who were fit for military service. However, he did not count the Levites and Benjamites because he disagreed with the king's order. In this case, Joab was right. How often do we, too, desire to have large numbers in our church or group so that we can boast about it?

After the census, David's heart was troubled, and he confessed to the Lord that he had greatly sinned. He said, "I beg You, Lord, remove the guilt of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly." It seems he had violated a clear command from God.

The next morning, the prophet Gad, sent by God, came to David with a message. He was to choose one of three punishments:
1. Seven years of famine in the land
2. Three months of fleeing from his enemies as they pursued him
3. Three days of plague in the land

Gad told David to think carefully and give an answer to the One who sent him. David was greatly distressed and said, "Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men."

So the Lord sent a plague from morning until evening, and 70,000 people died. But when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the calamity and told the angel, "It is enough; withdraw your hand."

The angel of the Lord was standing near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. When David saw the angel striking down the people, he fell face down and cried, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. But these sheep—what have they done? Let Your hand be against me and my father's house."

Then the prophet Gad told David to go and build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David obeyed the Lord's command, and when Araunah saw the king, he came and bowed before him, asking,

“Why has my lord the king come to his servant?”
David answered that he wanted to buy the threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord, so the plague would be stopped.

Araunah offered to give it freely to the king, along with oxen for burnt offerings, threshing sledges for wood, and everything needed for the sacrifice, saying, “My lord the king, I give this to you. May the Lord your God accept you.”

But King David replied, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.”

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver and six hundred shekels of gold. He built an altar there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. The Lord accepted his sacrifice, blessed the land, and the plague was stopped in Israel.

David had fallen into the worldly mindset of measuring success by the size of his army. Pride and selfish ambition led him to take this census. However, Israel’s greatness did not come from its army’s size or military strength. Their greatness came from their obedience to God. The Lord had promised them:

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.” (Deuteronomy 28)

It was through this promise that God had fought and won battles for Israel. Their victories were not because of their army’s size. Measuring success by worldly standards led David to commit a great sin.

If more prayers were offered in our hospitals and sanatoriums for the healing of the sick, the mighty power of the Great Physician would be seen. Many more would be strengthened and blessed, and many sudden illnesses would be healed.

Questions:

What did the prophet Gad tell David?

Why is it not good to boast about having a large number of members?

God values numbers so much that He has a book called Numbers. Why was He

displeased with David's census?

Which punishment did David choose?

What did David say to Araunah?

When people give us offerings to sacrifice while we have our own, why is it that they are the ones who gave, and not us?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Samuel 24:24.

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

Prayer: Good Lord, take away pride and boasting from the works we do. Protect us from the evil one so that we do not deceive ourselves into thinking that success comes from us. Every blessing comes from You alone. Thank You, Lord. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss modern-day examples of people showing pride in their wealth, power, or achievements—just as David once took pride in counting his military strength. How can we learn humility today?

DAY 102 (April 11)

TOPIC: The Coronation of Solomon

(1 Kings 1)



In his old age, David intended to store up treasures for building the temple of God on Mount Moriah, the same mountain where Abraham went to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This temple would be the most valuable building ever. David wanted to do this work, but the Lord told him that he had been a man of war and had shed blood, and that the temple would be built by a man of peace.

David became cold in his old age, and although they covered him with clothes, it did not help. So, they found Abishag, a Shunammite, to take care of him and serve him. The Bible briefly mentions this, and even though David had many attendants, Abishag was brought in. Some things recorded in the Bible were not necessarily commanded by God; rather, He allowed them or did not prevent them. They could have been human plans or His own, which we may ask about when we get to heaven. Let us pray that we may be there!

Adonijah, David's eldest surviving son after the deaths of Amnon and Absalom, assumed that he would be the next king. He prepared chariots and 50 horsemen to run ahead of him, just like Absalom had done. His father had never rebuked him at any time. He conspired with Joab and Abiathar the priest to seize the throne. However, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, Nathan, Shimei, and David's mighty men did not support Adonijah. Adonijah offered sacrifices and invited his brothers, the king's sons, and the people of Judah to a feast, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, David's warriors, or his brother Solomon.

Nathan warned Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, about Adonijah's actions. He advised her to go to King David and remind him of his promise that Solomon would be king after him. She was to plead for the safety of both herself and Solomon.

Bathsheba went to the king and presented her case, explaining that Adonijah had declared himself king without David's knowledge. She pointed out that the people of Israel were waiting for David to name his successor, fearing what might happen to her and Solomon if Adonijah ruled. As soon as she finished speaking, Nathan the prophet entered, bowed before the king, and confirmed Bathsheba's words.

King David then summoned Bathsheba and reaffirmed his oath that Solomon would reign after him. Bathsheba bowed low and said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

David called for Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah. He ordered them to take Solomon, mount him on the king's mule, and lead him to Gihon, where Zadok and Nathan would anoint him as king of Israel. They were to sound the trumpet and proclaim, "Long live King Solomon!" David declared that Solomon would sit on his throne and rule over Israel and Judah. Benaiah responded, "May Solomon's throne be even greater than my lord King David's!"

Solomon was anointed at Gihon amid great rejoicing, and the people celebrated so loudly that the ground shook with their cheers.

When Adonijah and his guests heard the commotion, they were alarmed. Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived and confirmed that Solomon had been crowned king, anointed by Zadok and Nathan, and had taken his place on David's throne. The people were celebrating, and even David rejoiced, thanking God for allowing him to see his son succeed him.

Fearful, Adonijah fled to the altar and clung to its horns for protection. Solomon declared that if Adonijah proved to be a loyal man, he would be safe, but if he was found guilty of wrongdoing, he would die. He ordered that Adonijah be brought down from the altar. Adonijah came before Solomon and bowed, and Solomon told him to go home.

The mothers of David's righteous children may have had a positive influence on them, unlike David, who was occupied with leading the entire nation. My heart goes out to men who are busy leading churches or governments. We must pray for them, their children, and ourselves and our children.

Have you asked God about the position you desire before stepping into it? Adonijah should have done so.

David gave his instructions and distributed his inheritance while he was still alive. Giving after death is not true giving—it is merely holding on to possessions selfishly, knowing that you cannot take them with you. We cannot take anything with us to the grave or to heaven. Instead, we should find ways to help the poor, orphans, and widows while we are still alive. We are merely stewards of what God has entrusted to us; He is the true owner of all things and the giver of life. By giving to God's work, we store up treasures in heaven. Everything we invest in heaven is secure and will multiply into something eternal and everlasting.

There are many benefits to giving now while we are still alive. Here are a few:
1. You will see the impact of your gifts—such as a new church building, a student in college, or a joyful orphan.
2. There will be no disputes among family or friends after your death.
3. You will set an example of generosity and love for others.
4. It demonstrates that your heart has shifted from selfishness to generosity.
5. You store up treasures in heaven.

I would bring this prayer before the Lord:
"Lord, we cannot read the heart of this sick person, but You know whether healing would be for their spiritual benefit and for the glory of Your name. In Your great mercy, grant healing and allow the necessary medical interventions to take place. May this work be entirely Yours."

Questions:

1. Why did David appoint Solomon as king before his death?

2. Why was Abishag the Shunammite brought to care for the king in his old

age?

3. What advice did Nathan give to Bathsheba?

4. Who supported Adonijah's claim to the throne?

5. Why do you think David became weak or aged so much by the age of 70?

God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Kings 1:30.

[30] "I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."

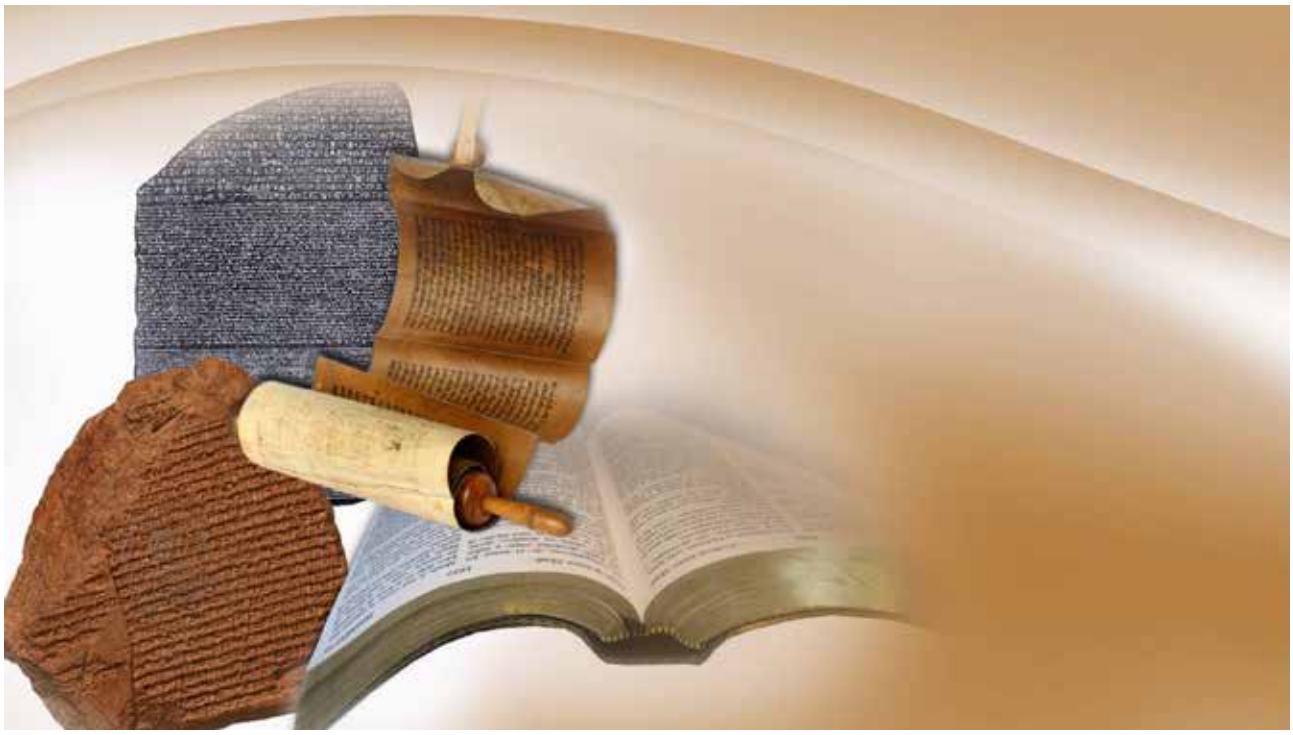
Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for calling us into Your royal priesthood. We are grateful for Your blessings. Help us to love You and to love people. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Drama – The Coronation of King Solomon. Assign roles and act out the words spoken at the crowning.

DAY 103 (April 12)

TOPIC: Psalms, Songs, and Worship

(Psalms 1-150)



The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible, containing 150 chapters. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter, while Psalm 118 is at the center of the Bible. Psalm 117 is the shortest chapter in the entire Bible. The Book of Psalms is a collection of songs and prayers written by various authors, including David, Asaph, Moses, and Solomon. David is the primary author, contributing the most Psalms. These songs and prayers were compiled by the Israelites for worship and are part of the Holy Scriptures.

David declared, "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will praise my God while I have my being" (Psalm 104:33). The first recorded Psalm writer was Moses, who wrote Psalm 90, reminding us that human life is brief—seventy or eighty years at most. He prayed to God, asking Him to teach us to number our days wisely so that we may gain a heart of wisdom, for our days pass quickly. Therefore, we must obey and trust in God before we enter the sleep of death.

Psalms are poetic writings, and every language has its own poetry style. In Swahili, poems often have four stanzas, with the last stanza repeating, and

a rhyme scheme of eight syllables per line. In English, poetry often follows a rhyme pattern without strict syllable counts. Hebrew poetry, on the other hand, is based on parallelism—where sentences are repeated and emphasized.

A good example is the contrast between the righteous and the wicked in Psalm 1:

"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked,
or stand in the way that sinners take,
or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season,
and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."

Here, we see a progression—first walking with the wicked, then standing, then sitting, and finally being completely immersed in sin.

Types of Psalms:
The Psalms cover a variety of themes, including:
Praises to God
Prayers for guidance and deliverance
Petitions for protection and salvation
Prayers for forgiveness
Thanksgiving for God's blessings
Prayers for justice against enemies

Some Psalms are personal, while others represent the needs and emotions of the entire nation of Israel. They highlight the deep and vital relationship between God and His people.

The New Testament frequently quotes the Psalms. For example, Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55, Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:68-79, and Simeon's thanksgiving prayer in Luke 2:29-32 all reflect the Psalms' poetic style. Many Psalms also contain Messianic prophecies, predicting the coming of Christ. Jesus Himself quoted Psalms, and the New Testament authors frequently referenced them.

Psalms have been a rich source of worship for believers throughout history. One of the most beloved Psalms is Psalm 23, which provides great comfort:



Psalm 23
"The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Psalms assure us that even though we are as fragile as flowers that fade or smoke that vanishes, God deeply cares for us. David marveled at God's greatness in Psalm 19:

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 19:1, 3-4)

David asked questions that still resonate today. For example, in Psalm 77, he wondered why God remained silent during times of trouble. At times, he felt as though the wicked prospered while the righteous suffered. However, when he entered the house of the Lord and understood their ultimate fate, he realized that their end would not be good. This gave him peace, knowing that God's justice prevails in the end.

Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament, appearing 33 times. One of its key verses states:

"The LORD says to my Lord:
'Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.'" (Psalm 110:1)

This verse highlights that Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father.

Psalm 139 teaches that God knows and searches our hearts. He knows all our ways, when we sit and when we rise. His knowledge is beyond comprehension. David declares:

"For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well." (Psalm 139:13-14)

Psalm 150 closes the book with a call to praise God using all musical instruments:

"Praise the LORD.
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,

praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD." (Psalm 150:1-6)

God dwells in the praises of His people. There is nothing better than worshiping Him. Since He owns everything, what can we give Him in return for His goodness? The best thing we can do is praise Him and share our testimonies with others so that they may know Him. When musical instruments are used properly, they enhance worship rather than create worldly noise.

Psalms contain great spiritual treasures. Psalm 34 states:

"I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
Taste and see that the LORD is good." (Psalm 34:1-8)

Among all the Psalms, I love Psalm 119 the most. It consists of 22 sections, each with 8 verses (totaling 176 verses). Every verse, except one, speaks about God's Word—His law, commands, testimonies, and precepts. Can you find the one verse that does not?

When facing challenges or seeking inspiration, read the Psalms. They provide deep comfort and spiritual nourishment.

Questions:

1. Who wrote the Book of Psalms?
2. What poetic style was used?
3. Which Psalms contain Messianic prophecies?
4. Memorize Psalms 1, 23, and 91.
5. What do you remember about Psalm 119?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Psalm 122:1–2.

[1,2] I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.

Prayer: Hallelujah, King of peace. We come before You singing, we are Your people entering Your gates with thanksgiving and praising Your Name. For You are good to us; Your mercy endures forever and Your faithfulness through all generations. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Write a song of praise to God, then sing it together with your friends.

DAY 104 (April 13)

TOPIC: Solomon and His Father's Instructions

(1 Kings 2-3)



David instructed his son Solomon, saying, "I am going the way of all the earth; be strong, and show yourself a man. Keep the commandments of the LORD your God, walk in His ways, keep His laws, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. That the LORD may fulfill His word spoken concerning David, saying that if his children walk in the way of the LORD with all their heart and soul, then David would never lack a man on the throne of Israel."

He reminded Solomon of the evil deeds of Joab, who killed Abner and Amasa without cause, telling him not to let Joab's gray hair go down to the grave in peace. He also instructed him to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, allowing them to eat at his table because they had helped him when he fled from Absalom. However, concerning Shimei, who had cursed David, he warned Solomon to deal wisely with him and ensure that his gray hair went down to the grave with blood.

David then died, and Solomon began his reign on his father's throne, and his kingdom was firmly established. Adonijah, Solomon's older brother from another mother, approached Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, saying that the kingdom had once belonged to him because he was the eldest, but it had now turned to his brother by the LORD's will. He made one request and pleaded with Bathsheba not to deny him. When she asked what he wanted, he requested to be given Abishag the Shunammite, who had served David, as his wife.

Bathsheba saw no harm in the request and agreed to speak to her son, King Solomon, unaware that it was a trap. When Bathsheba presented Adonijah's request to Solomon, the king, seated on his throne, placed his mother at his right hand. She asked for a small favor, hoping he would not refuse. Solomon responded, "Ask, mother, for I will not refuse you," unaware of what she was about to request.

When Solomon heard that Adonijah wanted to marry Abishag, he immediately recognized the hidden motive. Since Abishag had been closely associated with King David, giving her to Adonijah was almost like granting him the throne. Solomon replied sharply, "Why do you ask for Abishag for Adonijah? You might as well ask for the kingdom for him, since he is my older brother."

Solomon then swore that Adonijah would not cause trouble in the kingdom and declared that he would be executed that very day. He sent Benaiah to put him to death.

Solomon then dealt with Abiathar, the priest who had sided with Adonijah. Instead of killing him, he sent him away to his land, reminding him that he had carried the Ark of the Covenant and shared in David's struggles when he fled from Saul. Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood, thus fulfilling the LORD's word that Eli's descendants would no longer serve as priests.

When Joab heard about Adonijah's fate, he fled to the altar and held onto its horns, seeking refuge. However, Solomon sent Benaiah to tell Joab to come out, but Joab refused. Solomon commanded that he be struck down there, declaring that it would remove the guilt of innocent blood that Joab had shed, having killed Abner and Amasa unjustly. Benaiah carried out the order, and Solomon appointed him as commander of the army in Joab's place, while Zadok replaced Abiathar as priest.

Solomon summoned Shimei and instructed him to build a house in Jerusalem and not to leave or cross the Kidron Valley. If he did, he would be put to death, and his blood would be on his own head. Shimei agreed and lived in Jerusalem for a long time. However, after three years, his servants ran away to Achish, and he left to retrieve them. When Solomon learned of this, he reminded Shimei of the oath he had taken before the LORD. He also recalled the evil that Shimei had done to David. As a result, Solomon ordered his execution.

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, marrying his daughter and bringing her to the City of David, where he built a house for her, separate from the altar. It appears that this woman loved the God of Israel more than Solomon's other wives. She was his first wife.

We are living in the last days, where Satan is seeking whom he may devour. We must pray for one another and warn against the dangers of marrying unbelievers. Like Ezra, we must inform others about the risks of being unequally yoked with the world. Many need to understand the dangers of partnering with worldly people. We must highlight the dangers of engaging in politics that do not honor God. We must encourage our youth to choose Christian education over secular education.

Marrying an unbeliever with the hope of converting them later is a direct disregard for God's commandments. It is God who transforms a person, not their spouse. Marrying an unbeliever puts the believer at risk of losing their devotion to God. Constant conflicts arise, disrupting the relationship. Children are exposed to a negative example from the unbelieving parent. Often, the believer is forced to choose between God and their spouse. Their heart is troubled, knowing that their spouse may not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In the past, we were blessed with institutions where the sick could receive help through righteous treatments and sincere prayers of faith in God. We handled cases that seemed hopeless and found success. Today, the Lord invites those who are suffering to put their faith in Him. Man's necessity is God's opportunity.

Questions:

1. What instructions did David give to Solomon?
2. What did Adonijah request from Bathsheba? How was he answered?
3. Why were Joab and Shimei executed?
4. Why was Abiathar not executed?
5. Where did Solomon's wife come from?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Kings 2:2,3.

[2,3] Then David charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth; be strong therefore, and show yourself a man; and keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your instructions. We pray that You help us to walk in Your ways, Your statutes, commandments, testimonies, and judgments, as it is written in Your Book, so that we may prosper. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Open 1 Kings 2 and do this short play.

Read each part of David's counsel and tell the children to act out the gesture that matches the advice.

"Be strong and show yourself a man": Tell the children to fold their arms and show their muscles.

"Pay attention to what God wants you to do": Tell the children to fold their hands in prayer.

"Walk in obedience to God": Tell the children to move their fingers across the palm of their other hand as though walking.

"Keep His commands": Tell the children to hug themselves tightly.

"His laws and decrees as written in the Law of Moses": Pretend you are holding a pencil and writing.

"Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go": Place your hand above your eyes as though looking into the distance where you are supposed to go.

DAY 105 (April 14)

TOPIC: The LORD Appears to Solomon

(1 Kings 3 and 2 Chronicles 1)

God was with Solomon and greatly exalted him. His kingdom was vast, ruling from Dan to Beersheba, Syria, Moab, Ammon, and up to the Euphrates River. He had many officials, including commanders, judges, and elders under his leadership.

King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices at the high place. He presented a thousand burnt offerings on the altar built by Bezalel and Oholiab in the wilderness. That night, the LORD appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon and said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Solomon replied, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he walked before you in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart. You have continued this kindness by allowing his son to sit on his throne today. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great nation too numerous to count. Therefore, give me a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who can govern this great people of yours?”

Solomon’s request pleased the LORD, for he had asked for wisdom to serve the people and God, rather than for long life, wealth, riches, glory, or the death of his enemies. So, God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for selfish gains, I will give you a wise and discerning heart. There will never be anyone like you before or after you. Moreover, I will also give you what you have not asked for—wealth, honor, and long life—if you walk in my ways and keep my decrees and commands as your father David did.”

Solomon awoke from his dream and went to the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem, where he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings and held a feast for all his servants.

Solomon became wiser than all other people. He spoke about trees, birds, fish, and animals. His wisdom was soon tested when two prostitutes came before him, seeking justice.



Each woman had a baby, but one of the babies had died during the night. The first woman said, “We lived together, and there was no one else in the house. This woman’s baby died at night because she accidentally lay on him. She got up in the middle of the night and took my baby while I was asleep, placing her dead baby beside me. When I woke up to nurse my child, I found that he was dead. But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I realized he was not my son!”



But the other woman said, “No! The living baby is mine, and the dead one is yours!”

They argued before the king, each claiming to be the real mother.
Then King Solomon said, “One of you says, ‘The living baby is mine, and the dead one is yours.’ The other one says the same. Bring me a sword.”
When the sword was brought, the king commanded, “Cut the living child in two and give half to each woman.”

The real mother, filled with compassion for her son, pleaded, “My lord, please give her the living baby! Do not kill him!”
But the other woman said, “He shall be neither mine nor yours—cut him in half!

Solomon, using the wisdom given by God, immediately identified the real mother and declared, “Give the living baby to this woman. Do not kill him; she is the real mother.”

When the people of Israel heard about the king’s judgment, they stood in awe of him, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

Truly, it is better for a mother to give her child to another person to care for rather than allow the child to be harmed, as the second woman had suggested! A child is a gift from God, and we have no right to commit any cruel act against them or against anyone else. Whenever we face difficult situations, we should seek wise counsel from God-fearing parents, elders, or servants of God.

We are not kings or queens, but we all need wisdom in the work God has given us. Wisdom was not given to Solomon alone; even today, if you ask God for wisdom, He will grant it. As I write this story, I have prayed for wisdom.

It is God's promise that if anyone lacks wisdom, they should ask, and He will give generously without finding fault (James 1:5-8). But we must ask in faith without doubting, so we do not become like a wave tossed by the wind. I acknowledge that I lack wisdom—please pray for me, and I will also pray for you! Let us ask God for wisdom and an understanding heart.

"Lord, give us, Your servants, a discerning heart so we may judge Your people and distinguish between good and evil. For who can govern this great people of Yours?"

In other words, "You have placed me in a position of leadership over Your people. Please give me wisdom so that I may rule with justice and faithfulness."

God was pleased with Solomon's request because it was not selfish. Instead, it was something that would help him fulfill his divine calling successfully.

When praying for the sick, all we can do is sincerely and persistently plead with God on their behalf. We must trust Him completely and leave the matter in His hands. If we harbor sin in our hearts, the LORD will not hear us. But God can do whatever He wills for His people.

Questions:

1. If God asked you to request three things, what would you choose?
2. What dream did Solomon have?
3. Did Solomon's request please God?
4. How did Solomon demonstrate his wisdom?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse:

…….The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give you. ……And now, O LORD my God, ……. I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this Your great people?

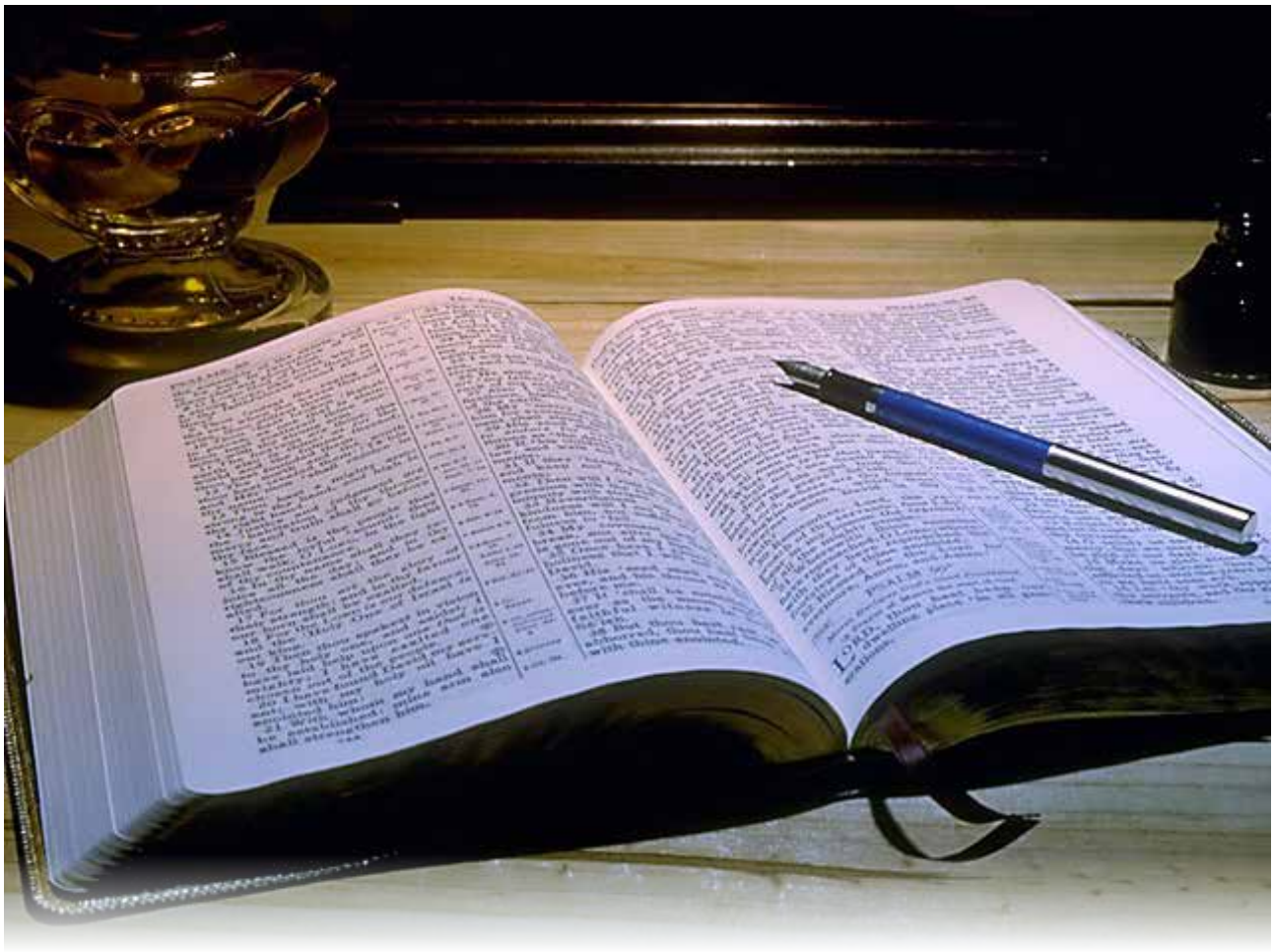
Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, we pray that You give us wisdom to discern between good and evil. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Write down everything you would ask God for if He told you to ask for anything!

DAY 106 (April 15)

TOPIC: Words of Wisdom

(Proverbs)



Day after day, Solomon spoke words of wisdom, composing 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. He had a special scribe to record his words of wisdom. Many people, even non-believers, quote Solomon's proverbs today. With the wisdom God gave him, Solomon wrote three poetic books and some Psalms. He wrote the Song of Solomon when he was young, then Proverbs, and finally Ecclesiastes when he was old.

He begins Proverbs by emphasizing that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Wisdom teaches that when sinners entice you to do evil, flee from them, or restrain your feet from going into wrongdoing. Do not follow the crowd blindly but stand firm in your principles. Surely, every child should memorize these proverbs.

There is a difference between knowledge (or education) and wisdom. Wisdom is obtaining knowledge and using it correctly for the glory of God and the benefit of others. Read one chapter of Proverbs every day, and by the end of the month, you will have completed the book!

“My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body. Honor the Lord with your wealth, and then your barns will be filled with plenty. Do not despise the Lord’s discipline, for the Lord disciplines those He loves, just as a father disciplines the son he delights in.” (Proverbs 3:1-11)

I will write a few more proverbs here for you to reflect on and discuss with your parents:

“The Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back tomorrow, and I will give it to you’ when you already have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor who lives trustfully near you. Do not accuse anyone for no reason when they have done you no harm.” (Proverbs 3:26-30)

These are wonderful instructions if we want to have the kind of relationships that God desires us to have with others!

“The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

“Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.” (Proverbs 4:13)

Education is essential, and knowledge is not necessarily obtained only in a classroom. A person may attend school but still lack true wisdom. I believe the meaning here is to seek learning, investigate, and acquire knowledge that benefits humanity in dealing with their environment. Science, art, technology, or any other skill mentioned here should align with our Creator.

Thousands of inventors who contributed to the world were God-fearing, and I was even surprised to learn that many were children of pastors! For example, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who invented the airplane, were believers, and

their father was a pastor. They tested their plane on the coast of North Carolina and managed to stay in the air for 8 minutes!

Many other scientists were also believers:

Eccles discovered how brain cells transmit information.

Pascal invented the calculator.

Lister introduced antiseptic surgery, reducing many deaths.

Leeuwenhoek discovered microorganisms like bacteria.

Kepler, a German scientist, discovered that the earth revolves around the sun.

Galileo invented the telescope.

Boyle from England made discoveries about natural gas and chemistry.

Faraday invented electricity-related concepts.

Mendel, a monk from Czechoslovakia, discovered genetics.

Newton discovered the laws of gravity.

Dalton introduced atomic theory, explaining that atoms make up all matter.

Carver improved agricultural practices and created peanut butter.

Nightingale improved hospital sanitation and founded modern nursing.

Volta invented the first battery.

Babbage pioneered early computers.

Steno founded geology.

Morse invented the telegraph and sent his first message using Numbers 23:23: “See what God has done!”

Beumann developed mathematical formulas that helped Einstein with his famous equation: $E = mc^2$.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (Proverbs 4:23)

Solomon also learned wisdom from observing ants:

“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a thief.” (Proverbs 6:6-11)

“A person who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys themselves.” (Proverbs 6:32)

“To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech.” (Proverbs 8:13)

“I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.” (Proverbs 8:17)

“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.” (Proverbs 10:1)

“Whoever gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.” (Proverbs 10:5)

“Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.” (Proverbs 10:17)

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.” (Proverbs 11:2)

“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.” (Proverbs 11:13)

“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.” (Proverbs 12:4)

“The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.” (Proverbs 12:10)

“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

(Proverbs 13:20)

“Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves them is careful to discipline them.” (Proverbs 13:24)

“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands, the foolish one tears hers down.” (Proverbs 14:1)

“There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)

“Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.” (Proverbs 15:16)

“The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” (Proverbs 18:10)

Questions:

How can a child’s character be known?

Why do people avoid a quarrelsome and contentious person?

Who is responsible for vengeance?

Why is anger harmful?

Why should we read Proverbs?

What is the difference between skill, education, and wisdom?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Disciple of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:3-6.

[3-6] Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to your body, and nourishment to your bones.

Prayer: Loving Lord, I thank You that You will give me wisdom to turn away from evil, and it will be health to my body. I ask You to help me not to rely on my own understanding, but in all my ways to acknowledge You, and You will direct my paths. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Compose one poem and one song that could help someone in their life!

DAY 107 (April 16)

TOPIC: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes



Solomon continued to write words of wisdom that help everyone, from children to adults.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6
“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.” – Proverbs 22:15
“Do you see a man diligent in his work? He will stand before kings.” – Proverbs 22:29

“Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and do not sell it; also wisdom, instruction, and understanding.” – Proverbs 23:22-23

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.” – Proverbs 20:1

Read also Proverbs 23:29-35. Never taste alcohol.

“Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor’s house, lest he be weary of you and hate you.” – Proverbs 25:17
“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you.” – Proverbs 25:21-22

“A lazy man says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!’” – Proverbs 26:13
“He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears.” – Proverbs 26:17
“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” – Proverbs 27:1
“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” – Proverbs 27:6
“The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.” – Proverbs 28:1

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” – Proverbs 28:13
“Whoever robs his father or his mother, and says, ‘It is no transgression,’ is a companion to a destroyer.” – Proverbs 28:24
“He who is often rebuked and hardens his neck will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.” – Proverbs 29:1
“Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” – Proverbs 29:20

“Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.” – Proverbs 30:8-9

If we learn and live by the instructions in Proverbs as commanded, we will have success, joy, and blessings. These writings in Proverbs are not Solomon’s wisdom but the wisdom of God Himself, who inspired Solomon to write them!

Solomon was wiser and wealthier than anyone else. He used his talents to research and understand what benefit a person gains from their labor under the sun. His conclusion was: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

This does not mean God did not create us for joy. Rather, Solomon explains in detail so that we do not make the same mistakes he did. He gives us the true

answers from his investigations so that we do not fall as he did.

He says everything is repetitive and exhausting. There is nothing new; everything repeats: morning, noon, evening; morning, noon, evening. It's like chasing the wind or punching the air. It's like trying to carry water in a net. It's like pedaling a stationary bike—going nowhere. Many people who do not acknowledge God think this book supports their way of life! But no, every scripture from God is meant to guide us to live above the sun forever, not just under the sun!

A person may have wealth and work hard, but it only brings jealousy from others. Despite all his riches, Solomon's heart and soul were still troubled. He could laugh, but deep inside, he was hiding sorrow. Even though he had servants, wealth, cattle, wine, delicious food, entertainers, gardens, fountains, education, choirs, and bands, none of these satisfied him.

Modern people live in noise and constant activity to forget their inner emptiness. As Saint Augustine said, "O Lord, You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You."
A hymn says, "My faith has found a resting place in You."

The hunger in our souls can only be satisfied by knowing God and serving Him—not by childish or youthful pleasures. Use your strength and ability to help those in need, serve God as a missionary wherever you are, and attend church. Do not waste your time on meaningless things. Instead, invest in things above the sun.

Read Matthew 5 to understand true joy under the sun. You will see that blessed are the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and those who are pure in heart. True happiness does not come from doing whatever we want or glorifying ourselves.

Buying things, throwing them away, and buying more is just a way to distract ourselves from sadness. Possessions do not bring joy—only a relationship with our Heavenly Father does.

A day is coming when all our actions under the sun, both open and secret, will be revealed in the Book of Remembrance. Serve with love, and blessings will return to you. It is our duty to present the sick and suffering to Christ through our faith. We must hold onto His promises and pray for His power to be revealed.

The heart of the gospel is restoration, and the Savior wants us to pray for the sick, the hopeless, and the troubled, that they may experience His power.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What happens to those who hide their sins?

2. According to Proverbs 7, what are the characteristics of an immoral woman?

3. According to Proverbs 31, what are the characteristics of a virtuous woman?

4. What are the traits of an immoral boy or girl?

5. Why is diligence in work important?

6. How can someone lend to the Lord?

7. What does vanity under the sun mean?

8. What is the difference between fighting and arguing?

9. How should we treat our enemies?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Proverbs 22:22, 23.

[22,23] Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and do not sell it; yes, also wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

Prayer: Father, thank You for loving us. I pray that I may honor my father and mother, and not sell the Truth that I know. I ask for wisdom. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss together what it means to train up a child in the way he should go. How would you want your child to be raised?

DAY 108 (April 17)

TOPIC: Ecclesiastes or Koheleth

The Book of Ecclesiastes contains teachings for both children and adults. The writer says, Young person, rejoice in your youth, let your heart cheer you, but remember that everything will be brought into judgment. Youth and childhood are vanity, and so is old age. He saw life as a mystery, seemingly without satisfaction, a cycle without purpose, where people are born and die, born and die. He sought the answer to the meaning of life, which is the same question we ask today.

Having lived many years, Solomon discovered that everything has its own time—
A time to throw away and a time to gather, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to search and a time to lose, a time to uproot and a time to plant, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to tear apart and a time to sew, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time for war and a time for peace, a time to love and a time to hate.

He realized that nothing is new under the sun that a person can boast of having discovered first.

Solomon also observed that with great wisdom comes great sorrow, and increasing knowledge brings more grief—unless it is directed toward the fear of the Lord. He sought to gratify his heart with luxuries:

He built houses,
Planted fruit trees,
Kept monkeys for entertainment,
Bought servants,
Amassed wealth and large herds,
Hired musicians,
Had many women to please him,
Acquired gold and more—

He withheld nothing from himself that could bring pleasure. But after indulging without restraint, he realized that it was all vanity, like chasing the wind. None of it brought true happiness.



Eventually, he despised all the things he had worked hard for because, despite his labor and wisdom, he would die and leave everything behind. If the one who inherits it is a fool, he would ruin it all. So, Solomon concluded that it was all meaningless. He advised that one should eat and enjoy life without being consumed by endless desires.

His final resolution was this:
“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, when you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’”

The summary of all things is this:
“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.”

Children and youth, everything in this world will pass away, but fearing God and keeping His commandments is the only thing that truly matters and lasts forever.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon reflects on the meaning of life. He analyzes the importance of human existence and its ultimate outcomes. Older people fully understand his message because they have lived through many struggles and realized that everything is temporary. Life is a journey for all people.

Through his years of experience, Solomon concluded that the essence of happiness is contentment, and the meaning of life is found in one thing—
Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

He had tried many things to find happiness but saw that it was all vanity. He became overwhelmed by sorrow, realizing that life was empty and without true profit. The joys of the world and its possessions are temporary.

He uses the phrase “under the sun” 27 times, referring to life on earth. Though he indulged in worldly pleasures more than anyone, he still felt empty. He also repeats the words “vanity” or “chasing the wind” 38 times, emphasizing that without God, life has no true meaning or purpose.

Some people seek God only when their lives fall apart or when they face financial problems. On the other hand, in wealthy nations, people who have everything often live as if God does not exist. Even among those who are struggling today, once they become successful, selfishness arises, and they prioritize status and material wealth over caring for the needy. They may only give away what they no longer want, and eventually, they realize that

possessions do not bring true happiness.

Does your life lack meaning or purpose?
I advise you to put God first in everything, to make Him the center of your life. Focus on heaven, not the temporary pleasures of this world. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added to you—including joy. There is sorrow in chasing worldly things without loving and seeking God. Faith in God is the only way to find true meaning in life; everything else fades quickly.

Many people constantly chase after something new. They collect and store things—
Toys, clothes, houses, cars, boats, gadgets, and more—
but none of it truly satisfies, so they keep looking for the next thing, hoping it will bring happiness. But in the end, nothing fulfills them.

Some people think, “I will be happy when I finish school.”
Or, “I will be happy when I get a job.”
Or, “I will be happy when I get married.”
Or, “I will be happy when I have children.”
Or, “I will be happy when my children are grown and independent.”
Or, “I will be happy when I retire.”
Or, “I will be happy when I have grandchildren.”

Happiness keeps running ahead of them, but they never catch it.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone. Who knows if we will even wake up from sleep? We must not let material things consume our hearts to the point where we forget why we are here on earth, where we are going, and what preparations we need to make to enter heaven.

Solomon ultimately realized that wisdom alone brings sorrow, and increasing knowledge without the fear of God brings grief. He sought to entertain his heart and had all the wealth needed to satisfy any craving. He had absolute power, so no one could stop him from doing whatever he pleased.

If he wanted 1,000 horses, he got them.
If he wanted to punish people, he did.
If he wanted to sleep all day without working, he did.
If he wanted to eat an entire pot of meat, no one could stop him.

But a life without limits is dangerous. This is why many wealthy people and rulers easily fall into great sin. Some historians say that Solomon found the

kingdom eating two meals a day and added a third meal. However, eating three meals a day without physical activity leads to gluttony, poor health, and a lack of self-control.

Solomon's final conclusion:
"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"
"Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil."

Everything in this world will pass away, but fearing God and keeping His commandments is the only thing that will last forever.

Let us read the story of this king, his downfalls, and what he learned so that we do not repeat his mistakes. Everyone—young and old—needs wisdom. Every stage of life requires making wise decisions, as no one follows the same exact path at all times.

Prayers for the Sick Are Needed Today as in Biblical Times

The Healer from Heaven is in the sickroom. He hears every prayer offered in true faith. Christ's disciples today should pray for the sick just as His early disciples did. There will be healing, for "the prayer of faith shall save the sick."

Questions for Reflection:

1. What does Koheleth mean?
2. What books did Solomon write?
3. Why don't material things bring the happiness people expect?
4. What brings true and lasting happiness?
5. Why should we remember our Creator while we are young?
6. Why do some people only turn to God when they are old and frail?
7. Why is a lack of self-control a sin?
8. Can true, lasting happiness be found in finishing school, getting married, having children, or retiring?

May God bless you, child and young person of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Ecclesiastes 1:1.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them."

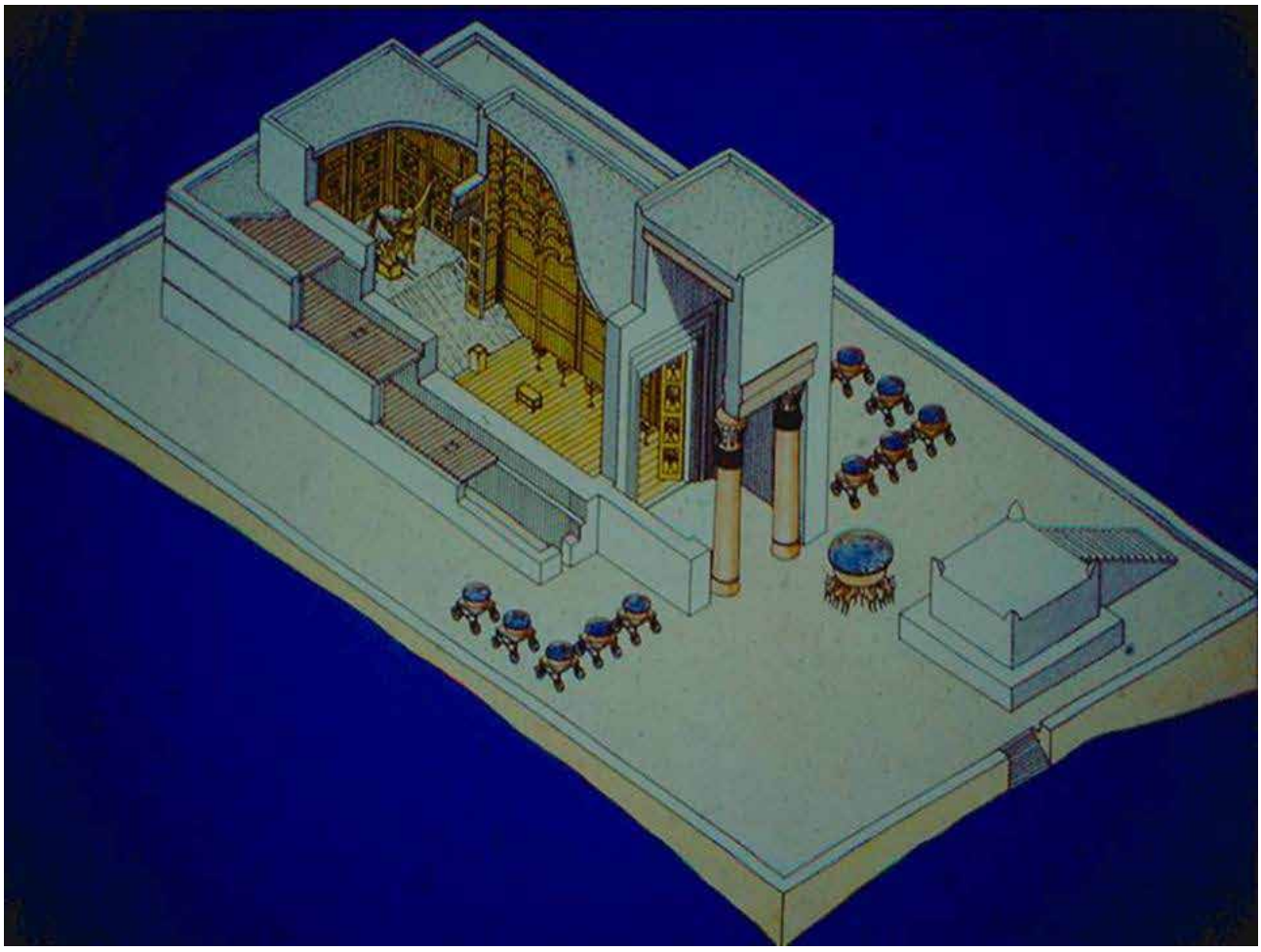
Prayer: Loving Father in heaven, help me to remember You in the days of my youth. I ask for the wisdom to live in Your joy. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Ecclesiastes 3. Bring a large clock if you have one, or a small one. Act out "everything has its time"!

DAY 109 (April 18)

TOPIC: Building the Temple

(1 Kings 5 and 2 Chronicles 1, 3)



Under Solomon's reign, Israel experienced peace and prosperity like never before. Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen, owning 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen. He made silver and gold as common as stones in Jerusalem, and cedars as plentiful as sycamore trees. Horses were imported from Egypt and sold in trade.

Hiram, the king of Tyre, was a friend of David. When he heard that David had passed away and Solomon had taken the throne, he sent a diplomatic envoy to congratulate him. He told Solomon, "Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them." Solomon responded by explaining that his father had been unable to build a temple for the LORD due to war, but now, with peace in the land, he intended to build a house for the LORD's Name.

Solomon committed to constructing a temple for the LORD and a palace for himself. With peace in the land, he appointed 70,000 laborers to carry loads, 80,000 stonecutters, and 3,600 overseers. He requested Hiram's help in supplying cedar wood, just as he had for David, explaining that he was building a great temple because God is greater than all gods. He asked for skilled craftsmen in various trades, including engraving, gold, silver, bronze, iron, and dyes. Such partnerships can often bring good results, as cooperation in work and sharing the good news can progress effectively!

Solomon requested that Hiram's servants cut cedars from Lebanon and transport them by sea to Joppa. In return, he promised to provide food as payment, acknowledging that no one knew how to cut timber like the Sidonians. Hiram was pleased, praising the LORD for giving David a wise son. He agreed to supply cedar, juniper, and other materials, having them transported by sea to the specified location. He requested food supplies in return. Solomon provided grain, barley, olive oil, and other necessities, and the two kings made an alliance.

Solomon sent 30,000 men to Lebanon in shifts of 10,000 per month, allowing them to return home for two months. He commanded that large, finely cut stones be prepared for the temple's foundation. The masons from Hiram and Solomon worked together, cutting and preparing the timber and stones for construction.

Hiram also sent Huram, a skilled craftsman whose mother was from the tribe of Dan and father was from Tyre. He was full of wisdom and artistic skill, proficient in working with bronze, iron, stone, wood, and fabrics of purple, blue, fine linen, and crimson. He could design and execute any craft. His talents mirrored those of Aholiab, who assisted Bezalel in constructing the wilderness tabernacle.

One of Huram's greatest works was casting two bronze pillars for the temple entrance, each 33 feet high and 7 feet wide. Using clay from the Jordan Valley, he molded and transported them to Jerusalem. These pillars stood for centuries, symbolizing that when a person dedicates themselves to God's work, He grants them gifts and abilities. When we admire the grandeur of Solomon's temple, we must not forget the craftsmanship of this man. Huram also created a massive basin, 18 feet wide and 9 feet deep, capable of holding about 6,000 liters. He crafted 400 bronze pomegranates, bases, tongs, and other temple furnishings. Though he had his weaknesses, he used his talents for God's work.

I wonder how so many workers managed during construction. Where did they sleep? Did they have enough water for drinking and sanitation? Who prepared meals for them? Did they have a 'hospital' for the injured? Did their whole families come, or did wives and children stay behind? The list of questions goes on. I even wonder how they built toilets and baths! Truly, God's work is amazing and well-organized.

Likewise, we are called to build a temple for the Lord—our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Do you know how to take care of your body according to the Bible's instructions? Do you eat a healthy diet? Do you exercise? Do you get fresh air? Do you trust in God? Do you drink 6 to 10 glasses of water daily? Do you practice moderation in all things? Do you read the Scriptures and pray every day?

All the stones for the temple were cut and prepared before being brought to the construction site. The building process was quiet—no hammer, axe, or iron tool was heard at the site. Perhaps God intended this as an example of how His Church should work under the guidance of His Spirit, without noise and disorder. Children should remember this and remain quiet and reverent during worship in church. Read more in Testimonies, Volume 5, Chapter 55: Conduct in the House of God.

Today, God is building another temple—our bodies, which are His dwelling place. Therefore, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do it for the glory of God.

Solomon began constructing the LORD's temple on Mount Moriah. The temple occupied the entire mountain, and it was built 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign. The foundation was laid in the fourth year, and the structure was completed in seven years. However, it took eleven years to fully finish all the details. His father, David, had designed the plans and made extensive preparations, collecting 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of bronze. Before his death, David encouraged the people to contribute freewill offerings for the temple's construction.

The cooperation between David and Hiram, and later between Solomon and Hiram, teaches us about partnerships between believers and non-believers in advancing God's work. However, there are precautions to consider when forming such alliances:

1. Do not enter into agreements that contradict the principles of Scripture.

2. When engaging in business with those who are not part of God's kingdom,

see it as a missionary opportunity to lead them to salvation.

3. We can learn valuable skills from non-believers while also teaching them about salvation. This happened with Joseph in Egypt and with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in Babylon.

God is ready to restore the health of the sick today, just as He spoke through the Psalms. Jesus is still the same compassionate Healer as He was during His earthly ministry. In Him, there is healing for every disease and strength for every weakness. His disciples today should pray for the sick, just as the early apostles did, and healing will follow, for "the prayer of faith will save the sick." We have the power of the Holy Spirit and the quiet assurance of faith that claims God's promises.

The Lord's promise in Mark 16:18—"They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"—is just as trustworthy today as it was in the apostles' time. It reveals the privilege of God's children, and our faith should claim all that is available to us. Christ's servants are His instruments, and through them, He desires to demonstrate His healing power. It is our duty to bring the sick and suffering to God through the hands of faith. We must teach them to trust in the Great Physician.

Questions:

1. What message did Hiram send in his diplomatic delegation?

2. What did the King of Tyre provide?

3. What did King Solomon offer in return?

4. What skills did Huram the craftsman possess?

5. Why was there no sound of hammering or chiseling at the temple construction site?

6. List ways we should conduct ourselves in God's house.

7. Do you think the Gospel work can be completed today without peace and unity?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Psalm 103:1-3.

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits; who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for all the good things You give us every day. Forgive us our sins and help us to always remember Your goodness and blessings. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw chariots and soldiers and connect them to the instructions of the Bible in 1 Samuel 8:11.

DAY 110 (April 19)

TOPIC: The Completion of the Temple Construction

(1 Kings 6-8)

Stone after stone was placed, spreading and fitting perfectly. Children came to look at it, and everyone marveled because it was a magnificent sight, unlike anything ever seen before. People also observed the silence and tranquility. David had begun this work many years earlier by gathering materials. The temple had two courts: the outer court, where only Israelite men were allowed to enter—foreigners were not permitted—and in front of this court was another reserved for priests only.

The dimensions of Moses' Tabernacle were 55 feet in length, 18 feet in width, and 18 feet in height. In contrast, Solomon's Temple measured 110 feet in length, 36 feet in width, and 36 feet in height.

Solomon's Temple was also divided into two sections: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The roof was made of cedarwood, and the floor of cypress wood, with no stone visible. The wooden panels were covered with gold. The doors were golden, and cherubim were carved on the walls, along with palm trees and flowers. The curtains were dyed in blue, purple, and red. The cherubim in the Most Holy Place were made of olive wood. The altar of incense was gold, as were the table for the showbread and the lampstand. The colors were extraordinarily beautiful.

Outside the temple, there was an altar for burnt offerings and a large bronze basin for washing. Everyone, from the king to the laborers, had done their part and given glory to God. Do not despise even the smallest task you are given—it is necessary for the whole work to be complete. Pray that God helps you to enjoy and faithfully perform your work.

The final step was to bring the Ark of the Covenant from the City of David and to dedicate the temple. There must have been a grand procession filled with joy as people saw the Ark, which had been with them for about 480 years, being carried with reverence by the Levites. They brought the sacred items of the former tabernacle and placed them in the new temple.

They brought in the Ark and set it inside, though it was small and contained only a few items—mainly the tablets of Moses from Mount Sinai. However, it



was the most valuable object in the temple, for without God's law and the mercy seat, all the temple services would have had no meaning.

Solomon placed the treasures that his father David had dedicated—gold, silver, and sacred items—into the temple's treasury. Then, he gathered the elders of Israel from all the tribes to Jerusalem to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from the City of David, also called Zion. They assembled for the festival, and the Levite priests carried the Ark. They brought up the Ark, along with the tabernacle of meeting and all the sacred items inside. Many sheep and cattle were sacrificed, too many to count.

The priests placed the Ark beneath the wings of the cherubim, which stretched their wings over the Ark and its poles. When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the house of the LORD was filled with a cloud. The priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the temple.

Then Solomon declared, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in thick darkness. Surely, I have built You an exalted house, a dwelling place for You forever." The building was magnificent, but true worship and devotion to God were far more important than the structure itself.

GOD knows the end from the beginning. He knows the hearts of all people. He sees every secret of the soul. He knows whether those we pray for would be able to withstand the trials ahead if they continue living. He knows whether their lives would be a blessing or a curse to themselves and the world. This is why, when we present our petitions earnestly, we should also say, “Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done.”

Questions:

1. Where was the Ark of the Covenant brought from?

2. What were the two important items inside the Ark of the Covenant?

3. What happened when the priests came out of the Holy Place?

4. How many years did it take to build the temple?

5. Solomon spent 7 years building the temple and 14 years building his own house. Why do you think his house took longer?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 6:38, 39, 42.

[38, 39, 42] …When they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your Name; then hear from heaven, from Your dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. …O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your anointed.

Prayer: O LORD, there is no God like You in heaven or on earth who keeps covenant of mercy with us Your children. Thank You for fulfilling Your promises given in the Bible. Thank You for helping us in the building of our churches. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity:

Drama: act out the building of the temple or a church.

Materials: paper, pens. Reflect on Solomon's prayer: Read 1 Kings 8:22-53 and talk about Solomon's dedication prayer for the temple, emphasizing his requests and God's promises.

Collect prayer requests: Each child can write their personal prayer on slips of paper, just as Solomon prayed for the people of Israel.

Link the prayers: Join the slips of paper together to form a "prayer chain" representing the connection between people and God, and hang the prayer chain in a visible place as a reminder to pray and trust God, just as Solomon did.

DAY 111 (April 20)

TOPIC: The Temple is Dedicated

(1 Kings 8-9 and 2 Chronicles 4-6)



When the work was completed, the king summoned the elders of Israel and the chiefs of the tribes to Jerusalem to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord from the City of David along with the holy articles from the tent. They then sacrificed an uncountable number of sheep and cattle because they were many. All the priests went to the holy place, for they had purified themselves and did not follow their usual divisions.

The Levite singers under Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were dressed in fine linen, standing on the east side with harps, lyres, and cymbals, blowing trumpets and singing. They praised the Lord with a loud voice, using trumpets, cymbals, and other musical instruments, glorifying the Lord. There were many singers, even Heman, the king's seer, and his children were singers in the temple.

The priests could not stand to perform their service because the cloud of God's glory filled the house of the Lord. The temple was filled with His presence. The king turned to bless the entire congregation of Israel, and they all stood. He said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who spoke with my father David and has fulfilled His promise with His hands through me, Solomon."

He reminded them that from the time Israel left Egypt, God had not chosen any city from the tribes of Israel to build an altar, but now He had chosen Jerusalem so that His name would be there. He recalled that it was in his father David's heart to build the temple, but God said, "You have done well in having this desire, but you will not build it; rather, your son Solomon will." And God fulfilled His promise. Solomon said, "I have now taken my father David's place, sitting on the throne and building the house of the Lord, the God of Israel. In it, I have placed the Ark of the Covenant, which contains the covenant the Lord made with the children of Israel."

Solomon then stood before the assembly, stretched out his hands on a bronze platform, lifted them toward heaven, and prayed:
"O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven or on earth, who keeps Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts."

He reiterated the promise God gave to his father, stating that Israel would never lack a ruler from David's lineage as long as they followed God's ways. He acknowledged that God had kept His promise and now the temple was built.

However, he asked, "But will God indeed dwell among men on earth? Behold, even the heavens cannot contain You, much less this house I have built!" Yet he pleaded with God to listen to his servant's prayers.

Solomon's prayer is considered one of the longest in the Bible. In summary, he prayed for:

1. The temple to be a place of forgiveness and pardon.
2. Justice to be served when oaths are taken there.
3. Deliverance for those defeated by enemies who repent and pray.
4. Relief from drought when the people repent and turn back to God.
5. Healing from plagues, famine, mildew, locusts, or pests when hands are lifted in prayer.
6. Foreigners who pray there to be heard.
7. Victory in battles and freedom for captives who seek forgiveness.

Solomon concluded his prayer by asking that God's eyes be open and His ears attentive to the prayers made in the temple. He then said, "Now arise, O Lord God, and come to Your resting place, You and the Ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Your saints rejoice in Your goodness. Do not turn away Your face, but remember the mercies promised to Your servant David."

When he finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter because of the glory of God. The people fell on their faces and worshiped, saying, "The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever."

The king then offered 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep as sacrifices, and they completed the temple dedication. They held a seven-day celebration. On the fourteenth day, the people were sent home, joyful and glad for all the goodness the Lord had shown to David, Solomon, and His people, Israel.

The temple became the center of everything in Israel. It was the heart of their worship, with the Ark of the Covenant as the primary symbol of God's presence and glory. It was called the Ark of the Covenant because it contained the Law or the Covenant.

One key observation is that Solomon did not struggle with sin while building the temple. However, when he began working on his own projects, problems arose.

Solomon established the rotation of priests and Levites for service, just as his father David had instructed. The priests had to cleanse themselves before serving in the large basin. However, when Christ died, He purified His people once and for all with His blood on the cross. We no longer need to wash with water to approach God, for Christ has cleansed our sins (Hebrews 1:3). Now we can boldly approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), knowing we are accepted because we are purified through Him, the Messiah.

Solomon built his own palace but refused to let his Egyptian wife live near the temple, saying, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, King of Israel, because it is holy, where the Ark of the Lord has entered" (2 Chronicles 8:11). Instead, he built an altar outside his palace.

The most important lesson today is understanding that we are God's temple under construction. Humanity is God's work, a sacred masterpiece created for a divine purpose. In every part of the human temple, God desires to inscribe His law. Every nerve, muscle, and faculty must remain pure. Our bodies are

being built today so that our characters may resemble His.

God plans for our bodies to be His Spirit's dwelling place. It is a serious issue if we defile our bodies through impure thoughts, alcohol, smoking, unhealthy food, inappropriate entertainment, pride, etc.

Christ died so that God's moral image could be restored in humanity, allowing men and women to partake in His divine nature and escape worldly corruption caused by evil desires. We must not use any part of our being for selfish or self-indulgent purposes because all our strength belongs to God and should be used for His glory. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. God's work must be preserved so that both the heavenly realm and humanity may witness that we are temples of the living God.

The perfection of character that God desires is keeping our whole being as a temple for the Holy Spirit. God requires the full service of our souls, not half-hearted devotion. He desires young men and women to become all that He has enabled them to be. It is not enough for only part of the human body to be devoted to Him.

When Christ died, His people were sanctified once and for all by His blood on the cross. We no longer need ceremonial washing with water to approach God, for Christ has made the purification for sin (Hebrews 1:3). Now, we can boldly approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), confident that we are spiritually, physically, mentally, economically, and socially clean through Him.

Let us be bold and overcome every habit that defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let us fully depend on God, and our faith will be strengthened as we trust in Him. Even when we do not see the purpose of His dealings with us or the results of this construction of our bodily temples, we will soon understand.

Questions:

1. What lesson have you learned from this?

2. Why was the Ark of the Covenant so important?

3. Where did the fire come from?

4. What seven things did Solomon pray for?

5. Why didn't Solomon want to bring his wife near the temple?

6. Our bodies are also God's temple today—how can we care for them?

7. Spiritual well-being is more important than a beautiful church building—can you explain this?

God bless you, child and young servant of Jesus.

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 6:24, 25.

[24,25] And he said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven nor in earth; who keeps covenant and mercy with Your servants, who walk before You with all their hearts; You who have kept what You promised to Your servant David my father… But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built!

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, if we have sinned against You; when we return to You, and confess Your Name, and pray and make supplication in this house, then hear from heaven, and forgive our sin. We dedicate our house to You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Dedicate your house. People dedicate a new house, or a house they move into, to invite God in a special way to bring protection and blessing. We dedicate our house to God, and remove anything that brings darkness inside—such as unworthy pictures, witchcraft, or idols of any kind.

Walk through each room and pray, listing the needs of that room or the person who will use it—for example, asking for good conversations in the family room or blessings in the kitchen.

Some use olive oil to anoint the room that will be used for God's purposes. Then pray together and share your requests with God, including the mission or ministry you want to do.

DAY 112 (April 21)

TOPIC: The Lord's Response to Solomon

(1 Kings and 2 Chronicles 7 and 9)

The Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple of sacrifices. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command locusts to devour the land, or if I send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

The Lord said that His eyes would be open and His ears attentive to the prayers offered in the temple. He declared that He had chosen and consecrated the temple so that His name may be there forever, and if Solomon walked before Him as his father David did, keeping His commands and laws, He would establish his throne. But if they turned away to worship other gods, He would make their land desolate, and all who passed by would be astonished and ask, "Why has the Lord done this to this land and temple?" The answer would be, "Because they abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt, and they embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them; that is why He brought all this disaster upon them."

Even today, the Lord is ready to hear our prayers. If we repent and return to Him, He will forgive us and heal our land.

In 1 Chronicles 23, we see that God commanded the Levites, who were in charge of the old Jewish temple and its services, to stand in His presence and lift their voices in thanksgiving and praise every morning and evening. This act of worship originated from another command that God gave Moses, instructing the Israelites, "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). God further commanded, "One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening" (Exodus 29:39).

If your prayer life has lost its strength, ask God now to renew your commitment to morning and evening worship through prayer and Bible reading.

Many people heard about Solomon's greatness and wisdom, and they came to

visit him, seeking counsel or witnessing his wonders. The wealth and power that God gives us should be a testimony to His greatness, not a source of pride or sin.

The Queen of Sheba also visited Solomon to test him with hard questions in Jerusalem. She came with a large entourage, bringing camels loaded with spices, gold, and precious stones. When she arrived, she shared with Solomon everything on her heart, and he answered all her questions. Nothing was hidden from Solomon that he could not explain.

When she saw Solomon's wisdom, the house he built, the food on his table, the organization of his officials, their clothing, the cupbearers, and the entrance to the temple, her spirit was overwhelmed. She told the king, "I had heard reports about you in my country, but I did not believe them until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half of your greatness and wisdom was told to me! You exceed what I heard." She continued, "Blessed are your men and servants who stand before you daily and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you and placed you on His throne."

She gave the king vast amounts of gold, spices, and precious stones. No one ever brought as many spices as the Queen of Sheba. In return, Solomon gave her gifts greater than what she had brought, granting all her requests. She then returned to her country with her servants.

The Queen of Sheba was more faithful to God than many Jews. Jesus said, "The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42).

The Bible is the greatest history book of the world, and new discoveries continue to affirm it. If you do not understand something now, ask God, for one day you will see that nothing contradicts His Word.

God chose Solomon while he was still young and inexperienced for the great work he would do for Him. The people also contributed greatly to building the temple. They gave willingly because of the integrity of their hearts and rejoiced with great joy. Giving is still a source of joy and brings many blessings, especially when helping those in need and supporting God's work in the church, just as King David and Solomon did. Wealth, empowerment, honor, and blessings come from God.

David said, "Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you



only what comes from your hand" (1 Chronicles 29:14). God tests our hearts and delights in integrity.

The Lord exalted Solomon in the eyes of Israel, granting him royal splendor greater than any king of Israel before him, including his father David.

In 1 Chronicles 4, we meet Jabez, from the tribe of Judah. His mother gave birth to him in pain, but he was more honorable than his brothers. He prayed to God, saying, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request. Even today, God grants the desires of our hearts when we pray.

In those days, they built one temple; today, we have millions of churches worldwide. When a church project begins, even if you are unemployed, strive to contribute. It is good to ensure that the church is built without debts. Pray that God will provide something for you to give towards building His house—it is a great blessing to construct the temple of the KING OF KINGS.

Even today, let us be like Solomon, choosing God as our Father so that we may be His children and stand firm forever. Children, be diligent and courageous in doing what pleases God. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you, and He will not fail or forsake you until He returns to take us home.

Each year, Solomon received gifts from distant lands.



When praying for the sick, we should ask that, if it is God's will, they be healed and have good health; but if not, we should pray that He grants them His grace and comfort in their suffering.

Many people who should put their houses in order neglect to do so because they hope for miraculous healing. Driven by false hope, they do not feel the need to give counsel or instructions to their children, parents, or friends, which is very unfortunate. Believing they will be healed through prayer, they avoid discussing how their wealth should be distributed, how their family should be cared for, or any wishes they might express if they thought they were near death.

As a result, families and friends face confusion because many important matters remain unspoken. Some people believe that preparing for such things is a lack of faith. They refuse to take necessary health precautions or maintain hygiene, fearing that doing so would show disbelief in God's healing power.

Questions:

1. How did God respond to Solomon's prayer?

2. What did the people and David give to build the temple?

3. Why did the Queen of Sheba visit Solomon?

4. What gifts did she bring?

5. What did Jabez ask God for?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 7:14.

[14] If My people, who are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, forgive me, and help me to humble myself before You, to pray and seek Your face, and to turn away from all my wicked ways. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Read this verse and discuss these steps and even act them out—2 Chronicles 7:14. How can revival and reformation begin in your home or in your church? Discuss together.

DAY 113 (April 22)

TOPIC: The Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon



The Book of the Song of Songs speaks about love between a man and a woman. This love should exist within marriage and not outside of it, as it is God's command. The love of God for His church is compared to the love of a husband for his wife. Whoever finds a good wife or husband receives a blessing from the LORD and obtains something good. Great sorrow comes if a husband or wife is cruel or does not love God.

Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 talk about the immoral woman, while Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman before God, her husband, and her children. Every young man and woman should read Solomon's teachings to avoid repeating his mistakes. When Eve came to know good and evil, her sorrow increased, and she found herself lost and empty. Women led Solomon away from God, the source of his wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Solomon warns against marrying ungodly spouses.

Even today, though you are still young, you can pray and ask God to help you so that when the time comes, you will marry someone who fears Him. If you marry an unbeliever or a wicked person, you will experience much pain. Many have joined bad groups of friends thinking they can leave whenever they want. However, if Solomon, who had great wisdom, failed to escape from these ungodly women because he welcomed them, talked with them, and befriended them, how can we, who lack his wisdom, expect to escape if we befriend those who worship other things?

God's love and grace are great and wonderful; they allowed Solomon to repent. Others do not get the same chance—once they are lost, that is the end for them. However, his first wife, Pharaoh's daughter, by grace, chose to

worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This should have been a sign for Solomon to stop marrying foreign women who worshiped other gods. Kings marrying many wives and having many children fulfilled Samuel's prophecy that kings would make their people their servants and bring sorrow to their citizens.

The Song of Solomon is one of the 1,005 songs Solomon wrote as a young man. Some people hesitate to read it, thinking it is not inspired, but that is not true. God is the one who established marriage and the relationship between a husband and wife. Just like the book of Esther does not explicitly mention the name of God but is inspired by the Holy Spirit, all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This song begins with courtship before the wedding. The Shulamite woman desires to be close to her fiancé but is advised not to rush love; she should give it time to grow naturally. She advises other young women not to awaken love until the right time. The man, King Solomon, praises the Shulamite, reducing her fears that she may not be beautiful enough. The Shulamite dreams that she has lost Solomon and searches for him throughout the city, with the guards helping her. On the wedding day, the groom praises his bride, they unite and become one.

As the marriage continues, they face challenges. In another dream, the Shulamite quarrels with her husband, and he leaves. She searches for him again in the city, but this time, the guards beat her. The dream ends with the lovers reuniting.

Love between a husband and wife should not be hidden in secrecy or darkness. Holding hands, speaking kind and encouraging words—these are expressions of love. Some people may not realize whether a couple still has chemistry or if only history remains. Affection should continue after marriage, even more than before. Love between a husband and wife is God's plan from creation. "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song of Solomon 2:1).

This is not an ordinary song; it is poetic and consists of conversations between a man and a woman, showing that they are still young and pure. It describes how the man praises the woman's love and character, and vice versa. "Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have doves' eyes" (Song of Solomon 4:7).

These lovers love each other openly, and their parents are informed; it is not a secret. Romance is a part of life that God desires for a husband and wife,

and its safe place is only within marriage. “For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. What God has joined together, let no man separate.”

The song starts before the wedding, during courtship, and continues through their marriage. If we want true joy and love in marriage, we must follow God’s plan, taking the right steps instead of engaging in immorality and defiling our bodies. “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases” (Song of Solomon 8:4). Solomon acknowledges that love is stronger than death; many waters cannot quench it.

We live in a time when love between people, even between husband and wife, is decreasing, and divorce is increasing. These teachings help sustain true and incomparable love in marriage. God’s love for us is unconditional (agape). A husband and wife must know each other well to build their relationship over time. They should learn to speak kind and uplifting words instead of constantly criticizing each other.

A husband should do everything within his power to make his wife happy, show care, and be responsible for her. A husband and wife should renew their vows and commitments daily. They should not see divorce as a solution to their problems. God wants them to live in peace and security. A husband and wife should learn to listen to each other, not just expect to be heard.

The Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25). “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:22-23). This book can also be used to illustrate God’s love for us or His love for His church. “You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you” (Song of Solomon 4:7) compared with Ephesians 5:27.

Ways to strengthen and maintain a happy marriage include:

Wishing your spouse well and not thinking evil of them

Praying together

Continuing to court each other

Remembering that God united you

Guarding your thoughts

Not going to bed angry

Making God the center of your life

Understanding that divorce is not the answer

Avoiding constant criticism

Exercising self-control

Respecting each other's rights and personal space

Maintaining cleanliness and organization

Managing finances wisely

Freely communicating and consulting each other

Respecting and loving one another



Marriage is meant to last until death separates the couple. A young person must be very careful when choosing a spouse. They should be someone who loves God, has good character, and is compatible in personality and goals. Marriage should be approached with much prayer, seeking counsel from godly elders, and studying Scripture.

No one is perfect, but certain behaviors—such as alcoholism, lying, gossiping, unfaithfulness, jealousy, and pride—can bring much sorrow to a marriage. Since a young person may not fully understand their potential spouse, they should continuously seek God's guidance, just as Eliezer did, rather than choosing someone and then asking God to bless that decision.

Biblical marriage is between a man and a woman and should be legally and religiously officiated in a place of worship. A marriage can be renewed and strengthened, like Solomon's and the Shulamite's, by doing things together: rejoicing, complimenting, writing to each other, laughing, solving problems, playing together, traveling, working together, showing kindness, and being gentle.

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse:

The Song of Songs, of Solomon. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is better than wine. My beloved, you are beautiful indeed, and within you there is no blemish.

Prayer: Beloved Lord, You are the Founder of love. Thank You for the gift of the covenant of pure love, full of desire and faithfulness. Teach us to delight in the beauty of responsible love. Help us preserve our relationships with tender kindness (gentleness) and mutual respect.

Activity: Compose a song about someone you love, whether a parent, friend, or relative.

DAY 114 (April 23)

TOPIC: Solomon Forsakes God

(1 Kings 11)



Solomon was someone who loved God in a special way from childhood. He was not the firstborn heir, as Amnon was the first, and even after Amnon and Absalom died, it was expected that Daniel, the son of Abigail, or Adonijah would reign. However, God chose Solomon. His father did not hesitate to leave him the kingdom and the task of building the temple, even though he saw him as young. He said, "My son is still young and tender, and the house of the Lord that he will build must be exceedingly magnificent, famous, and glorious throughout all lands." He then stored up great wealth before his death. He blessed him to prosper and prayed that the Lord would give him wisdom and understanding so that he would keep the law of the Lord, for only then would he be successful, by observing and doing the Lord's commands and judgments as instructed by Moses.

However, King Solomon fell because of his love for many foreign women—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—nations about which the Lord had warned the Israelites not to intermarry with, lest they turn their hearts away to follow their gods. Yet Solomon clung to these women in love and had 700 wives and 300 concubines. This was astonishing, for even being with just one wife requires great wisdom. He started well, being wise and God-fearing in his youth, but when he grew old, his heart was turned away to follow other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as his father David's heart had been. He began to follow Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites—a god who required people to sacrifice their children as burnt offerings. Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and he built high places for worshiping these detestable gods, including Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites. He participated in these idol worship

practices with his foreign wives, burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

Read more online: Lessons from the Life of Solomon - Review and Herald.

The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. He rebuked him, saying he should not follow those gods, but Solomon did not heed the Lord's command. God told him that since he had not kept His commands, He would tear the kingdom away from him and give it to his servant. However, for the sake of David, God said He would not do this during Solomon's reign but during his son's time. He also said He would leave one tribe, Judah, for his son, while the rest of the tribes would be taken by another ruler.

Solomon's love for foreign women turned his heart away from God, and his wisdom diminished. His love for God, who had given him everything, started fading. As a result, the Lord raised adversaries against Solomon, including Hadad the Edomite and Rezon, as well as Jeroboam. God sent the prophet Ahijah to meet Jeroboam and gave him a message by tearing his new robe into twelve pieces, telling him to take ten pieces. The prophet explained that this symbolized the tearing of Solomon's kingdom, with ten tribes given to Jeroboam because Solomon had forsaken God and worshiped other gods.

Solomon abandoned God's ways and did what was right in his own eyes, neglecting the laws and judgments of God. Darkness entered Israel. His love for many women led him astray from the Lord. Wealth, pride, and the love of women have been causes of downfall for many who love God when they attain positions of leadership. Those being led see such evil examples, and many follow the same destructive path.

Solomon did everything in excess—whether building the temple, accumulating wealth, or marrying many wives. Imagine if someone came to church with 1,000 wives and 2,000 children! Where would they sit? How would they manage school, meals, and other expenses? His rule must have been costly for his people. He was the wisest man in the known world at the time and had everything! If he could be led astray by relationships with unbelievers, how much more vulnerable are we? We live in an era of social media, mobile phones, and more widespread corruption than in his time. We must walk with greater caution, remain in prayer, and flee from worldly temptations and influences!

We should keep the cross close. Our prayer should be: "Oh Lord, hide me under Your wings. Protect me from evil influences and distractions. Help me

not to lose my first love for You."

It is incredibly difficult to comprehend how such a wise man, who spoke directly with God and received divine wisdom, could turn so drastically away from His laws. The key issue was that he "loved foreign women," meaning those who did not believe in the God of heaven. A single woman or man can lead a person astray. We have seen many young people ignore the advice of their parents and pastors and enter relationships with people who do not love the Lord. Many of these relationships have ended disastrously! God, who took great pride in Solomon and granted him immense wisdom, was grieved by his poor choices.

Later in the chapter, we see that when Solomon heard that Jeroboam was to be given part of his kingdom, he sought to kill him. Jeroboam fled to Egypt until Solomon died. Solomon ruled Israel for 40 years.

We should not try to create our own paths or attempt to fit God into our desires. If the lives of the sick can glorify Him, we should pray for their healing—but not according to our will, but His. Our faith must be firm and unwavering, trusting God completely and surrendering our desires to His wisdom. We have His promises. We know He hears us when we pray according to His will.

Questions:

1. What led to Solomon's downfall?

2. Why do we say darkness entered Israel?

3. What can we learn from Solomon about our own lives?

4. What instructions did Solomon receive from his father?

5. How did the priestly orders help?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Kings 14:4-7.

[4-7] When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord and did not fully follow the Lord, as did David his father.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for this day. Help us to be humble, and not to go astray to worship other gods such as money, wealth, beauty, education, opinions, or anything else. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: We who live in the world of social media, mobile phones, and even greater abominations and filth spreading through the media than in Solomon's time, must be more cautious. Write down these dangers and precautions—about 10 of them.

DAY 115 (April 24)

TOPIC: How to Avoid Regret

(1 Kings 12 & 2 Chronicles 9-11)



Solomon had flaws like other kings during his reign, just as God had warned that kings would. To maintain luxury and grandeur, he imposed heavy taxes on all the tribes of Israel. He had a vast workforce serving in his army, construction projects, and even in his household. If he had 1,000 wives, the estimated number of children was also high. All these people needed to be served—children were fed, meals prepared, clothes washed, houses cleaned, fields cultivated, children educated and entertained, animal parks maintained, and much more.

Before Solomon's reign ended, people began complaining about the heavy taxation, as it had become an unbearable burden on Israel, especially the less fortunate. It is possible that even the sacrifices he made to foreign gods came from tax revenues collected from the people. A ruler who honors God

leads his people to do the same, while poor leadership can turn people away from God.

God sent a message to Jeroboam, Solomon's servant who helped build his royal palace, telling him that if he obeyed God's will, he would be blessed, and his descendants would rule. Solomon's kingdom was already on the verge of collapse. His weak son, Rehoboam, inherited the throne and sought to continue his father's high taxation. The people did not want him to be crowned in Jerusalem but instead in Shechem.

Before his coronation, the Israelites in Shechem told him, "Your father placed a heavy yoke on us. Now lighten the harsh labor and heavy burden he put on us, and we will serve you." Rehoboam asked them to return after three days for his response. He first sought advice from the elders, who told him that if he served the people and answered them kindly, they would always remain loyal to him. However, Rehoboam ignored the elders' advice and instead consulted young men from his generation regarding the heavy taxation imposed by his father. These young men told him to say to the people, "My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid a heavy burden on you, but I will make it even heavier. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."

On the third day, when the people returned for his response, Rehoboam answered them harshly, rejecting the wise counsel of the elders. Because he refused to listen to sound advice, God fulfilled the prophecy given through Ahijah, leading to the division of Israel's kingdom.

God desires to bless us, but we often lack wisdom and stray from His ways. May He help us avoid regret. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is destruction." (Proverbs 14:12). When Israel demanded a king like other nations, God warned them that relying on a monarchy would be a heavy burden. He advised them to remain a theocracy, with God as their King, but they rejected His counsel.

To understand the burden Solomon imposed, consider the daily provisions for his royal household: 5,000 liters of flour, 10,000 liters of grain, 10 fattened cattle fed with grain, 20 grass-fed cattle, 100 sheep, and various types of deer and choice poultry. Multiply these amounts by 30 days per month and then by the 40 years Solomon ruled—you get a clear picture of the burden his subjects carried. Yet, they had chosen this system themselves.

Rehoboam's refusal to reduce this burden resulted in the kingdom splitting into two: the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah).

Israel eventually disappeared as a nation, and Judah was later conquered by Babylon, leading to 70 years of captivity.

We are advised to reject foolish advice. Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam followed poor counsel, leading to national destruction and spiritual rebellion. Many people still make this mistake today.

Here is a wonderful promise from the Lord that we should claim daily:
“I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.” (Psalm 32:8).
Let us accept His great invitation! What do you say today?

God Answers Prayers for the Sick

No human power can save the sick, but through prayers of faith, the Great Healer fulfills His promise to those who call upon His Name.

Questions:

1. What major sin did Solomon commit? What caused it?

2. What were the flaws in Solomon’s kingdom?

3. How did Rehoboam respond to the people without wisdom?

4. Do young people always lack wisdom while older people always have it?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:33-34

[33,34] Do not be deceived! Bad company corrupts good character. Wake up! Start living right, and stop sinning. Some of you do not know God at all. I say this to your shame!

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for the example of Solomon, who forgot himself and began worshiping other gods, and taxed his people heavily so that he might live a life of luxury and self-indulgence. Help us to reflect on these examples and be transformed. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: In newspapers or news reports today, what things do religious and government leaders involve themselves in that do not glorify God, just as Solomon did? How can we do differently when we are leaders?

DAY 116 (April 26)

LESSON: The Kingdom of Israel Divided

(1 Kings 12 and 1 Chronicles 10)



Rehoboam stopped listening to the wise advice of the elders, and listened to the advice of his peer group, to was to his his downfall. Even today we have good friends and bad friends, good counselors and bad counselors, so let us be careful so as to avoid the advice of people who do not care about God, and go to people who fear God. Peer pressure put Rehoboam in trouble, and the people of Israel knew that they had no inheritance or share in the son of Jesse, David. They said to each other, "Everyone go to your tent, and look after your own house." So Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who were in Judah, and when he sent his leader, Adoram, to Israel, they stoned him to death. When the king saw this, he quickly got into his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. Thus Israel rebelled against the house of David. Jerohoboam built oxen idol and appointed captains and food, oil and wine, and put shields and spears in Judah to make Judah very strong.

When Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, they called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel, and there was no one

who adhered to the house of David except the tribe of Judah and Benjamin. Rehoboam came to Jerusalem and gathered 80,000 men of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel and restore the kingdom to him as the son of Solomon and the grandson of David. But God sent the prophet Shemaiah to Rehoboam and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, “You shall not go up or fight against your brothers the children of Israel; return every man to his house, for this thing is from me.” So they obeyed the word of the LORD and returned and went to their homes. Separate the two names of these two kings because they are looking somewhat similar. Solomon’s son of the tribe of Judah was named King Rehoboam; and the servant of Solomon who fled to Egypt and later became king of the 10 tribes of Israel, his name was Jeroboam. Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. From there he built Penuel. Jeroboam said in his heart, perhaps his kingdom will return to the house of David, if the people continue to go up to Jerusalem to sacrifice in the house of the LORD, because there was only one place to worship, namely Jerusalem. He thought that if the people went up to worship, their hearts would turn to the son of Solomon, their lord, and then they would kill him and follow Rehoboam.

It did not take long for Jeroboam to show his inner character and wickedness. This was the mistake that Jeroboam made for himself, for he made two golden calves and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold, these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” He set up one calf in Bethel and the other in Dan. And this became a sin, because the people went to worship before the idols. Leadership is indeed a great task. When you are great and God gives you leadership, every time you step on it, look, whether you are making people worship and fear God or making people worship other gods or other things. There are only two kings to serve, God and Satan, there is no middle ground. And whoever has not made a decision to fear and serve God, even if he does not say so, will be serving the enemy Satan. There are not three kingdoms, only two. Jeroboam built a place of sacrifice on the mountains and took non-Levites as priests and commanded them to keep the feasts of certain imperfect models by sacrificing the bulls to the false priests. So all the Levitical priests went to Judah, to Jerusalem. The false priests that Jeroboam appointed served, inventing the days he wanted as feasts, and he commanded the children of Israel to keep them by going to the altar and burning incense. The king of Israel followed the godly people, and all who sought the LORD.”

Even today, the nations, tribes, tongues and peoples of the world have examples of false worship that bear little resemblance to the plan that God gave to His people such as sacrifices of animals etc. They offer sacrifices, and

bow down, but they are false. These worships are not true, they are contrary to the God of heaven. May God help us to know true worship as he says in Revelation 14 “Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Revelation 14:7.

The way of God is in His Altar, let us return there by reading from 25 and the book of Hebrews. Let us do as the apostles of Christ did; let us pray for the sick, for there are many who cannot benefit from our Sanitariums (simple treatment programs). The Lord will remove weakness or sickness in answer to prayer.

Questions: What lesson have you learned today? Why did Rehoboam stop listening to the advice of the elders? Why is it good to get advice from wise people? Why did Rehoboam stop fighting? What sin did Jeroboam commit? Why did he forget when God brought him out of service and made him king?

God Bless You Baby and Boy Jesus🙏🙏

Key Verse: 2 Chronicles 10:8,9.

But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him... “My father put a heavy yoke on you; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.”

Prayer: Thank You, Holy Father. I ask You to help me to have wisdom and listen to the counsel of wise elders. May Your Name be glorified, may Your will be done, help us to forgive others. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the words Rehoboam said to the elders and to the young men, and the advice he was given. Youth and elders both have many good things, so it is best when they work together. What good things do young people have that most elders don’t? And what good things do elders have that young people don’t?

DAY 117 – April 26

TOPIC: The Withered Hand of Jeroboam

(1 Kings 13 & 2 Chronicles 13)



A man of God from Judah came to Bethel by the word of the LORD. He found Jeroboam standing at an altar offering incense. The man of God cried out against the altar, saying, “O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: A child shall be born in the house of David, named Josiah. On you, he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense here, and human bones shall be burned on you.”

He gave a sign that day, saying, “This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar shall be split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.”

When King Jeroboam heard the words of the man of God, he stretched out his hand, commanding his men to seize him. But his hand became withered, and he could not pull it back. The altar was split apart, and the ashes were

poured out, just as the man of God had spoken by the word of the LORD.

Terrified, the king pleaded with the man of God to pray to the LORD so that his hand could be restored. The man of God prayed, and the king's hand was healed. In gratitude, Jeroboam invited the man of God to his house for refreshment and promised him a gift. However, the man of God refused, saying, "Even if you give me half of your house, I will not go with you, nor will I eat or drink in this place. For the LORD commanded me not to eat or drink here or return by the same way I came." He then left by a different path.

Meanwhile, an old prophet living in Bethel heard about the incident from his sons. He asked which way the man of God had gone and set out to find him. He found him resting under a tree and asked if he was the man of God from Judah. When he confirmed, the old prophet invited him home for a meal. The man of God refused, repeating the LORD's command not to eat, drink, or return the same way.

The old prophet then lied, saying, "I, too, am a prophet, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back to your house so that he may eat and drink.'" The man of God believed the lie and went with him.

As they ate at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet, who declared, "Because you disobeyed the LORD's command and returned to eat and drink in this place, your body shall not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors."

After leaving the old prophet's house, the man of God was attacked and killed by a lion. His body was left on the road, with the lion standing next to it, and his donkey unharmed. Travelers saw the unusual sight and reported it to the city where the old prophet lived.

When the old prophet heard about the incident, he admitted, "It is the man of God who disobeyed the LORD's word. That is why the LORD allowed the lion to kill him." He went, picked up the body, and buried him in his own tomb, mourning, "Oh, my brother!"

The old prophet then instructed his sons to bury him in the same tomb when he died. Meanwhile, the prophecy concerning the altar at Bethel and the destruction of the false altars in Samaria came to pass.

Let us be cautious of false prophets who lead people away from God's commands. Even when someone appears godly, we must remain faithful to what the LORD has clearly spoken. Disobedience to God's word can lead to

great danger.

We need grace, and we need light from the LORD so that through the Holy Spirit, we may know how to pray for the things we truly need. When our prayers align with God's will, they will be answered.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What lesson do you learn from this story?

2. What did the man of God tell King Jeroboam?

3. Why did Jeroboam's hand wither?

4. Why did the lion kill the man of God?

5. How can a man of God avoid the deceit of Satan?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Kings 13:20-22.

[20-22] Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'"

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey Your voice, no matter if church members come and tell me a different word that does not agree with Your Word. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Explain the story of the prophet of God and the false prophet in your own words.

DAY 118 – (April 27)

TOPIC: The Kings of Judah and Israel

(1 Kings 14, 15 and 2 Chronicles 10)

Rehoboam, the king of Judah, married several wives, including the daughter of



Eliab, David's brother, and the granddaughter of David, Maakah, the daughter of Absalom. He loved Maakah the most and planned to make her son, Abijah, his successor. David had won battles and conquered lands, and Solomon ruled over them, but now Rehoboam ruled only a third of the kingdom that Solomon had. However, God's purpose for Israel was not just to be a great nation but to be a people who feared Him.

Rehoboam began ruling at 41 years old and reigned for 17 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonite. However, he and the people of Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking Him to anger with their sins. They built high places to worship other gods and set up Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak, the king of Egypt, came and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the king's palace. He also took the gold shields that Solomon had made,

and Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields. When Rehoboam died, his son Abijah became king after him; this Abijah is different from Jeroboam's son who passed away.

Jeroboam, the king of Israel, did not turn away from his wicked ways or remember how his hand had withered. He continued appointing illegitimate priests from any tribe, making them burn incense at the high places. This was a great sin in the eyes of the Lord. During this time, his beloved son, Abijah, became ill. Jeroboam sent his wife to Shiloh to inquire from the prophet Ahijah, the same prophet who had told him he would become king when he was in exile in Egypt. He instructed his wife to disguise herself and take ten loaves of bread, cakes, and a jar of honey to the prophet to ask about their son's condition.

However, the Lord had already spoken to Ahijah, telling him that Jeroboam's wife was coming, pretending to be someone else. As soon as she entered his house, he addressed her, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have a heavy message for you." The prophet then told her to inform Jeroboam that God had exalted him among the people and made him king over Israel. However, Jeroboam had done more evil than those before him by making idols and worshiping them, rejecting the Lord. Therefore, God would bring disaster upon Jeroboam's household, cutting off every male in his family and sweeping away his lineage like dung. Dogs would eat those who died in the city, and birds would devour those who died in the fields.

Ahijah also prophesied that as soon as Jeroboam's wife stepped back into the city, their son Abijah would die. He would be the only one in Jeroboam's family to receive a proper burial because something pleasing to the Lord had been found in him. As predicted, the boy died the moment his mother arrived home. The Israelites mourned and buried him as the prophet had said. Jeroboam reigned for 22 years before dying, and his son Nadab succeeded him.

In the 18th year of Jeroboam's reign, Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, became the king of Judah. His mother was the daughter of Absalom, the son of David. He followed the sinful ways of his father, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord. However, because of God's promise to David, the kingdom of Judah was preserved. The Lord declared that David had obeyed His commands and followed Him wholeheartedly, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

There were continuous battles between Jeroboam and Abijah, representing the ongoing war between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Eventually,

Abijah died, and his son Asa became king. Asa began ruling in the 20th year of Jeroboam's reign over Israel and ruled for 41 years. He was a good king, like his ancestor David. He expelled male shrine prostitutes from the land and destroyed all the idols his fathers had made.

He even removed his grandmother Maakah from her position as queen mother because she had made a repulsive Asherah idol. Asa cut down the idol and burned it in the Kidron Valley. One day, a vast Cushite army of a million men and 300 chariots attacked Asa. He prayed to the Lord, affirming that God's help was not based on numbers. The Lord responded, and the Cushites fled.

The prophet Azariah came to Asa, telling him that as long as he sought the Lord, the Lord would be with him. Encouraged by this, Asa continued removing detestable idols from the land and dedicated himself fully to God. However, he made a mistake by bribing King Ben-Hadad of Aram with gold and silver from the temple and royal treasury to break his treaty with King Baasha of Israel. As a result, Ben-Hadad attacked Israel, causing them harm.

In his old age, Asa suffered from a severe foot disease. Instead of seeking the Lord, he relied only on physicians. Eventually, he died and was buried with his ancestors in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Nadab, Jeroboam's son, became the king of Israel in Asa's second year as king of Judah. However, he ruled for only two years, walking in his father's wicked ways and leading Israel into sin.

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. The advice of elders is often better than that of young people because they have more experience. However, the best advice is that which is based on the Word of God because God's wisdom is limitless.

2. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Living by God's Word is the surest way to avoid mistakes in life.

3. King Rehoboam had three major leadership textbooks—the lives of Saul, David, and Solomon. However, he failed to learn from their mistakes or successes. Instead, he listened to his peers and announced that he would impose heavier taxes and use harsh discipline.

4. Jesus, our King, has called us to be different leaders. He said, "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43). Even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

5. Sin must be put away if prayers for healing are to be answered. Those who seek restoration and healing must understand that violating God's laws—whether natural or spiritual—is sin. To receive His blessings, they must confess and turn away from their sins.

QUESTIONS:

Was Asa right to give gifts to Ben-Hadad?

Why did Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, die?

What punishment did Jeroboam's family receive?

What was Rehoboam's sin?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Matthew 20:26-28.

[26-28] …but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant; and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for a good day. I ask You to help me not to exalt myself, but to be a servant when I am given a chance to lead, such as being a class monitor. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: When someone dies, it seems like a great punishment, but from 1 Kings 14:1-9 and Isaiah 57:1,2 what have you learned here?

DAY 119 (April 28)

TOPIC: Kings and Prophet Elijah the Tishbite

(1 Kings 15-17 and 2 Chronicles 16)

Baasha, the son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar, conspired against Nadab, killed him, and took over his reign. He struck down all the descendants of Jeroboam, leaving no one alive, just as the Lord had spoken through His servant Ahijah. Jeroboam had sinned and led the entire nation of Israel into sin. When Nadab died, Baasha became king and continued to fight against Asa, the king of Judah, throughout their reigns. This was the beginning of war among the Israelites.

Baasha ruled for 24 years, following the wicked ways of Jeroboam and causing Israel to sin. Then, the word of the Lord came to Jehu, son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, "I lifted you up from the dust and made you ruler over my people Israel, but you have followed the ways of Jeroboam." The Lord declared that He would destroy Baasha's house as He had done with Jeroboam's house. Any member of Baasha's family who died in the city would be eaten by dogs, and those who died in the fields would be eaten by birds. Baasha died, and his son Elah became king of Israel in the 26th year of Asa, king of Judah.

Elah ruled for only two years. While he was drinking himself drunk, his servant Zimri entered and killed him. Zimri also slaughtered all the household of Baasha, fulfilling the Lord's prophecy through Jehu. However, Zimri ruled for only seven days before a rebellion arose in Israel, and Omri, the army commander, was made king. When Zimri saw what had happened, he set the king's house on fire and burned himself alive inside.
The people of Israel were divided between following two leaders: Tibni and Omri. Eventually, Omri defeated Tibni and became king in the 31st year of Asa, ruling for seven years. Omri built the city of Samaria and did more evil than all the kings before him, leading Israel further into sin like Jeroboam.

After Omri's death, his son Ahab became king in the 38th year of Asa's reign. Ahab ruled over Israel from Samaria and did more wickedness than any of the kings before him. He married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and began worshiping Baal. Ahab angered the Lord more than any previous king by setting up idols and worshiping Baal and Asherah. Jezebel became a symbol of a wicked woman who led people into idolatry and immorality, a reference even found in Revelation 2.



The Rise of Elijah the Prophet

After King Solomon's death, a prophet named Elijah was born east of the Jordan River. His parents had surely dedicated him to God's service. Growing up, he heard many stories of the kings of Israel and their wickedness. At that time, people were choosing between the true God of heaven and the false gods of Baal. Elijah's name means "The Lord is my God." Jesus Himself mentioned Elijah's great faith, even though he was just a human like us. John the Baptist's ministry was also compared to Elijah's.

When the time was right, this prophet of God, Elijah the Tishbite, courageously approached King Ahab and declared, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, there will be no dew or rain these years, except at my word." The people had been praying to Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech—false gods with no power.

Then the Lord instructed Elijah to go and hide at the Brook Cherith, east of the Jordan. There, he would drink from the brook, and ravens would bring him food. Every morning when Elijah woke up, ravens brought him food. God's creation obeys Him—what about us humans? Elijah went to Cherith, and God fulfilled His promise. But after some time, the brook dried up because there was no rain.

Then, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, telling him to go to Zarephath, where God had commanded a widow to provide for him. Jesus later mentioned that there were many widows in Israel at that time, but Elijah was sent to this particular woman because she feared God and had faith.

When Elijah arrived in Zarephath, he found the widow gathering firewood. He asked her for a drink of water. As she went to fetch it, he also asked for a piece of bread. She responded, “As surely as the Lord your God lives, I have no bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and prepare a meal for myself and my son, so that we may eat it—and die.”

Elijah told her not to fear but to first make a small cake for him, then prepare for herself and her son. Perhaps the widow was surprised, thinking Elijah was selfish. Sadly, some people today pretend to serve God but care more about their own needs than those they serve. But Elijah was not such a person.



This widow obeyed Elijah’s instructions. Her child may have asked about the delicious smell of bread, and she would have replied, “It’s for the guest.” But this act of faith and generosity led to a great blessing. Elijah assured her, “As surely as the Lord lives, the jar of flour will not be used up, and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.” She obeyed, and they had food for many days. The flour never ran out, and the oil never dried up, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah.

Obedience to God always bears good fruit, even if the results take time. They will surely come. “Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4).

The same God who provided for Elijah will provide for His children today, no matter how difficult the world’s conditions may be. The key principle for God’s children to have food security is: Work diligently, as it is written, “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” (2 Thessalonians 3:10), and trust and obey God. This principle never fails because the Psalmist wrote, “I was young, and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread.” (Psalm 37:25).

The Bible teaches us: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16).

For those who pray for the sick, let us keep this in mind: We cannot read hearts or know the hidden things of people’s lives. Only God knows those secrets. If someone confesses their sins, it is their duty to seek forgiveness. We must be cautious not to mistake false confidence for true faith when praying for the sick. I have seen much enthusiasm in healing prayers, but sometimes things are taken to extremes, making me feel that this area needs clear understanding. The sick need wise counsel so that they act with wisdom and avoid making harmful or embarrassing choices.

When seeking healing, people should not ignore natural remedies and laws of health. Simple remedies that work should be used. Although hospitals and medical tests (such as lab tests and X-rays) are necessary in emergencies or serious cases, we should also learn to use the eight natural remedies that God has given us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What lesson have you learned today?
2. What was Baasha’s sin?
3. What kind of character did Jezebel have?
4. Who fed Elijah at the Brook Cherith?
5. What instruction did Elijah give to the widow of Zarephath?
6. If you were given the same instruction today, how would you respond?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Luke 6:38.

[38] Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your lap. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, I ask You to help me to be generous to people, and to Your work, and to do good deeds. Thank You for answering my prayers and preparing me to be ready when You come again so that we may live in heaven, the place You have prepared for us with Your generosity. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the story of Elijah, the widow, and her son.

DAY 120 (April 29)

TOPIC: The Widow's Son of Zarephath is Raised

(1 Kings 17)



The son of the widow of Zarephath became ill, and his illness worsened until he died. She approached Elijah with sorrow and said, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to remind me of my sin and cause my son's death?" Many people today still believe that misfortunes or disasters happen because of their sins. While this may be true in some cases, it is not always the reason. Even Job faced suffering, but not because of his wrongdoing. It is wise to pray and examine ourselves, as Psalm 139 says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Elijah told the widow to give him her son. He took the boy from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. He then cried out to the Lord, saying, "O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy on this widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" He stretched himself out on the child three times and prayed, "O Lord my God, let this child's soul return to him." The Lord heard Elijah's prayer, and the child's soul returned to him, and he revived. Elijah then took the boy back down to his mother and said, "See, your son lives."

God was teaching His prophet to rely on Him. The widow was not an Israelite, yet she trusted in God. She rejoiced and said, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." Even though she had lived with Elijah for three years and had seen the miracle of food provision, she still had doubts. Let us pray that God increases our faith. The king searched for Elijah with anger but could not find him. Instead of

repenting and doing what was right so that the Lord would forgive him and restore blessings to the land, he sought to blame someone else instead of examining his own sins and confessing them. Even today, we should not hate those who rebuke us for our mistakes, but instead, we should be willing to repent and confess our sins.

In the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, instructing him to present himself to King Ahab and announce that rain would return. Elijah traveled about 200 kilometers to meet Ahab during a severe famine in Samaria. Ahab called Obadiah, his servant who feared God. Obadiah had hidden and fed 100 prophets of the Lord when Queen Jezebel was killing them. Ahab instructed Obadiah to search the land for springs of water to keep the horses and mules alive. They divided the land to search separately.

As Obadiah was walking, he saw Elijah, recognized him, and bowed, saying, “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?” Elijah answered, “Yes, it is me. Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’” Obadiah was afraid and asked why Elijah wanted to put him in danger. He explained that Ahab had searched for Elijah in every nation and made them swear that they had not seen him. If he told Ahab that Elijah was there and then the Spirit of the Lord took Elijah away, Ahab would kill him.

Obadiah pleaded for mercy, explaining that he had feared the Lord since his youth and had hidden 100 prophets in a cave when Jezebel was killing them. He repeated his fear of being killed by Ahab. But Elijah assured him, saying, “As the Lord Almighty lives, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.” Obadiah went and informed Ahab, and Ahab came to meet Elijah.

The wicked king believed that Elijah had the power to stop the rain but was not willing to repent of his own sins or those of his wife, Jezebel, to restore blessings to the land. When Ahab saw Elijah, he angrily asked, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” Elijah replied, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have abandoned the Lord’s commandments and followed the Baals.”

Sometimes, when we face consequences for our sins, we blame others instead of taking responsibility for our actions. Elijah told Ahab to gather all Israel at Mount Carmel, including the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who ate at Jezebel’s table. Ahab had no choice but to obey and call the people to Mount Carmel. The famine and drought were severe, affecting everyone, leaving no room for rebellion or stubbornness.

Job declared, “But I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end, He will

stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God." (Job 19:25-26). God will resurrect His people when He returns for the second time. The resurrection gives us hope when we lose our loved ones. We will recognize our resurrected loved ones because everyone will retain their unique identity. There will be no confusion, for they will be real people, not wandering spirits.

If people believe that seeking healing through natural remedies given by God to relieve pain and assist nature in its work is a denial of faith, they are taking an incorrect stance. This is not a denial of faith; rather, it aligns with God's plan. When King Hezekiah was sick, the prophet of God brought him a message that he would die. Hezekiah cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard him and performed a miracle, granting him 15 more years of life. God could have healed Hezekiah with just a word, but He instructed them to apply a poultice of figs to the infected area, and Hezekiah was restored to health. In all things, we must align with God's plans and purposes.

Questions:

1. How was Elijah fed at the Brook of Cherith?
2. How did the widow of Zarephath help Elijah?
3. What did the widow say when her son died?
4. What good thing did Obadiah do?
5. Who troubled Israel?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Kings 17:22,23.

[22,23] Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the story of Elijah Your servant and the power You gave him even to raise a dead child. Revive everything that has died in our home, whether relationships, provision, or other things. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the conversation between Elijah and Obadiah.

DAY 121 (April 30)

TOPIC: The Prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel

(1 Kings 18)



Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him!” But the people remained silent. Elijah said he was the only prophet of the LORD left, while the prophets of Baal were many. He instructed them to bring two bulls—one for the prophets of Baal and one for himself. The prophets of Baal were to prepare their bull and place it on wood without lighting a fire. Elijah would do the same for the LORD’s sacrifice, but neither would set fire to their offering. Instead, they would each call upon their respective god, and the one who answered with fire would be declared the true God.

Since the prophets of Baal were many, Elijah let them go first. They prepared their bull and called on Baal from morning until evening, shouting for him to send fire. However, there was no voice, no answer. They danced around the altar they had made. At noon, Elijah mocked them, saying, “Shout louder!



Surely he is a god! Maybe he is deep in thought, busy, traveling, or sleeping and must be awakened!" The prophets of Baal shouted louder and even cut themselves with knives and spears as was their custom, but still, there was no response.

The people became weary of Baal's prophets, so Elijah called them closer. He repaired the LORD's broken altar with twelve stones, representing the tribes of Israel. He built the altar in the name of the LORD and dug a trench around it. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces, and laid it on the wood. Then he ordered them to pour twelve barrels of water over the sacrifice until it was soaked, and even the trench around it was filled with water.

At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel, that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your command. Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that You, LORD, are God and that You are turning their hearts back to You."

Before Elijah could finish praying, fire from the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and even the water in the trench. When the people saw it, they fell face down and cried, "The LORD is God! The LORD is God!"



This miracle was a demonstration of God's grace, showing the people whom they should follow. Elijah then commanded the people to seize the false prophets of Baal so that none could escape. They were taken to the Kishon Valley, where Elijah put them to death.

Elijah then told Ahab to rise, eat, and drink because a great rain was coming. Ahab, exhausted from the events of the day, obeyed the prophet and ate and drank. Meanwhile, Elijah climbed Mount Carmel, knelt, and bowed down in prayer, asking the LORD for rain. He sent his servant to look toward the sea for a sign of rain. The servant went and reported nothing. Elijah sent him back seven times. On the seventh time, the servant saw a small cloud rising from the sea, about the size of a man's hand.

Elijah, full of faith, knew that God had answered. He instructed his servant to tell Ahab to prepare his chariot and leave before the heavy rain stopped him. Although Ahab was wicked, Elijah still respected him as king and took care of his needs. It is important to obey leaders, except when they command us to disobey God—then we must choose to follow God rather than men.

Soon, dark clouds filled the sky, the wind blew, and heavy rain poured. Ahab rode his chariot toward Jezreel, about 30 kilometers away. The power of the LORD came upon Elijah, and he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel, despite the darkness and the storm. After more than 1,000 days of drought,

rain was finally falling. Many people turned to God that day, but Ahab and Jezebel continued in their stubborn ways.

Elijah is a living witness that when we fully trust in the LORD, we are freed from fear. Let us pray that God fills us with His Holy Spirit so that we may be free from all our fears. Are we wavering between two opinions? Do we love both God and the world? Do we go to church yet also worship worldly things? Are we saved by grace and works? Today, Jesus asks us to make a decision. Let us give Him our whole hearts and fix our eyes on Him.

God calls us to put to death our sinful desires and corruption. Does God still want to reveal Himself to an unbelieving world today? Yes! There may not be fire from heaven, but if we fully surrender to Him, He will work wonders through us as living testimonies of His presence. That is why He commands His children: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Human efforts must be combined with faith. We must use every resource available, taking advantage of every means God has provided. By doing so, we neither deny faith nor hinder it.

Questions:

1. Why was Ahab an evil king?

2. How did Elijah help Ahab?

3. Why didn’t the sacrifice of Baal’s prophets burn?

4. How many prophets did Baal have?

5. Why did Elijah lead Ahab into the darkness?

6. Among your friends, is there someone wavering in faith whom you can help?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Key Verse: James 5:17.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father. Lord, I ask You to increase my faith, that I may believe that what I pray for will be fulfilled, since it is Your will and I am doing Your work.

Activity: Tell the story of Mount Carmel about the two teams: Elijah's team and the prophets of Baal's team.

DAY 122 (May 1)

TOPIC: Elijah Loses Courage and Flees

(1 Kings 19)



Ahab told his wife, Jezebel, everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets of Baal with the sword. This wicked and ruthless woman, Jezebel, sent a threatening message to Prophet Elijah, saying, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

When Elijah heard this, he was suddenly overcome with fear, losing his courage. He forgot that God is all-powerful and that even Jezebel could be destroyed just like the other false prophets. This is a common human struggle—one day, we have great faith, and the next, we tremble in fear. So, Elijah ran for his life, reaching Beersheba in Judah, where he left his servant. However, he continued alone into the wilderness, walking for a whole day. He sat under

a broom tree, exhausted and discouraged, and prayed to die, saying, “It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”

Elijah had traveled over 250 kilometers and was exhausted. He lay down under the tree and fell asleep. Suddenly, an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” When he looked around, he saw a baked loaf of bread and a jug of water by his head. Simple food—this is what God provides! And it is also the healthiest! So, he ate, drank, and lay down again. His heart was filled with joy, knowing that God knew where he was and had personally prepared food for him.

The angel of the Lord came again a second time, touched him, and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” Elijah got up, ate, and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled for forty days and forty nights without eating, reaching Mount Horeb (also known as Mount Sinai), where Moses had received the Ten Commandments. He found a cave, entered it, and slept there. Then, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Elijah replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” Elijah had a righteous zeal, desiring that all people love and serve God—not a jealousy where one envies others’ possessions.

The Lord told Elijah to step out and stand on the mountain in His presence. A powerful wind tore through the mountains, shattering rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, a fire appeared, but the Lord was not in the fire. Then, after the fire, there was a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak, stepped out, and stood at the cave’s entrance. Then, a voice came again, asking, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Elijah repeated his words, saying that he had been zealous for the Lord while Israel had forsaken God’s covenant, broken His altars, and killed His prophets.

The Lord commanded Elijah to go back through the desert to Damascus, anoint Hazael as king of Aram, Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel, and Elisha son of Shaphat as his prophetic successor.

God said that whoever escaped Hazael’s sword would be killed by Jehu, and whoever escaped Jehu’s sword would be killed by Elisha. Then, God revealed

to Elijah that there were still 7,000 people in Israel who had not bowed to Baal or kissed him.

The Lord gave Elijah a new mission before taking him up to heaven. God allowed Elijah time to recover from exhaustion by providing food, engaging in conversation, giving him new work, and companionship. This period of rest and time with God healed Elijah physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Oh Lord, help us surrender everything to You! God's people will not be free from suffering, but even in hardship, they will endure, and God will not let them perish. The same God who cared for Elijah will not overlook a single one of His dedicated children. The One who numbers the hairs on our heads watches over us, and in times of famine, we will be fed.

When the wicked perish from hunger and disease, angels will protect and provide for us. To those who walk righteously, God's promise remains:

"Their bread will be given them; their water will be sure."
"The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I, the Lord, will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into flowing springs."

In God's Word, we find clear instructions regarding prayers for healing. However, offering such prayers is a sacred act and should not be taken lightly. In many cases where healing is sought, what is called faith is merely an assumption.

Questions:

1. What message did Jezebel send to Elijah?

2. Why did Elijah flee?

3. What lesson do we learn from Elijah being provided food?

4. How many people had not bowed to Baal?

May God Bless You, Child and Young Disciple of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Kings 19:9,10.

[9,10] …And the word of the Lord came to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

Prayer: Beloved Lord, sometimes we desire to serve You with zeal, but we encounter wicked people like Jezebel. Thank You because You will protect us from evil ones, and You will help us Yourself to do Your work diligently. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: 1 Kings 18—Elijah praying many times and telling his servant to go and see if the rain had begun. What does praying seven times teach us about perseverance in prayer?

DAY 123 (May 2)

TOPIC: Elijah Anoints His Successor

(1 Kings 20)



So Elijah went and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Elisha came from a wealthy family. Elijah called him and threw his cloak over him. Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah, saying, "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, then I will follow you." Elijah knew this was a call to live a life of self-denial as a prophet and to face danger from Jezebel's hatred, yet he chose to serve God. Elijah allowed him to go and return, saying, "What have I done to you?" Elisha went back, slaughtered the oxen, cooked the meat using the wood from the plow, and gave it to the people to eat. He did this so that he would not look back or hesitate in serving God. Then Elisha got up, followed Elijah, and served him.

Meanwhile, Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, gathered his entire army. With him were thirty-two other kings, along with horses and chariots. He marched up, besieged Samaria, and attacked it. He sent messengers to Ahab, the king of Israel, with a provocative message: "Your silver, your gold, your wives, and your finest children are mine!" The wicked and weak King Ahab became afraid, trembled, and replied, "Just as you say, my lord the king. I am yours, and all that I have." A person who fails to stand firm for God is ready to fall and surrender his children, wives, and all his possessions. The messengers returned to Ben-Hadad, who then said, "Yes, you will give me your silver, gold, wives, and children. But tomorrow, I will send my officers to search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will seize everything you value and take it away."

Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land and told them to see how Ben-Hadad was seeking trouble, for he had demanded his wives, children, silver, and gold, and he had not refused. The elders advised him not to listen or agree to Ben-Hadad's demands. So Ahab sent back a message: "Tell my lord the king, I will do all you first requested, but this last demand I cannot accept." In response, Ben-Hadad swore, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even the dust of Samaria will be enough to fill the hands of all my soldiers." Ahab then found courage and replied, "Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off."

When Ben-Hadad heard this, he was drinking with the other kings in his tent. He commanded his officers to prepare for battle, and they did. Then a prophet came to Ahab and told him, "Have you seen this vast army? The Lord will give them into your hand today, and you will know that I am the Lord." Ahab asked, "Who will do this?" The prophet replied, "The junior officers under the provincial commanders." Ahab asked, "Who will start the battle?" The prophet answered, "You will." So Ahab assembled 232 young officers and 7,000 Israelites and went out while Ben-Hadad was still drinking. When the Arameans saw the Israelites approaching, Ben-Hadad commanded that they be captured alive. But the young officers struck down their enemies, and the Arameans fled, with Israel pursuing them. Ben-Hadad escaped on horseback, and Ahab led Israel to a great victory.

A prophet warned Ahab to strengthen his army because Ben-Hadad would return the following year. The Arameans believed Israel's God was only a god of the mountains, so they planned to fight on the plains, thinking they would win. But when they attacked again, the Lord gave Israel another victory, and the surviving Arameans fled. Ben-Hadad hid, and his servants advised him that the kings of Israel were merciful. So they dressed in sackcloth, put ropes on their heads, and approached Ahab, begging for mercy. Ben-Hadad told Ahab that he would return the cities his father had taken from Israel. Ahab, feeling proud that a great king like Ben-Hadad was bowing before him, made a treaty and let him go—an unwise decision.

God then used a parable to show Ahab his mistake. A prophet disguised himself and asked another man to strike him, but the man refused, and a lion killed him. The prophet then asked another man, who struck him and wounded him. The wounded prophet waited for the king, disguised with a headband over his eyes. He told Ahab a story: "While in battle, a man brought me a prisoner and told me to guard him. If he escaped, I would have to pay a heavy price or forfeit my life. But as I was busy with other things, he disappeared." Ahab responded, "You have pronounced your own judgment." The prophet then removed the headband, revealing his identity, and told Ahab, "Because you

released the man I had determined should die, your life will be taken in place of his, and your people in place of his people." Ahab went home angry and troubled.

You may think that the success of God's work in your community depends on well-known figures like a pastor, evangelist, or church elder. But what if you are the girl or boy God is calling to do what they cannot? What if you are the son or daughter of God whom someone will listen to when they have stopped listening to everyone else? Maybe your mother, father, brother, sister, cousin, uncle, or grandmother has strayed, and you can reach them—then do it. Great things can happen when the Elijahs among us stand boldly and make a difference. Even greater things will happen when all of us play our part when God calls. No matter how bad things seem, let us not forget God's promise: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

Many people bring sickness upon themselves by indulging in pleasures and self-gratification. They do not live according to natural laws or principles of pure living. Others ignore health laws in their eating, drinking, dressing, or work habits. Often, some form of wrongdoing is the cause of mental or physical weakness. If these people received healing, many would continue their careless ways, believing that if God heals them once, they are free to continue their bad habits without consequence. If God were to work a miracle to restore their health, He would be encouraging sin.

Questions:

1. What lesson do you learn from this story?

2. Why did Elisha burn his plow and slaughter his oxen?

3. How did Ahab win the battle against Aram?

4. Why did the Lord say it was wrong to let the king of Aram go?

5. If you knew Ahab's wickedness, would you continue associating with him?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Kings 20:11.

[33] The king of Israel answered, "Tell him: 'Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.'"

Prayer: Beloved Heavenly Father, help us not to be boastful, but to have love and readiness to teach those younger than us, so that when we are gone, they may continue to do Your work and fill the gap. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: How to begin a calling that the Lord has given someone. Explain the example of Elisha here and also modern-day stories of how people began their calling to serve God.

DAY 124 (May 3)

TOPIC: Naboth's Vineyard

(1 Kings 21)



King Ahab, who ruled over all of Israel, was wealthy but extremely covetous and envious. He had two palaces, one in Samaria and another in Jezreel. One day, as he looked out of his palace window, he saw the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. Ahab asked Naboth to give him his vineyard so that he could use it as a vegetable garden because it was near his palace. In exchange, Ahab offered him either a better vineyard or money. However, Naboth told Ahab that the vineyard was his inheritance from his ancestors and that he could not give it away.

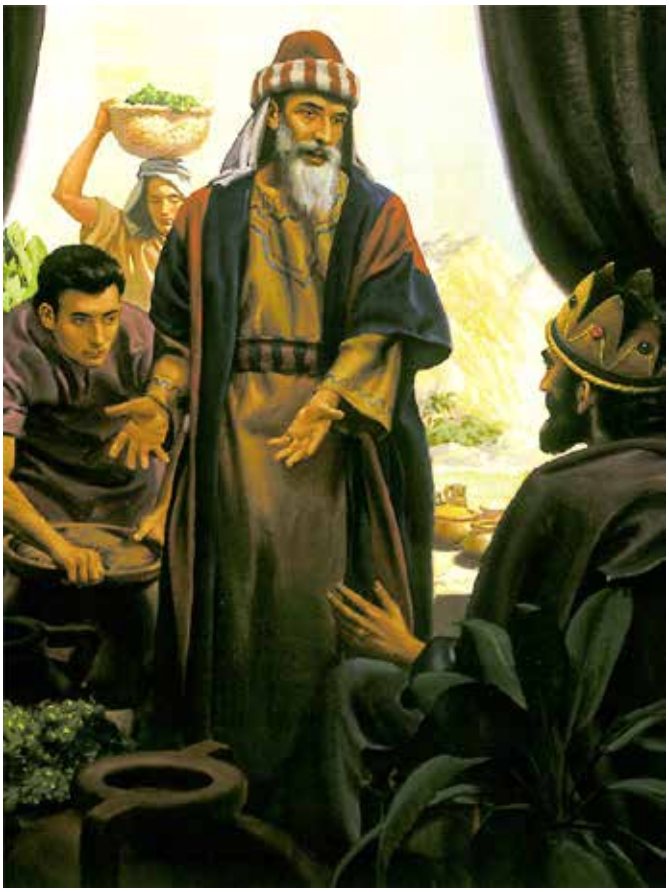
Ahab went home feeling heavy-hearted, angry, and resentful because Naboth had refused to give him the vineyard. He lay on his bed sulking like a spoiled child, turned his face away, and refused to eat. Some people today have the habit of wanting everything to go their way, even if it is wrong. If things do not go their way, they become upset and refuse to listen to others. This is a bad attitude.

His wife, Jezebel, a well-known wicked woman who worshiped idols, found him sulking, sad, and refusing to eat. She asked him what was wrong, and he told her. Jezebel laughed mockingly and told him, “You are the king, not Naboth. Get up, eat, and be happy. I will give you Naboth’s vineyard.” Then this evil woman wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and noblemen of the city where Naboth lived. In the letters, she instructed them:

“Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. Then bring two scoundrels to accuse him falsely, saying that he has cursed God and the king. After that, take him outside and stone him to death.”

The corrupt elders of the city, following their wicked leaders Ahab and Jezebel, obeyed her instructions. They proclaimed a fast, brought Naboth forward, and had false witnesses accuse him of blaspheming God and the king. Then they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. Afterward, they sent a message to Jezebel saying, “Naboth has been stoned and is dead.”

When Jezebel heard this, she told Ahab to get up and take possession of the vineyard that Naboth had refused to give him, for Naboth was now dead. Without shame or remorse, Ahab went to claim the vineyard.



Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet Elijah, instructing him to go and meet Ahab in Naboth’s vineyard in Samaria on the very day he went to seize it. Elijah confronted Ahab, saying:

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Have you murdered and taken possession?’ In the same place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood as well.”

Ahab was shocked that Elijah knew what had happened and asked, “Have you found me, my enemy?”

Elijah answered, “Yes, I have found you because you have sold yourself to do

evil in the sight of the Lord."

Elijah then declared the Lord's judgment:

"I will bring disaster upon you and cut off every male descendant of your family, just as I did to the house of Jeroboam and Baasha, because of your wickedness in leading Israel to sin. Dogs will devour Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel. Any of Ahab's family members who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, and those who die in the fields will be eaten by birds."

Ahab was the most wicked king, and his wife constantly encouraged him in his evil ways.

When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and walked humbly in sorrow. Because of this, God decided to postpone the disaster until after Ahab's lifetime, allowing it to fall upon his son's days instead. However, Ahab's wickedness still affected his children, as they followed in their parents' sinful footsteps. This was a tragic outcome.

God does not let evil go unpunished. Sometimes it takes time, but in the end, sin has its consequences.

Many leaders have taken wealth from others by force, violating the rights of the weak, thinking that God will not act. But God is merciful and patient. Ahab and Jezebel were given many chances to repent, but they kept sinking deeper into sin and ignored the warnings. When Elijah confronted Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, he should have returned the land to Naboth's children and confessed his sin.

Pray that God will help you avoid the path of Ahab.

Ahab and Jezebel's relationship was a partnership in wickedness. They corrupted true worship and encouraged sin. The actions Jezebel took to please her husband were evil, filled with deception, provocation, and murder. Marriage is a gift from God, meant to encourage spouses to support one another and serve those around them. However, in Ahab and Jezebel's case, it became a source of selfishness and greed.

If you are still searching for a spouse, do not settle for someone who brings out the worst in you. Likewise, do not be a person who influences your spouse negatively. Pray that God helps you be the husband or wife you are meant to be so that your marriage will be a blessing rather than a source of pain for those around you.

It is pointless to teach people to look to God as the healer of their weaknesses if they are not also taught to abandon harmful habits that go against good health. To receive God's blessings in response to prayer, they must stop doing evil and learn to do what is right. Their environment must be clean, their lifestyle must be proper, and they must live according to both God's natural and spiritual laws.

Questions for Reflection:

What did Ahab want from Naboth?

How did the king react after Naboth refused to give him the vineyard?

What advice did his wife give him?

What message did Elijah bring from God?

Why did God say the punishment would come upon Ahab's children instead of Ahab himself?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Timothy 6:18,19.

[17,18] Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

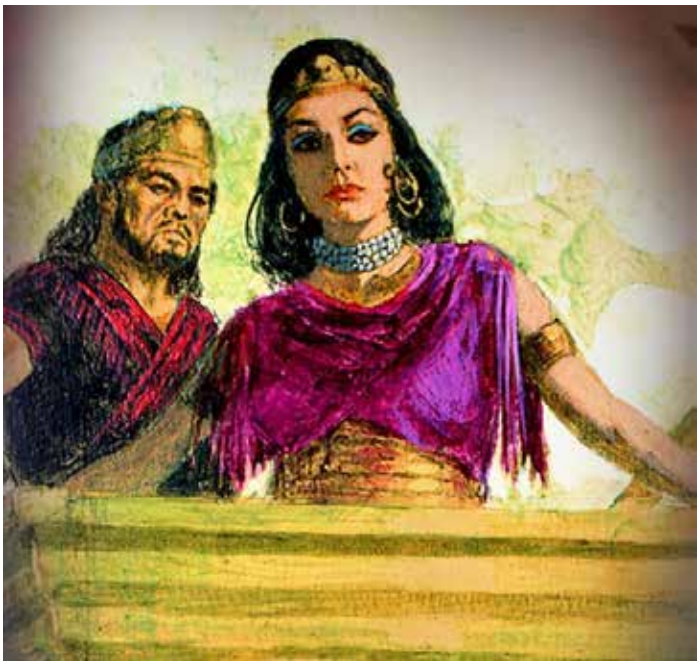
Prayer: Beloved Heavenly Father, thank You for all the provisions You give us. This morning I ask You to help me not to be arrogant, but to trust in You, not to have greed for wealth, nor jealousy of others' possessions, nor even to rob others of their belongings. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity of contentment: How can we be content today? Learning from others, being thankful, counting all the things we have, etc.

DAY 125 (May 4)

LESSON: The Last Days of Ahab

(1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18)



There were three years of peace, and then Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went to visit Ahab, the king of Israel. Ahab said that the city of Ramoth-Gilead belonged to them and that they should take it back from the Arameans. He then proposed to King Jehoshaphat that they go to war together to reclaim the city. Jehoshaphat responded, "I am as you are, and my people as your people, and my horses as your horses."

King Jehoshaphat feared God, but he involved himself in a friendship with Ahab, who was an enemy of God. Ahab gathered 400 false prophets and asked them whether he should go to take Ramoth-Gilead, and they replied, "Go up, for the LORD will give it into the king's hand." However, Jehoshaphat was skeptical of these false prophets and asked Ahab, "Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?" Ahab admitted that there was one, Micaiah, but said, "I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad." Jehoshaphat responded, "The king should not say such a thing."

Ahab then sent a messenger to bring Micaiah, while both Ahab and Jehoshaphat sat on their royal thrones at the gate of Samaria, dressed in their royal robes, as the false prophets continued prophesying. One false prophet, Zedekiah, made iron horns and declared, "With these, you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed." All the other prophets agreed, saying, "Go up and succeed!"

As the messenger went to fetch Micaiah, he urged him, "Please speak favorable words to the king, just like the other prophets." But Micaiah said that he would only speak what the LORD told him. When they entered before

the kings, Ahab asked, “Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth-Gilead, or should we refrain?” Micaiah sarcastically replied, “Go up and succeed!”

Ahab, sensing the sarcasm, pressed him further: “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” Micaiah then spoke the truth: “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, ‘These people have no master; let them go home in peace.’”

Ahab turned to Jehoshaphat and said, “Didn’t I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, only bad?”

Micaiah then revealed a vision of the LORD on His throne, with the heavenly hosts around Him. A voice was heard asking, “Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?” Different suggestions were made until a spirit came forward and said, “I will deceive him through the mouths of his prophets.”

Ahab had chosen to serve Satan, yet he blamed God’s servants when misfortune struck. Micaiah warned that a lying spirit had taken over Ahab’s prophets and that the LORD had decreed disaster for him. Zedekiah, the false prophet, trying to gain favor with the king, struck Micaiah on the cheek, asking, “Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go when he left me to speak to you?” Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.”

Ahab ordered Micaiah to be thrown into prison with only bread and water until he returned in peace. But Micaiah declared, “If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken through me. Hear, all you people!”

The two kings went up to Ramoth-Gilead, but Ahab disguised himself in ordinary clothes while Jehoshaphat wore his royal robes. The king of Aram had instructed his army to ignore all soldiers and focus on killing the king of Israel. When they saw Jehoshaphat, they assumed he was Ahab and pursued him. Jehoshaphat cried out, and the commanders realized he was not Ahab and turned away.

Jehoshaphat, a righteous man, had made an alliance with a wicked man. This serves as a lesson when we consider making agreements, friendships, or business deals with those who do not honor God, or when we allow our children to marry people who openly defy the Lord.

God is full of mercy. Many times, we put ourselves in harm’s way, but He works tirelessly to save us. He sends His servants to warn us, but we prefer to hear pleasing words instead of corrections that would lead us to change.

Many church members demand that their leaders tell them what they want to hear, saying, “Speak well of us; if you rebuke us, we will not pay your salary or give you gifts.”

Then, an archer randomly shot an arrow, and it struck Ahab between the joints of his armor, where there was no protection. Ahab told his chariot driver, “Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded.”

In those days, kings were required to go into battle, unlike today. The fighting continued, and Ahab, fatally wounded, propped himself up in his chariot until evening, when he died from excessive bleeding. At sunset, a cry went through the army: “Every man to his own country and home!”

Ahab’s body was taken to Samaria, and his chariot was washed at a pool where prostitutes bathed. Dogs licked his blood, just as the LORD had declared through the prophet Elijah. Ahab was buried with his ancestors, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

As for Jezebel, she was thrown from a window in Jezreel by her own attendants. Her blood splattered on the wall and horses. When they went to bury her, they found only her skull, hands, and feet, for the dogs had devoured her body—exactly as the prophet Elijah had foretold.

God means what He says, and He says what He means. His prophecies and promises always come to pass. This wicked couple’s hearts were full of corruption, and they shook an entire nation with their arrogance. Though Jezebel was not Ahab’s first wife, she ruled over him and the nation. She maintained 850+ Baal prophets who were fed daily from the nation’s treasury. The people of God gave offerings that were used to sustain the servants of Baal, their enemy.

A prayer we should say today is, “Pass me not, O Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by.” We need the Lord to dwell in our hearts so that we do not make wicked choices that please our itching ears—such as choosing a life partner with corrupt behavior, leading to a life of shame. Today, we even have a saying, “He married a Jezebel.”

Supernatural Healing Prayers Can Lead to Fanaticism (or Excessiveness)

Why do people repeatedly ask, “Why are prayers not offered for miraculous healing of the sick, but instead for the many sanitariums that have been established?” If this were done, great fanaticism would arise among us. Those who are overly self-confident would take control of the movement.

Questions:

1. Why did Ahab go to war?
2. Who did he go with?
3. Why didn't he wear his royal robes?
4. What did the false prophet tell Ahab?
5. Do you prefer to hear sweet lies or hard truths that will help you?
6. Why did Ahab imprison Micaiah?
7. What happened to Ahab in the battle?
8. Who was the true prophet?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34.

[33,34] Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good character." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, help us to choose good friends, and may we feel sorrow and shame when we sin. Thank You for the life of Ahab that is enough to teach us to avoid evil completely.

Activity: Sing together this hymn:

Do not pass me by, Savior
Do not pass me by, Savior, hear my cry;
While on others You are calling, do not pass me by.
Jesus, Jesus, hear my cry,
While on others You are calling, do not pass me by.

Your mercy seat I behold,
I kneel there, to be forgiven.
I have nothing else to trust, only You;
Your face be upon me, I worship You.

You alone are my Comforter, I have none in heaven,
Nor anywhere on earth, no other Lord.

DAY 126 (May 5)

TOPIC: Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah, and Elijah

(1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 1 and 2; 2 Chronicles 17-19)

Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began to reign over Judah at the age of 35, during the fourth year of King Ahab's reign in Israel. He ruled for 25 years and walked in the righteous ways of his father Asa, without turning aside. His father Asa received a message through the prophet Hanani, saying, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him." This message is for all of us today; we should not think that the LORD does not see—He knows everything. If we surrender to Him, He will reveal Himself to us. However, Asa did not like being corrected, so he imprisoned the prophet. Furthermore, he did not destroy the high places where people worshiped foreign gods.

His son Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. He also removed the male cult prostitutes, the prostitutes, and the idols where people practiced wicked worship. Jehoshaphat built ships to go to Tarshish to bring gold from Ophir, but the ships were wrecked at Ezion-Geber. When Jehoshaphat died, his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, reigned after his father and did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his father had done. Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and was injured. He then sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he would recover from his injury. But the angel of the LORD told Elijah to meet the king's messengers and ask them, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?" The message was that Ahaziah would not leave the bed he was lying on but would surely die. Elijah departed after delivering the message.

When the messengers returned, the king was surprised at how quickly they came back. They told him, "A man met us and told us to return to the king who sent us and to say to him, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you will not come down from the bed you have climbed into, but you will surely die.'"

The king asked them what the man who told them this looked like. They replied, "He was wearing a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his



waist." The king immediately recognized that it was Elijah the Tishbite.

So, the king sent a captain with fifty soldiers to Elijah. They found him sitting on top of a hill, and the captain ordered him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'" Elijah replied, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire fell from heaven and consumed them.

The king sent another captain with fifty soldiers, and they suffered the same fate. Then the king sent a third captain with another fifty men. This third captain went up the hill, knelt before Elijah, and pleaded with him, saying, "Man of God, I beg you, let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. Fire has already come down from heaven and consumed the first two captains and their fifty men. But now, I beg you, spare my life."

God is pleased with humility. The first two captains approached Elijah with pride and authority, relying on their king's command rather than showing reverence to the man of God. But the third captain humbled himself and was spared.

The angel of the LORD told Elijah to go down with the third captain and not to be afraid. Elijah went to the king and repeated the message, saying that

because he sought guidance from Baal-Zebub instead of the God of Israel, he would surely die. And so, King Ahaziah died, just as the word of the LORD had declared. His son Joram succeeded him as king.

Taking the Right Action Is Not Denying Faith in Healing Prayers

Many people who seek God's mercy for healing believe they must receive an immediate and direct answer to their prayers, or else their faith is flawed. Because of this, those weakened by illness need wise counsel so they can act with wisdom. They should not neglect their responsibility toward friends who can help them survive, nor should they ignore using natural remedies (or alternative treatments) to restore their health.

Questions:

1. What kind of clothing did Elijah wear?

2. How did the last group of fifty soldiers survive when they approached Elijah?

3. Why did King Ahaziah die?

4. What do the eyes of the LORD search for throughout the earth?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 2 Chronicles 16:9.

[9] For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is fully committed to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.

Prayer: Lord, thank You because You care so much for us, and You look throughout the whole earth to see if we are fully committed to You. Help us not to act foolishly. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: 18, focus on "Good Counsel versus Bad Counsel," where children act out wise or foolish decisions, or draw different scenes of Ahab and Micaiah.

DAY 127 (May 6)

TOPIC: What Blessing Would You Ask for If You Were Asked?

(2 Kings 1 and 2)

The LORD desired to take Elijah to be with Him in heaven through a whirlwind. The work God had given him during a wicked generation was coming to an end. He had fought the LORD's battle with courage, and God knew He would take him. So, Elijah left Gilgal with Elisha and told him to stay behind because the LORD had sent him to Bethel. But Elisha refused, saying, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So, they went down to Bethel.

The sons of the prophets at Bethel asked Elisha if he knew that his master would be taken to heaven that day, and that he would no longer be his leader. Elisha replied that he knew but told them to keep quiet. Elijah again told Elisha to stay because the LORD had sent him to Jericho, and Elisha gave the same response as before. When they reached Jericho, the sons of the prophets again asked Elisha if he knew his master would be taken away, and he answered that he did.

For the third time, Elijah asked Elisha to stay because the LORD had sent him to the Jordan River. Elisha again refused to leave.

Fifty of the sons of the prophets stood watching from a distance while Elijah and Elisha stood by the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and struck the water. The water divided, and they crossed over on dry ground, just as the Israelites did when they left Egypt. After they crossed, Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted before he was taken away. Would he ask for money, a house, a high position, or other worldly things?

Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Having this spirit means having a close relationship with God. Elijah told him that he had asked for a difficult thing, but if he saw him being taken away, he would receive what he had asked for.

As they were walking and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. The fiery chariot was glorious and amazing. Human language



cannot describe what a heavenly chariot looks like—it is neither a Benz nor a Prado.

Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father, my father! The chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” He never saw Elijah again. He took hold of his clothes and tore them in two. Then he picked up Elijah’s cloak that had fallen and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He struck the water with Elijah’s cloak and said, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” When he struck the water, it divided, and he crossed over.

The sons of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” They came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. They asked Elisha if they could send fifty strong men to search for Elijah, thinking the Spirit of the LORD might have carried him away and left him on a mountain or in a valley. Although Elisha knew God had taken Elijah, he allowed them to go after they insisted. They searched but did not find him. When they returned, Elisha said, “Did I not tell you not to go?”

When God chooses you to fill a position, He will give you the training, strength, and honor needed to fulfill the work for His glory. The question is: Will you remain faithfully in your place of service, doing humble tasks, until God sees fit to entrust you with greater responsibilities? When the baton is passed to you, or the mantle falls on you, will you receive it with faith and courage? Will you see the “Jordan River” as an opportunity or an obstacle?

God is still ready to part the Jordan, heal the waters, and defend His workers. God does not abandon His work when a great leader retires. As we dedicate ourselves to the LORD, He will help us receive the Holy Spirit, who will empower us to train other evangelists to be even better. That power is still available today. Let us ask for it, and we will receive a double portion. The double portion of the Holy Spirit will be given only to those who faithfully walk with God, as Elisha did with Elijah. May our Heavenly Father help us to hunger and thirst for His Word daily so that we may live fully in the will of His Spirit!

Prayer:
Help me to crucify self and do Your work regardless of criticism, discouragement, opposition, and tears. Remind me that You, LORD, are in charge of my work. Help me to keep my eyes on You and do what You ask me to do. Let me be as faithful as Elisha in Your service.

Parents have a great responsibility to help their children be like Elisha. Let it be the desire of their hearts that their children love and know Jesus while

holding on to God's hand. Children watch examples all the time; they will imitate them sooner or later. Therefore, we should always seek to imitate Christ so that when children copy us, they are copying Christ.

Many Christians want to be part of the last generation so they will not experience death. We are told that this is not the highest honor or position God can give to His child. The highest position is "fellowship with Christ in His sufferings." Without inviting unnecessary suffering, this will come to anyone who lives the kind of life described here (2 Timothy 3:12). This is the highest honor God can bestow on any human being!

The Bible tells us that only two people have been taken to heaven without tasting death—Enoch and Elijah. They represent those who will enter heaven without dying when Jesus returns. Moses represents those who have tasted death and were taken to heaven. The promise of victory is given to all, and if we remain faithful, one day we will see Elijah and Moses in heaven.

There is often a danger of misunderstanding this. Some believe that being healed in answer to prayer means avoiding anything that might suggest a lack of faith. However, they should not neglect to put their affairs in order if they expect to be called away by death. Nor should they hesitate to give words of encouragement or counsel they would want to share if they knew their time was short.

Questions:

1. What was going to happen to Elijah?
2. How did Elisha feel?
3. Why did Elisha refuse to leave Elijah? What does this show about Elisha?
4. What did Elisha ask for? Do you think it was a good thing to ask for?
5. Did Elisha see Elijah being taken away?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Proverbs 30:7-9

[7-9] Two things I ask of You, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Prayer:
Lord, today I thank You for the many things You have already given me, and I ask to be filled with Your Holy Spirit. Help me with love, faith, tender mercy, patience, and hope. Help me to do Your work and to walk with You all the days of my life. In the precious Name of the Messiah, Amen.

▫Activity:
What are the best choices of things to pray for when you are suddenly surprised? Write down the blessings you would ask God to give you today. Give each person a piece of paper; for anyone who cannot write, have someone write for them. Tell them to think very carefully. For everything they want, let them also explain its positive or negative outcome.

DAY 128 (May 7)

TOPIC: Disobedient Children Are Punished

(2 Kings 2-3)



Elisha returned after Elijah was taken up. The people of the city told him, “This place is pleasant, but the water is bad, and the land causes miscarriages.” He asked for a new bowl with salt in it. They brought it to him, and he went to the spring, threw the salt in it, and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I have healed these waters; never again will they cause death or miscarriages.’” The waters were healed.

Elisha then went up to Bethel, and some disrespectful youth mocked him, saying, “Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!” They meant he should ascend to heaven like Elijah. The people had heard about Elijah’s ascension but did not believe it and mocked heavenly matters. Elisha realized they wanted

to ridicule the great work he had received and make him a laughingstock. He was shocked that such a glorious event of his master's ascension could be mocked.

Elisha looked at the children and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. Then Elisha went to Mount Carmel and returned to Samaria.

We do not know the extent of the children's injuries, but it is possible they died since they were mauled. What we do know is that their disrespect became a serious warning to other children or youth. No one dared mock another servant of God again. Even today, we must be careful not to despise those who work for God because they represent Him. Let us avoid bringing harm upon ourselves. Disrespecting people, even those your age, is a sin.

Scripture instructs us in Ephesians 4 that:
"Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Joram, son of Ahab, began to reign over Samaria in the eighteenth year of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and he reigned for twelve years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD like his father. Mesha, the king of Moab, who was a sheep breeder, used to pay the king of Israel 200,000 lambs and the wool of 200,000 rams. But after Ahab died, he rebelled.

Joram mobilized Israel in Samaria to go to war against Moab and sent a message to Jehoshaphat, asking him to join in the battle. Jehoshaphat agreed, saying, "I will go; I am as you are, my people as your people, and my horses as your horses." They marched for seven days through the desert of Edom, but there was no water for the army or the animals. Joram lamented, "Alas! The LORD has brought these three kings together to deliver us into the hands of Moab."

Jehoshaphat asked if there was a prophet of the LORD to inquire of Him. One of Joram's servants mentioned Elisha, the former servant of Elijah. So, the three kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom went down to Elisha.

Elisha told Joram, "What do I have to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and mother!" But Joram insisted, saying, "No, because the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver us into the hands of Moab." Elisha

responded, “Were it not for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not even look at you or notice you.”

Elisha called for a musician, and as the musician played, the hand of the LORD came upon him. He said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig many ditches in this valley. You will see neither wind nor rain, but this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle, and your animals will drink.’ This is an easy thing in the sight of the LORD. He will also deliver the Moabites into your hands.”

The next morning, at the time of the grain offering, water flowed from the direction of Edom and filled the land. When the Moabites heard that the three kings were coming to fight against them, they assembled all who could bear arms and stood at the border. As the sun rose, it reflected on the water, making it look like blood. The Moabites thought, “The kings have fought each other and killed one another! Now to the plunder!”

When they came to the Israelite camp, the Israelites rose and struck down the Moabites, pursuing them into their territory, destroying cities, blocking springs, cutting down good trees, and covering fertile fields with stones.

When the king of Moab saw he was losing, he took 700 swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom but failed. In desperation, he offered his firstborn son, the heir to his throne, as a burnt offering on the city wall. This caused such great wrath against Israel that they withdrew and returned to their own land.

Recent archaeological excavations in Moab have revealed a stone inscription about this battle. God’s Word is always true. We may have doubts, but eventually, we will find that His Word is indeed true. It is easy for God to meet our physical needs, but He delights in doing even more. He promises guidance, deliverance, and victory for those who seek Him.

When God reveals a way out, it may seem impossible by human reasoning, but He is all-powerful. The Christian life is a serious battle, not an easy journey. The victory we need cannot be achieved by human strength alone. Our hearts are the true battlefield.

Read Ephesians 6 about putting on the armor of God. The greatest battle we must fight is surrendering our hearts and wills to God. We must be born again by water and the Spirit and abandon the desires of the flesh to inherit God’s kingdom.

Those who decide to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all natural and sinful desires, supported by the kingdom of darkness, will be aimed against them. Selfishness and pride will resist anything that exposes our sin.

We cannot overcome sinful habits by ourselves or defeat the powerful enemy who holds us captive. Only God can give us victory. He wants us to cooperate with Him through our free will. When facing troubles, what is your first response? Choose faith, which can bring water to the desert and deliver you from Satan's armies.

When we pray for the sick, what should we do next? Should we stop all efforts? No! We should work harder and pray more for God to bless the means He has provided.

Questions:

1. Where did Elisha live?

2. How did he heal the water?

3. Why were 42 youths mauled by bears?

4. Why did the three kings seek Elisha?

5. What instructions did Elisha give them?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:1-3.

[1-3] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—this is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Slaves and Masters.

Prayer: Lord who dwells in heaven above, grant me the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; help me crucify my flesh with its sinful desires. Let me live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit. May I not boast in vain, irritate, or envy anyone. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss what respect for elders is. And how it is practiced. If we are with other children and they begin to be disrespectful to someone, what should we do? Include things like greeting, telling the truth, paying attention when they are speaking, politeness, respecting boundaries, helping with chores, speaking moderately, avoiding showing contempt or bullying, respecting yourself, not gossiping behind others, and keeping time. —|Ephesians 6:1-3.

DAY 129 (May 8)

TOPIC: The Widow and the Shunammite Woman

(2 Kings 4-6)



In many parts of Israel, people listened to the teachings of Elisha and the prophets and worshiped God. Elisha traveled from place to place, meeting people and teaching them to worship the true God.

One day, a woman among the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant, my husband, is dead. You know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two sons to be his slaves." During those days, and even today in some areas, creditors would take a person's children as collateral if a debt was not paid. This was a painful situation because the woman had lost her husband, and now her children were about to be taken as slaves.

Elisha, with compassion, asked her, "What shall I do for you?" The LORD loves to help us in our troubles. Elisha then asked her what she had in her house. She answered that she had nothing except a jar of oil. Elisha told her to go and borrow many empty vessels from her neighbors. Then he instructed her to go inside, shut the door behind her and her sons, and pour the oil into all the vessels, setting aside each one that was full.

The woman did as Elisha instructed. Her sons brought her vessels, and she poured the oil. As soon as each vessel was filled, they set it aside and continued until there were no more vessels left. The oil stopped flowing only when all

the vessels were full. Imagine the surprise of the children as they saw the miracle of the oil multiplying!

The neighbors may have wondered why the woman was borrowing so many containers—perhaps they thought she was confused due to her debt. After filling the vessels, the woman went to Elisha, smiling, to tell him what had happened. Elisha instructed her to sell the oil, pay her debt, and use the remaining oil to support herself and her sons. She received as much as her faith and the number of vessels allowed.

Another day, as Elisha was traveling to Shunem, he met a prominent woman who invited him to her home for a meal. Whenever Elisha passed by that way, he would stop to eat with the woman and her husband. Eventually, the woman told her husband, “I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.” She suggested building a small room on the roof for Elisha, furnished with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he could stay there whenever he visited.

This was a kind gesture. Many people expand their homes for luxury or personal desires, but this family did so to show hospitality to a servant of God.

One day, during a visit, Elisha asked his servant Gehazi to call the Shunammite woman. When she came, Elisha said, “You have gone to all this trouble for us. What can be done for you? Should we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?” The woman humbly replied that she was content living among her own people and needed nothing.

Elisha then asked Gehazi if there was anything the woman lacked. Gehazi noted that the woman and her husband had no child. Elisha called the woman again and, as she stood at the doorway, he said, “About this time next year, you will hold a son in your arms.” The woman, overwhelmed with emotion, replied, “No, my lord, man of God, do not lie to your servant!” She had longed for a child but was afraid to raise her hopes only to be disappointed.

As Elisha had said, the woman conceived and gave birth to a son the following year.

The child grew, and one day, while in the fields with his father, he suddenly cried out, “My head! My head!” His father told a servant to carry him to his mother. The boy sat on his mother’s lap until noon, and then he died.

The mother took her son and laid him on Elisha’s bed, closed the door, and left. Without telling her husband the reason, she asked for a servant and a



donkey to go quickly to the man of God. Her husband, puzzled, asked why she was going when it was not the New Moon or the Sabbath, but she simply said, “It is well.”

She urged the servant to drive the donkey quickly without slowing down unless she instructed. When she reached Mount Carmel, where Elisha was, Gehazi saw her from a distance and told Elisha. Elisha sent Gehazi to ask her if all was well with her, her husband, and the child. She answered, “All is well.”

When she reached Elisha, she fell at his feet. Gehazi tried to push her away, but Elisha stopped him, saying, “Leave her alone; her soul is troubled, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.”

The Shunammite woman said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn’t I say, ‘Do not deceive me’?”

Elisha then told Gehazi to take his staff, go ahead quickly, and lay it on the boy’s face. He instructed him not to stop to greet anyone along the way. But the mother insisted on staying with Elisha, so he followed after Gehazi.

When Gehazi placed the staff on the boy’s face, there was no sound or response. He returned to meet Elisha and reported, “The boy has not awakened.”

When Elisha arrived, he went into the room, shut the door, and prayed to the LORD. He then lay on the boy, placing his mouth on the boy's mouth, his eyes on the boy's eyes, and his hands on the boy's hands. As Elisha stretched himself out on the boy, the child's body began to grow warm.

Elisha got up and walked back and forth, then stretched himself on the boy again. The child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Elisha called Gehazi to summon the Shunammite woman. When she came, Elisha said, "Take your son." The woman fell at Elisha's feet in gratitude, then took her son and left.

God rewards those who serve His faithful servants. This woman received precious gifts because of her hospitality.

The boy learned valuable lessons through this experience. Today, many children admire actors, athletes, and fashion icons, giving them more respect than they give to God's faithful servants. This is wrong—we should value and honor those who live according to God's word.

This child learned the importance of prayer and meditating on God's word through the powerful testimony of his own life.

Trust GOD Regardless of the Outcome of Your Prayers
When we pray for the healing of the sick, we must not lose faith in GOD, no matter the outcome. If we are called to face sorrow, let us accept the bitter cup, remembering that the Father's hand holds it to our lips. If health is restored, the one who receives healing must remember their renewed responsibility to their Creator.

Questions:

1. How did Elisha help the widow?

2. How many children did the widow have?

3. Why couldn't Elisha's servant raise the child?

4. Why did Elisha want to give the Shunammite woman a gift?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Psalm 103:1-4.

[1-4] Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.

Prayer: Thank You so much for healing, our heavenly Father. We praise You for Your love, compassion, forgiveness, and for healing all our diseases. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the miracle of the child resurrecting and sneezing.

DAY 130 (May 9)

TOPIC: Poisonous Food and the Sunken Axe

(2 Kings 4-6)



During this time of many troubles and darkness, God revealed Himself and helped His people through many miracles. Elisha came to Gilgal again, and there was a famine in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him at the schools of the prophets. Elisha told his servants to set a large pot to cook for the sons of the prophets. One of them went out to the field to gather herbs and found a wild gourd. He picked it until his garment was full, brought it back, cut it into pieces, and put it in the pot, even though they did not know if it was edible.

Even today, there are poisonous mushrooms and inedible plants, so it is wise to consult experts to distinguish between what is safe to eat and what is not, as this knowledge may be useful during emergencies. The stew was served to the sons of the prophets, but as they began to eat, they cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” meaning the wild gourds were poisonous and inedible. They could not continue eating.

Elisha told them to bring some flour, which he threw into the pot. He then instructed them to serve the people, and the stew became safe to eat because God had removed the poison. The Lord heard the prayer of the man of God and neutralized the poison. Even today, we can pray with faith if we find ourselves in trouble, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

During the famine, a man from Baal-shalishah brought Elisha food from the first fruits—twenty barley loaves and fresh ears of grain. Elisha told his servant to give it to the people to eat. The servant questioned how so little food could feed a hundred people, but Elisha insisted, saying, “The Lord says, ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” The food was served, and they ate and had leftovers, according to the word of the Lord.

The sons of the prophets were many and eager to study and serve the Lord. This kind of school today would be called a missionary school, a service school, or a seminary. The sons of the prophets came to Elisha and said, “The place where we stay under your supervision is too small for us.” They requested permission to go to the Jordan River to cut logs to build a place to live. Elisha allowed them to go, and one student asked him to accompany them, to which Elisha agreed.

When they arrived, they began cutting down trees. However, as one of them was cutting a log, the iron axe head fell into the water. He cried out, “Alas, my master! It was borrowed!” Elisha asked where it had fallen, and when the student showed him the spot, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, causing



the iron to float. He told the student to retrieve it, and the student stretched out his hand and took it. Without a doubt, that student was grateful to have the man of God with him and to receive his help.

Even today, those studying for pastoral or evangelistic work face various challenges while at school or when beginning their ministry. This story shows that when you receive a calling to serve God by helping people, He will always be with you. Therefore, learn to live a life of contentment and godliness. Serving God is not about making money but about developing a heavenly character for yourself and others. This calling requires self-denial.

Biblical examples do not show God's servants living in luxury, being overwhelmed by debt, or begging people for money to bless them. Being rich is not just about having money but about having fewer wants. Learn to be content in all circumstances because "godliness with contentment is great gain." You can do all things through Him who gives you strength (Philippians 4:13). He has promised never to leave you.

Do not compare yourself with your neighbor who may have a bigger house, a larger farm, or a better motorcycle. Focus on the blessings you already have, not what you lack—count them and praise God. You will find joy replacing your frown. Today's culture suggests that happiness comes from possessions, but why are people still unhappy despite having many things?

One key lesson here concerns loans or debts. Scripture mentions borrowing 26 times, always in a negative light. While borrowing is sometimes necessary, we should avoid it when possible and ask God to help us live simple lives and meet our needs. Many blessings we enjoy include:

If you woke up today healthy, you are blessed—use that opportunity to bless others.

If you live without war or hunger, you are more fortunate than 500 million people living in conflict zones.

If you can worship freely without fear, you are more blessed than 3 billion people who lack religious freedom.

If you have clothes to wear, food, a home, and a bed, you are better off than 75% of the world's population.

If you have money in the bank, small savings, or spare change, you are among the world's wealthiest 8%.

If you have both parents alive, you are more fortunate than many who are orphaned or have only one parent.

If your parents have a university degree, you are more privileged than 99% of people worldwide.

Finally, if you can read this, you are more blessed than over 2 billion people who cannot read or write.

The Prayer for Forgiveness Is Always Answered Instantly

When we pray for material blessings, God's response may be delayed, or He may give us something different. However, when we ask for deliverance from sin, He is always willing to cleanse us. Christ gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil world, according to the will of God the Father (Galatians 1:4).

We have confidence that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, we know that we have what we asked of Him (1 John 5:14-15). If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Questions:

Why were the sons of the prophets cutting trees?

How was the axe head recovered?

Why does iron not float?

Why did they cry out, "There is death in the pot"?

What lessons do we learn from this story?

Count all your blessings and write them down. Then, list the challenges or things you lack.

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Mark 16:17-18.

[17-18] And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

Prayer: Thank You for protecting us from harm and giving us these signs to accompany us. Thank You for giving us the authority to lay hands on the sick that they may recover. Guide us, Lord, in everything. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the story of poisonous food and flour being added, people eating, and leftovers remaining.

DAY 131 (May 10)

TOPIC: Commander Naaman and the Slave Girl

(God's gifts are not for sale - 2 Kings 5)









Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram (Syria), was a man of high rank and was respected by his master because through him, the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant warrior, but he had leprosy. The Arameans had gone out and taken captive a young girl from Israel who became a servant to Naaman's wife. It was cruel for this girl to be taken captive and taken far from her home, unable to see her parents or siblings. This young girl worshiped the God of heaven and had a heart full of love, despite living in slavery in Syria.

It seems that her mistress, Naaman's wife, was kind-hearted, and they talked like a mother and daughter. Sometimes, her mistress appeared sad and troubled, most likely because of her husband's leprosy. This young captive girl shared stories about Elisha, the prophet of God—how he raised the dead and made poisonous food safe to eat. Regardless of your age, you can be someone who shares good news with the sick, the poor, those in trouble, or those who are sad.

She said to Naaman's wife, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." She was referring to the prophet Elisha. Someone who overheard this reported it to Naaman, and Naaman went to tell the king of Aram. The king was pleased, hoping his

valued commander could be healed from his dreadful disease. He promised to give Naaman a letter of introduction to the king of Israel to help him get healed of his leprosy.

Naaman left for Israel, taking ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of clothes. He delivered the letter to the king of Israel, which read: “With this letter, I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.” When the king of Israel read the letter, he was greatly distressed. He tore his robes and said, “Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this man send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!”

When Elisha the prophet heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent a message: “Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.” So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house.





Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be cleansed.” But Naaman was angry. As a high-ranking commander, he felt disrespected that Elisha did not come out personally to meet him. He thought Elisha would come out, stand, call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot, and cure him of leprosy. He said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage.

Thankfully, Naaman had wise and caring servants. They approached him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!” Their wisdom softened his heart. So, Naaman went down to the Jordan River. The water was not as clean as the rivers of Damascus, but he obeyed. He dipped himself once—no change. Twice, three times—still nothing. He might have wondered if this simple act could truly heal him.

Many people today think they can do things their own way, ignoring God's instructions. For instance, in Genesis 2, God commanded that the seventh day is the Sabbath, a day of rest. Yet, many people treat it as an ordinary day—doing chores, shopping, or working. Some say it does not matter which day you keep as long as you love God in your heart. But God is a God of specific instructions.

Naaman continued dipping himself—four times, five, six—and still, nothing happened. But on the seventh time, his leprosy disappeared! His skin became as smooth and healthy as a young child's. It was a miracle.



Naaman returned to the man of God and stood before him, declaring, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So, please accept a gift from your servant." But Elisha refused. He knew that the healing was a gift from God, not something to be bought. Despite Naaman urging him to accept the gifts, Elisha firmly declined.

Many people today are like the old Naaman—rejecting God's simple instructions. For example, some people spend large amounts of money on medicine when simple lifestyle changes, like drinking more water, could help prevent certain illnesses. God wants us to live simple, healthy lives—eating nutritious food and following His guidelines.



Parents have a responsibility to train their children, just like the captive girl who shared her faith. If you are not willing to teach your children the way to heaven, think carefully before bringing them into this world. There is a heaven to gain and a hell to avoid!

The moment a child of God approaches the Throne of Grace, they become a client of the greatest Advocate—Jesus Christ. With the first confession of sin and plea for forgiveness, Christ takes their case as His own and presents it to the Father.

Questions:

1. What disease did Naaman have?
2. Who helped Naaman?
3. What did the king of Aram do for Naaman?
4. Why was the king of Israel afraid?
5. Why was Elisha willing to help Naaman?
6. Why did Naaman think Elisha was not helpful?
7. Why did Naaman almost leave without being healed?
8. What happened when Naaman obeyed?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 4:10.

[10] Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for freely giving us Your gifts. Help me to know and use my gifts well for Your glory. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss 10 simple remedies that many people reject which often bring true healing—water, fresh air, sunlight, unrefined and unprocessed food, temperance, trust in God, rest, cleanliness, diligence in work, and a positive mindset.

DAY 132 (May 11)

TOPIC: Naaman's Leprosy Transfers to Gehazi

(2 Kings 5)



When Elisha refused to accept gifts, Naaman asked to take some soil from Israel as a gift. He promised he would no longer offer sacrifices to his gods but only to the LORD, the God of Israel. However, he requested forgiveness for accompanying the king to the temple of his god Rimmon. When the king bowed there, leaning on Naaman's arm for support, Naaman would also bow to assist the king but not to worship. Elisha told him to go in peace, and Naaman began his journey back home.

Before he had gone far, he noticed a cloud of dust behind him—it was Gehazi following him. Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, Elisha, was overcome with greed when he saw his master refusing such valuable gifts. Gehazi said to himself, "Look, my master has let this Aramean Naaman go without accepting any of the gifts he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running, he got down from his chariot to meet him and asked, “Is everything all right?” Gehazi answered, “Everything is all right.” Although there was no physical war, there was a spiritual battle in Gehazi’s heart—the sin of greed. For godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. Since creation, God has provided for our needs—He created our food, light, and everything before creating us. This means He has plans for our provision, and we should not be greedy to the point of sinning.

Gehazi lied, saying that Elisha had sent him and that two young prophets had just come from the hills of Ephraim. He requested a talent of silver and two sets of clothing. Naaman was happy to give him the gifts since he had initially wanted to offer them all. He insisted that Gehazi take two talents of silver. Naaman even sent two of his servants to carry the gifts for Gehazi because they were heavy. When they reached a hill, Gehazi took the items from the servants and stored them in his house secretly so that Elisha would not see them. Then he sent the servants away.

When Gehazi returned to Elisha, pretending that nothing had happened, Elisha asked him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” Gehazi replied, “Your servant didn’t go anywhere.” But Elisha said, “Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you?” In other words, God had revealed the whole event to Elisha. Elisha then asked, “Is this the time to accept money and clothes—or olive groves, vineyards, sheep, cattle, male and female servants?” There is a time to accept things and a time to refuse.

Elisha then pronounced judgment on Gehazi: “Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and your descendants forever.” Gehazi left Elisha’s presence leprous, as white as snow.

This story teaches us not to lie, not to accept bribes, and not to be greedy. Because of two sets of clothing and some silver, Gehazi lost the opportunity to inherit Elisha’s prophetic ministry, just as Elisha had inherited Elijah’s. His sin also became a poor witness to the Arameans who needed to know the God of Abraham, who does not sell His healing. Gehazi’s actions made his master appear unreliable and showed that he was willing to lie—a serious sin.

Tell Jesus your needs with a sincere heart. You do not need to engage in long debates, arguments, or preach sermons to God. Instead, with a heart broken over your sins, simply say, “Save me, Lord, or I will perish.” There is hope for such a soul. Those who seek, ask, and knock will receive. When Jesus lifts the burden of sin from your heart, you will experience the blessing of His peace.

Questions:

1. Why did Naaman take soil from Israel?

2. Why did Naaman ask for forgiveness when he went to the temple of Rimmon?

3. Why did Gehazi get leprosy?

4. What lesson do you learn from this story?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Memory Verse: Matthew 6:24-25.

[24-25] No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

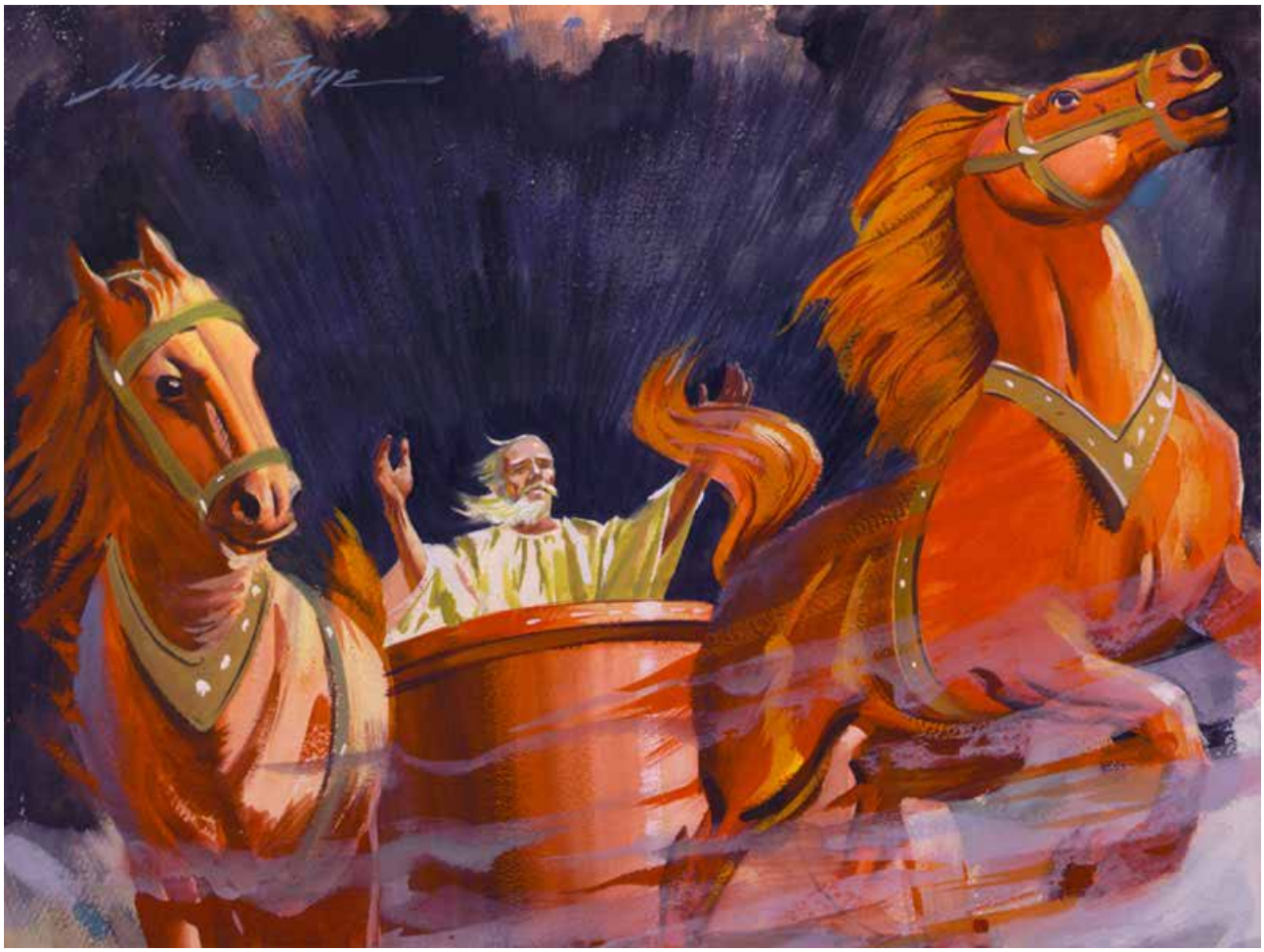
Prayer: Lord, help us not to be greedy for wealth more than Your service like Gehazi. Forgive us our sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out—Elisha refusing gifts. Naaman carrying soil and promising to leave idols. Gehazi following Naaman to obtain the gifts Elisha had refused.

DAY 133 (May 12)

TOPIC: Chariots of Fire

(2 Kings 6)



The king of Aram wanted to make war against Israel. He told his officers, "I will set up my camp at such and such a place." The man of God, Elisha, sent word to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware of passing that place because the Arameans are going down there." So, the king of Israel sent men to the place the man of God had told him about. This happened several times, and the king of Israel was kept safe.

The king of Aram was very upset about this and summoned his officers, asking them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" One of his servants replied, "None of us, my lord the king. Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in your bedroom."

The king ordered them to find out where Elisha was so he could capture him. He was told that Elisha was in Dothan. So, the king sent horses, chariots, and a strong force there. They arrived at night and surrounded the city.

The next morning, Elisha's servant got up and went outside. He saw an army with horses and chariots surrounding the city. Terrified, he asked, "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?"

Elisha said, "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." The LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

As the enemy advanced toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike this army with blindness." So, He struck them with blindness as Elisha had asked. Elisha then led them to Samaria, saying, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me."

When they entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, "LORD, open their eyes so they may see." The LORD opened their eyes, and they found themselves inside Samaria. The king of Israel asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them?" Elisha replied, "No! Would you kill those you have captured? Give them food and water, and send them back to their master." The king prepared a great feast for them, and they returned home. As a result, the Arameans stopped raiding Israel's territory.

This story teaches us not to take revenge on our enemies. Even today, God's angelic army surrounds us. Those who present their requests to God through Christ will never be forsaken.

Questions:

1. How did Elisha help the king of Israel?

2. How did Elisha know the plans of the Arameans?

3. What did the king of Aram want to do to Elisha?

4. How did God protect Elisha?

5. How did Elisha defeat the Arameans?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Memory Verse: 2 Kings 6:16-17.

[16-17] "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

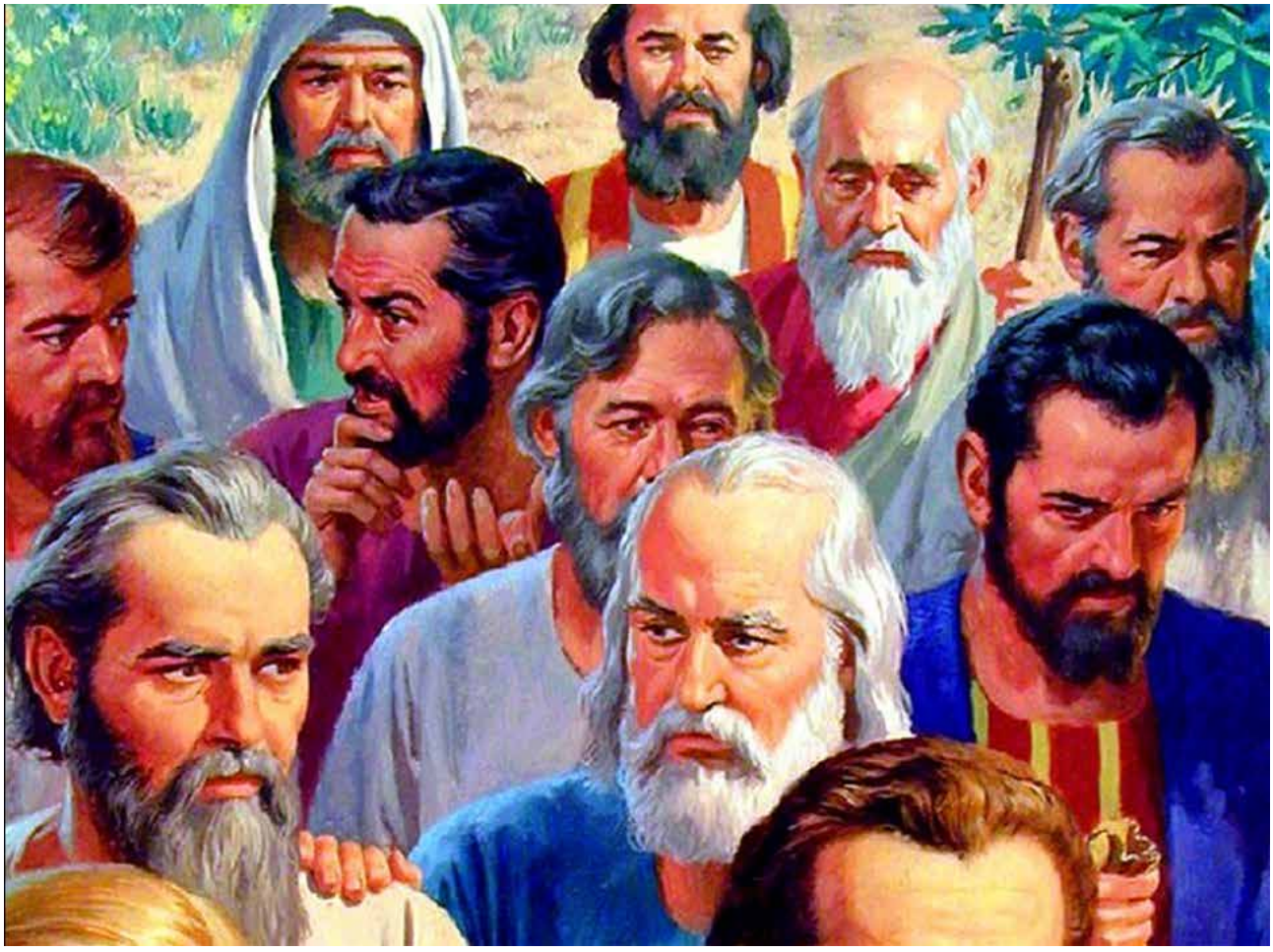
Prayer: Lord, thank You that the angels with us are more than the angels of the enemy. Please open our eyes to see this army. Provide for our daily bread today. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Explain how information was leaking from one army or country to another. Or Naaman's leprosy.

DAY 134 (May 13)

The LORD Fights for Israel

(2 Kings 6-7)



It came to pass that Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, gathered his entire army and went up to besiege Samaria, the capital city of Israel. There was a great famine in Samaria, so severe that a donkey's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a quarter of a kab of dove's dung was sold for five pieces of silver. The situation was so desperate that even dove's dung was being sold! This famine was worse than the one during the time of Ahab.

As the king was passing by on the city wall, a woman cried out to him, seeking judgment or justice. The king asked how he could help her, and she replied, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we will eat my son.'" It was no ordinary famine. The woman explained that they had eaten her son, but the other woman had hidden her child and refused to fulfill her part of the agreement.

When the king heard this, he realized how desperate things had become, and he tore his clothes while standing on the wall. In those days, city walls were broad enough for people and chariots to walk on. The people saw that the king was wearing sackcloth underneath his royal robes.

The king blamed Elisha for the situation, even though it was a punishment from God due to the king's and the people's wickedness in worshipping other gods. In his anger, the king said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today."

Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders when the king sent a messenger to him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha, having been shown by the LORD, warned the elders, "Do you see how this murderer's son is sending someone to cut off my head? When he arrives, shut the door and hold it closed against him." The messenger said, "This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: By this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria."

The officer on whose arm the king leaned scoffed and said, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of heaven, could this happen?" Elisha answered, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it." Because of his lack of faith and disbelief in God's word, it became a curse upon him.

Now there were four lepers sitting at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each other, "Why stay here until we die? If we say, 'We'll go into the city,' the famine is there, and we will die. If we stay here, we will die. So let's go to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die."

At twilight, they set out for the Aramean camp. When they reached the edge of the camp, there was no one there! For the LORD had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses—a great army approaching them. The Arameans said to one another, "Look! The king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!" In panic, they fled during the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and the entire camp as it was, and ran for their lives.

When the lepers arrived at the camp, they entered a tent, ate and drank, and took silver, gold, and clothes. They went off and hid them. They returned,

entered another tent, and did the same thing. But then they said to each other, “What we’re doing is not right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping it to ourselves! If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let’s go at once and report this to the royal palace.”

So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers, saying, “We went to the Aramean camp, and no one was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were.” The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported inside the palace.

The king got up in the night and said to his officers, “I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving, so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside, thinking, ‘When they come out, we will capture them alive and get into the city.’”

One of his officers suggested, “Let some men take five of the remaining horses, and let us send them to find out what has happened.” So they selected two chariots with their horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army. The soldiers followed the trail as far as the Jordan River, and they found the whole road strewn with clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their panic. The messengers returned and reported to the king.

Then the people went out and plundered the Aramean camp. So a seah of the finest flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the LORD had said.

The king appointed the officer who had mocked Elisha to be in charge of the city gate, but the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died—just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house. The prophecy was fulfilled exactly: “By this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria,” but the officer, though he saw it with his own eyes, did not get to eat any of it.

Let us learn to obey the voice of God through His servants.

Nothing can be more helpless and defeated than a soul that feels its own emptiness and relies entirely on the merits of the crucified and risen Savior. God will send every angel in heaven to aid the one who puts their full trust in Christ rather than allowing them to be overcome.

Questions:

1. What did the Arameans do to Israel?

2. What did Elisha promise the king?

3. What happened to the officer who did not believe the prophet?

4. Why is it important to believe the prophets of God?

May God greatly bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Kings 7:1-2.

[1-2] Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria." The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the Lord should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" "You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!"

Prayer: Lord, thank You, increase our faith to hear the words of Your prophets. Help us in these last days we are living in with wars and troubles, especially here in Congo (DRC), and even in Russia and other nations. Bring peace, and remove hatred and oppression of every kind. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the story of the two women who discussed eating their children before the king.

DAY 135 (May 14)

TOPIC: Hazael Becomes King of Aram

(2 Kings 8)



After some time, the Shunammite woman, who was now a widow, left her country and went to live in a foreign land because of the famine that was coming. This famine lasted for seven years. The woman left as the man of God had instructed her and stayed in the land of the Philistines for seven years. When the seven years were over, she returned to Israel and went to the king to plead for her house and field, which had been taken.

The king was talking with Gehazi, who had been the servant of Elisha, the man of God. The king said to him, “Please tell me all the great things Elisha has done.” As Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the Shunammite woman came in to appeal to the king for her house and land. Gehazi said, “My lord the king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life.”

When the king asked the woman, she told him everything Elisha had done for her. This was a blessing because the king now had enough evidence, and he was eager to know about the works of Elisha, the man of God. The king assigned an official to her case and said, “Restore everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now.”

Later, Elisha went to Damascus, where Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, was sick. The king was told, “The man of God has come here.” The king said to his servant Hazael, “Take a gift in your hand and go meet the man of God. Ask him, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’”

Hazael went to meet Elisha, carrying forty camel-loads of the finest goods from Damascus. He stood before Elisha and said, “Your son, Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, has sent me to ask, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’” Elisha answered, “Go and tell him, ‘You will certainly recover.’ However, the LORD has shown me that he will surely die.” Then Elisha stared at Hazael until he was embarrassed, and the man of God began to weep.

Hazael was surprised and asked, “Why is my lord weeping?” Elisha answered, “Because I know the harm you will do to the Israelites. You will set fire to their fortresses, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women.”

Hazael was astonished and said, “How could your servant, a mere dog, do such a great thing?” Elisha replied, “The LORD has shown me that you will become king of Aram.”

Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, “What did Elisha say to you?” Hazael replied, “He told me you would certainly recover.” But the next day, Hazael took a thick cloth, soaked it in water, spread it over the king’s face, and smothered him to death. And Hazael became king in his place.

In the fifth year of Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel—while Jehoshaphat was king of Judah—Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, became king of Judah. He was thirty-two years old and followed the ways of the kings of Israel, even though his father feared God. This was because he had married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. It is a serious mistake for a believer to bind themselves in marriage with an unbeliever.

Jehoram did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but the LORD did not want to destroy the house of Judah because of His covenant with David.

During Jehoram's reign, Edom rebelled against Judah and established their own king. Jehoram went to Zair with all his chariots. He rose up at night and struck down the Edomites who had surrounded him and the commanders of the chariots, and his army fled to their homes. Jehoram died, and his son took over the throne.

In the twelfth year of Joram, king of Israel, Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, became king of Judah at the age of twenty-two. His mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Ahaziah followed in the ways of his grandfather Ahab and his grandmother Jezebel.

We are told that he did not follow the ways of his paternal grandfather, Jehoshaphat, but instead followed the ways of his maternal grandfather. Evil has a strong influence—it is easier to go downhill than uphill. It is only by the grace of God that we are not destroyed, and He helps us rise again.

Ahaziah joined Joram to fight against the army of Aram and their king, Hazael, at Ramoth-Gilead. During the battle, Joram was wounded. Ahaziah went to visit Joram while he was recovering.

By this time, Elisha was old, and he sent one of the company of prophets to anoint Jehu as king of Israel in Ramoth-Gilead. The young prophet took Jehu aside, anointed him with oil, and then quickly fled.

Those Who Seek Forgiveness Must Themselves Be Forgiving
When we come to seek mercy and blessings from God, we must have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our hearts. How can we pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," while we still hold an unforgiving spirit? (Matthew 6:12)

If we expect our prayers to be heard, we must forgive others in the same way and to the same extent that we want to be forgiven.

Questions:

1. What did Elisha tell the Shunammite woman to do?

2. What did Gehazi tell the king?

3. Who anointed Jehu as king?

4. What was the name of Ahaziah's mother?

5. Why is it difficult to follow the example of good parents and easy to follow the example of bad ones?

6. What lesson do we learn from this story?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: Jeremiah 17:9-10

[9-10] The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."

Prayer: Lord, our hearts are deceitful and fatally sick, just as Hazael did not know himself. Deliver us from the evil one. Help us to love You and to please You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the story of Gehazi and the Shunammite woman when she returned to her land.

DAY 136 (May 15)

TOPIC: The Reign of Jehu

(2 Kings 9-10)



Jehu received instructions from the LORD through the prophet Elisha, who sent one of the sons of the prophets to deliver God's message on what Jehu was to do to the household of Ahab, his master. This was for the LORD to avenge the blood of His servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants at the hands of Jezebel. The LORD declared that the entire house of Ahab would be destroyed, and all his male descendants would be cut off. The house of Ahab would become like the house of Jeroboam and Baasha, who worshiped other gods and faced judgment.

The messenger took Jehu into a room, anointed him as king of Israel, and delivered the message. When Jehu returned, his companions asked him, "What

did that madman want from you?" Jehu tried to avoid the question, but they pressed him to reveal the message. He then told them, "He anointed me king over Israel and commanded me to destroy the house of Ahab." Immediately, his companions quickly declared, "Jehu is king!" Thus, Jehu became king and followed the LORD's instructions.

At that time, Joram (or Jehoram) was guarding Ramoth-Gilead against Hazael, the king of Aram (Syria), but he had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he had received in battle against the Arameans. Jehu rode furiously in his chariot as was his reputation.

A watchman stationed on the tower in Jezreel spotted Jehu's company approaching and reported, "I see a company coming." Joram ordered a rider to be sent to meet them and ask, "Is it peace?" When the rider met Jehu and asked, "Is it peace?" Jehu replied defiantly, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me!" The watchman reported that the messenger had reached them but had not returned.

A second rider was sent, and Jehu gave the same response. The watchman reported again, "He reached them but has not returned. The driving is like that of Jehu, son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously." Joram ordered his chariot, and he and Ahaziah, the king of Judah (his brother-in-law), rode out to meet Jehu at the plot of land that had belonged to Naboth.

When Joram saw Jehu, he asked, "Is it peace, Jehu?" Jehu replied, "How can there be peace as long as your mother Jezebel's harlotries and witchcraft are so many?" Joram turned his chariot around and fled, crying to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Joram between his shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart, and he collapsed in his chariot, dead.

Jehu then ordered his officer to throw Joram's body on Naboth's field, fulfilling the word of the LORD that declared, "I will repay you in this plot of ground."

When Ahaziah saw what happened, he fled toward Beth-Haggan. Jehu pursued him and mortally wounded him near Gur, but Ahaziah escaped to Megiddo, where he died.

Jehu then turned his attention to Jezebel in Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, adorned her head, and looked out from a window—perhaps hoping to charm or intimidate Jehu. As Jehu entered the city gate, Jezebel mockingly asked, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" Jehu called out to the eunuchs serving Jezebel, asking, "Who is on

my side?" When some of them looked out at him, he commanded, "Throw her down!" They threw her out of the window, and her blood splattered on the wall and the horses, and Jehu trampled her underfoot.

When they went to bury her, they found only her skull, feet, and hands, as dogs had devoured the rest of her body—fulfilling the prophecy that Jezebel's corpse would be like dung on the fields.

Jehu then sought to consolidate his reign. He challenged the people who supported him to prove their loyalty by killing the seventy sons of Ahab. They complied, sending their heads to Jehu in baskets. This fulfilled the LORD's word against the house of Ahab.

Jehu also deceived and destroyed the worshipers of Baal. He pretended to be a devout follower of Baal and called for a great assembly of Baal's prophets and servants. When they all gathered in the temple of Baal, Jehu ordered his guards to kill everyone and destroy the temple, turning it into a latrine.

Because of Jehu's obedience in executing God's judgment on Ahab's house, the LORD promised that his descendants would reign over Israel for four generations. However, Jehu did not walk in the law of the LORD with all his heart. He continued to lead Israel into sin by allowing the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, the same sin introduced by Jeroboam.

It might seem strange that ancient kings and people worshiped idols, but even today, people have modern "idols"—such as sports, food, television, computers, opinions, beauty, friends, fashion, false teachings, and more. I studied biology and evolutionary theory, yet remarkably, ancient history aligns with the biblical timeline! By God's grace, let us not be among those who worship idols or serve other gods. May the LORD be the sole ruler of our lives.

After teaching the Lord's Prayer, Jesus added these words:
"For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your offenses." (Matthew 6:14-15)

Anyone who refuses to forgive blocks the very channel through which they can receive God's mercy. We should not think that if those who hurt us do not apologize, we are justified in withholding forgiveness. It is their duty to humble themselves in repentance and confession, but we must always be compassionate toward those who wrong us, whether they confess their faults or not.

Questions:

1. What good things did Jehu do?

2. What were Jehu's mistakes?

3. If you knew you had only a few hours to live, would you put on makeup first or confess your sins so that you could live with Jesus forever?

4. How did Jehu destroy Jezebel?

5. Who commanded Jehu to destroy Ahab's family?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Kings 9:8-10.

[8-10] The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her. Then he opened the door and ran.

Prayer: Lord, we pray for our parents, relatives, and ourselves that we may not be like Ahab or Jezebel. Forgive our sins, help us not to have evil desires. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out—Jehu driving the horses furiously. Jehu leading Israel into sin by worshiping the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. Explain how leadership affects people not worshiping God as they should, and give examples such as Aaron.

DAY 137 (May 16)

TOPIC: Joash – The Boy King

(2 Kings 11-13; 2 Chronicles 24)

When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son had been killed by Jehu, she arose and killed all the royal heirs and reigned for six years. What a terrible act! Killing her own grandchildren—the children of Ahaziah! Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, living up to the proverb: "A snake's child is a snake." However, Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of the slain King Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, from among the royal children who were being killed. She and his nurse hid him from Athaliah so that he was not killed.

In the seventh year, Jehoiada, the high priest—who was Jehosheba's husband—summoned the captains of hundreds and the guards to crown Joash king when he was only seven years old. He appointed security guards with shields and spears that had belonged to King David. Joash, the young prince, was brought out, crowned, given the royal testimony, and anointed as king. The people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

When Athaliah, who was ruling, heard the sound of the guards and the people, she entered the temple of the LORD and saw King Joash standing by the pillar, with the captains blowing trumpets and the people rejoicing. She tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!" Jehoiada the priest ordered the captains and commanders to take her out of the temple and kill her by the sword—but not inside the temple of the LORD.

King Joash made a covenant between himself, the people, and the LORD, that they would be the LORD's people. The people went to the temple of Baal, tore it down, broke its altars and images into pieces. Jehoiada appointed officers over the temple of the LORD. All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet.

Zechariah, a prophet, was the son of this priest Jehoiada, and he grew up with Joash like brothers. Since Joash was still young, the priest guided him in ruling the kingdom. Joash reigned for 40 years, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD throughout the days of Jehoiada's instruction. Indeed, we cannot repay godly parents for the sacrifices they made to raise us from birth. The best we can do is to care for and assist them in their needs.



Another way to repay their efforts is by raising our own children in the right path or helping others raise theirs.

Joash instructed the priests to collect all the dedicated money brought to the temple of the LORD for repairing the house of God—where he had been hidden for seven years. It had been 200 years since Solomon's temple was built, and it had been damaged by nations like Egypt, the Philistines, and even by Queen Athaliah, who had taken many valuable items. By the 23rd year of Joash's reign, the priests had still not repaired the damages, so Joash questioned them, asking why they had not fixed the breaches. He ordered them to stop collecting money until the repairs were completed.

Jehoiada the priest took a large chest, drilled a hole in its lid, and placed it near the altar so people could bring their voluntary offerings as the king had suggested. The priests and the king's scribe counted the money. Surely, the king himself must have given something to set a good example. Even today, when we go to church, it is good to bring an offering. It is shameful if we go before the Almighty God empty-handed while carrying full wallets to sports events or stores. A neighbor once joked that when a dollar bill was asked where it had been, it replied, "Church, church, church."

God is merciful because we receive His daily blessings, and we continue to ask Him for more. Yet, when it comes to giving, we often offer very little to help others in need. Soon, the chest was filled with gold, bronze, and other precious materials. They emptied it and replaced it regularly. The funds were used to hire carpenters, masons, stonecutters, and builders to repair the temple. The remaining funds were used to purchase vessels for temple use.

Do you or your parents have gifts meant for offering but have kept them unused for years? Even I have discovered many items I could give that have been sitting unused for years—I pray God will help me find and give them this year.

The offerings for guilt and sin were not used for temple repairs; these were for the priests themselves. Jehoiada lived to be 130 years old. After his death, the leaders of Judah came and bowed before King Joash, leading him into wickedness. They abandoned the true worship of God and served Asherah poles and idols. Despite God sending prophets to warn them, they refused to listen. God asked, "Why do you disobey the commandments of the LORD so that you cannot prosper?"

Later, Hazael, king of Syria, attacked Gath and turned toward Jerusalem, seizing the treasures that had been dedicated by Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and

Ahaziah—Joash's predecessors. As Joash grew older, he turned away from God, even to the point of ordering the stoning of Zechariah, the prophet and son of Jehoiada, in the courtyard of the temple. Joash forgot the kindness Jehoiada and his wife had shown him in his youth and repaid it by killing their son. As Zechariah died, he said, "May the LORD see this and call you to account."

The Syrian army came and severely wounded Joash. His servants conspired against him for shedding Zechariah's blood and killed him on his bed. Let us pray that we do not start well only to finish badly because of evil influences.

Joash's son, Amaziah, succeeded him. However, he was wicked, and when Israel invaded, they broke down a section of Jerusalem's wall, took all the gold and silver from the temple and the king's palace, and held people hostage.

In the 23rd year of King Joash of Judah, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned for 17 years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. Because of this, the LORD allowed them to fall into the hands of Hazael and Ben-Hadad of Syria. However, when Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, God sent a deliverer who freed them from the Syrians. Yet, they continued to follow the sins of Jeroboam and worship the Asherah in Samaria.

When Jehoahaz died, his son Jehoash reigned for 16 years, continuing in evil. Elisha, the prophet, grew old and fell ill. Even though many loved him, others despised him—just as it is with God's servants today.

As Elisha lay dying, King Jehoash of Israel visited and wept, calling out, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" Elisha instructed him to shoot an arrow eastward, symbolizing the LORD's arrow of victory over Syria. When Elisha told him to strike the ground, the king struck it three times and stopped. Elisha was angry and said, "You should have struck it five or six times; then you would have completely defeated Syria. Now you will only strike them three times."

After Elisha's death, a dead man was revived when his body touched Elisha's bones. Even in death, Elisha fulfilled God's work.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to ask God to forgive us as we forgive others. We cannot sincerely pray this prayer if we refuse to forgive others. Those who understand this truth will not take these words lightly.

Questions:

1. What evil did Athaliah commit?

2. How was Joash hidden?

3. What kind of king was the son of Jehu?

4. What did the dead man touch to come back to life?

5. What was the kingdom like during Joash's reign?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 24:20-22.

[20-22] Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you disobey the Lord's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the Lord, He has forsaken you.'" But they plotted against him, and by order of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the Lord's temple. King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoiada had shown him but killed his son, who said as he lay dying, "May the Lord see this and call you to account."

Prayer: Thank You Lord, remove cruelty from us when people try to warn us that we are leaving the right path. Forgive us Father. Help us to be generous in our offerings like in the time of King Joash. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the story of Joash, a seven-year-old child crowned king. His grandmother Athaliah killing the royal children, etc.

DAY 138 (May 17)

TOPIC: The Choir That Won the Battle

2 Chronicles 19-20)



It is not often that we hear of a choir leading a nation's army, but this happened during the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. One day, a messenger came and reported that the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites were on their way with thousands of soldiers to invade the city and were already at En-gedi. Knowing that his army was weak, King Jehoshaphat became afraid and turned his face to seek the LORD, asking for help. Although he had made mistakes in the past by forming an alliance with Ahab, he repented. He proclaimed a fast throughout Judah and called all the people to gather at the house of the LORD to pray. People from all parts came—men, women, and children.

It was a unique event because it demonstrated humility, showing that our help comes from the LORD and not from the size of the army, battle strategies, or advanced weapons. Jehoshaphat assembled the people at the house of the LORD, in front of the new courtyard, and began to praise and glorify God. This is an important aspect of our prayers—we should give God praise and glory by acknowledging His nature and mighty works.

Jehoshaphat said, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who rules over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham, your friend?”

He continued by reminding God that the Israelites had built a sanctuary for His name, declaring that if disaster came upon them—whether by sword, judgment, plague, or famine—they would stand in His presence and cry out to Him, and He would hear and save them. Jehoshaphat explained that the people of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir—whom God had forbidden Israel to attack when they came out of Egypt—were now rewarding them by coming to drive them out of the land God had given them. He asked the LORD to judge their enemies, saying, “We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.”

Then, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel, son of Zechariah, a Levite, who prophesied: “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army, for the battle is not yours but God’s. Tomorrow, march down against them; you will find them at the end of the valley. You will not need to fight this battle. Take your positions, stand firm, and see the deliverance the LORD will give you.”

Upon hearing this, King Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Jerusalem worshiped the LORD. The Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the LORD with a loud voice.

Early the next morning, they set out for the Desert of Tekoa. As they marched, Jehoshaphat encouraged the people, saying, “Listen to me, people of Judah and Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God, and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets, and you will be successful.” The people agreed, knowing that victory was certain. The king then consulted with the people and appointed singers to go ahead of the army, praising the LORD for His holiness. They sang, “Give thanks to the LORD, for His love endures forever.”

As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the

Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir, and they were defeated. The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the people of Mount Seir and destroyed them completely. Afterward, they turned on each other and killed one another.

When the men of Judah came to the watchtower overlooking the wilderness, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground—no one had escaped. Jehoshaphat and his people gathered a great amount of plunder, including clothing, valuables, and precious jewels. The loot was so abundant that it took them three days to collect it all. On the fourth day, they assembled in the Valley of Berakah (which means "blessing"), where they praised and thanked the LORD.

They returned joyfully to Jerusalem, led by King Jehoshaphat, because the LORD had given them victory over their enemies. With harps, lyres, and trumpets, they entered the temple of the LORD. The surrounding kingdoms were filled with fear when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. As a result, the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for God had given him rest on every side.

There is nothing as pleasing as praising the LORD with songs—both new and old. Scripture encourages us to "speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the LORD, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As humans, we sometimes falter. Jehoshaphat's son married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. To please his in-laws, Jehoshaphat later made a bad decision by partnering with King Ahaziah to build ships to sail to Tarshish. Because of this alliance, the LORD sent the prophet Eliezer, who declared, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy your works." The ships were wrecked and never set sail.

Even today, we must be careful when choosing friends or life partners. We should not be yoked together with unbelievers, as they can lead us away from God's will. We cannot serve two masters—God and Satan—we must choose one.

Music, when used correctly in worship, is a powerful force for good. It also helps teach Scripture. We rarely forget the songs we learned as children. Singing should not be done for emotional excitement but with beauty, order, and power. Let our voices rise in songs of praise and worship, as they are an acceptable offering to God. Singing is an essential part of worship, just like

prayer. When we are in church and a hymn is sung, we should participate and sing along. Unfortunately, many young people remain silent during worship songs.

We must examine our hearts before approaching God in prayer. If we do not forgive others, our prayers for forgiveness will not be heard. Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” As sinners approaching the throne of grace, we cannot ask for forgiveness unless we have forgiven those who have wronged us. Jesus explained, “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Questions:

1. Which nations united to attack Judah?

2. Why did the choir sing?
3. Why is it important to rely on the LORD?

4. What mistake did King Jehoshaphat make?

5. Why is it important to remember to thank God when He helps us?

6. Can you list five benefits of singing or music for the human body?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 20:21-22.

[21-22] After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendor of His holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: “Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever.” As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

Prayer: Thank You beloved Father, we praise You today and thank You for Your everlasting love. Create in us new hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity:

1. Drama: Act out the story of King Jehoshaphat, a good king in the Bible, who faced a powerful enemy army.

2. Unusual Strategy: Explain that Jehoshaphat did not send his soldiers first, but instead he sent singers to praise God ahead of his army.

3. Choose a Song: Select a praise song that children know, such as “Give Thanks to the Lord” or “I’m in the Lord’s Army.”

4. Make a “Drama Battle”: Let the children stand and sing the chosen song as they march forward. If possible, let another group of children represent the enemy army. As the singers continue to sing, the enemy group can fall down as though defeated.

DAY 139 (May 18)

TOPIC: The Evil Years of the Kings

(2 Kings 14-15 and 2 Chronicles 25-28)

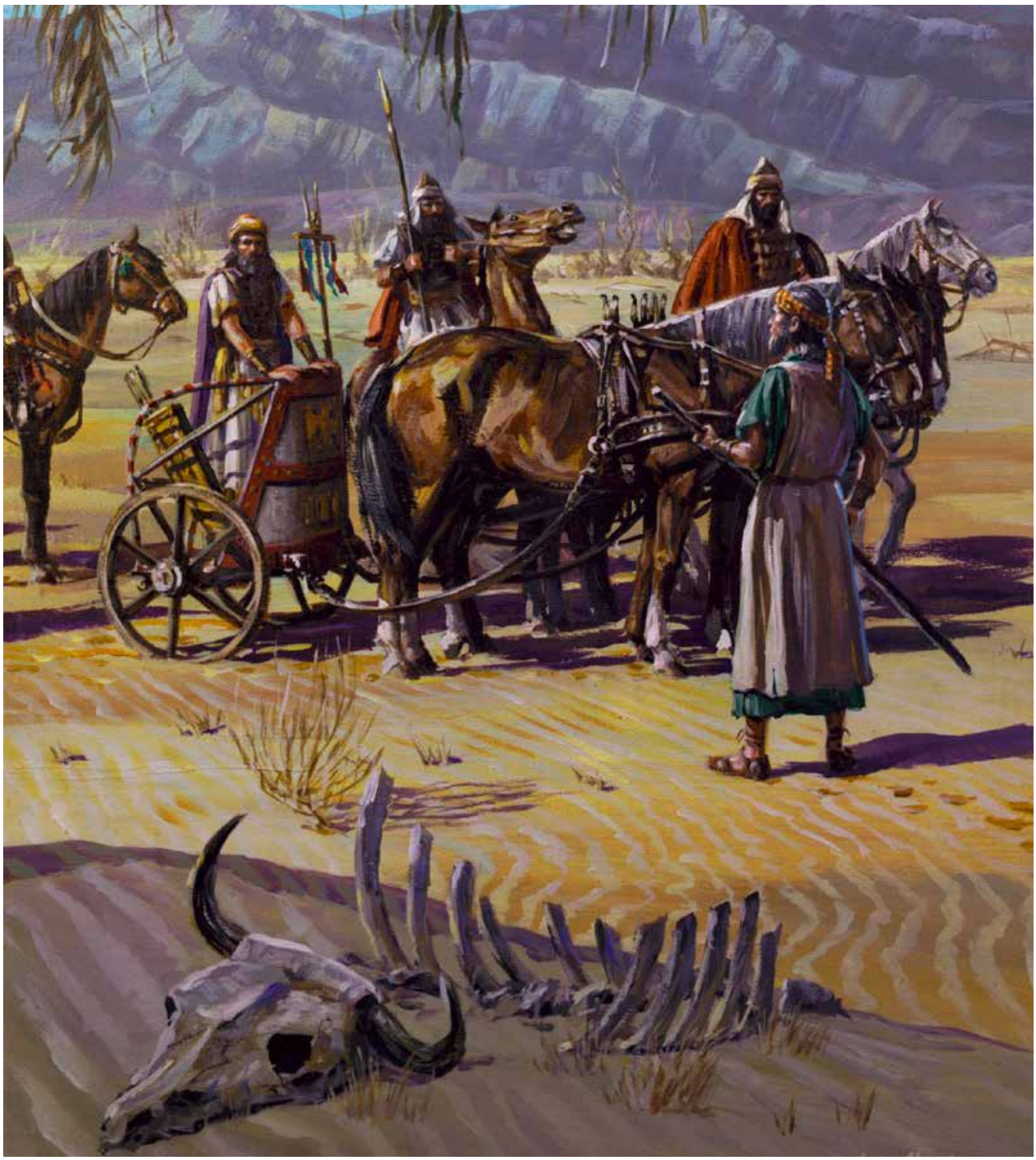
Hazael, the king of Aram, oppressed the Israelites during the days of Jehoahaz, but the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and turned to them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was not willing to destroy them or cast them from His presence yet. When Hazael died, his son Ben-Hadad succeeded him as king. Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, recaptured from Ben-Hadad the towns that had been taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz. Jehoash defeated him three times and recovered the cities of Israel.

In the second year of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah, son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned for 29 years in Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD but not like David his father. He followed the example of his father Joash but did not remove the high places; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

When his kingdom was firmly established, he executed the officials who had murdered his father, the king. However, he did not put their children to death, in accordance with what the LORD commanded—that parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor children for their parents; each will die for their own sin. Amaziah struck down the Edomites in the Valley of Salt but made the mistake of bringing back their gods, setting them up, bowing down to them, and burning incense.

The LORD sent a prophet to him, asking, “Why do you seek the gods of these people, which could not save them from your hand?” The king replied arrogantly, “Did we appoint you as the king’s counselor? Be quiet! Why should you be struck down?” The prophet stopped speaking but warned that God would destroy him because he refused to listen.

Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, challenging him to face him in battle. Jehoash sent back a parable saying, “A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son in marriage.’ But a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle. You have defeated Edom and your heart



has become proud. Stay at home! Why ask for trouble and bring disaster on yourself and Judah?”

But Amaziah would not listen, so Jehoash king of Israel advanced, and they faced each other in battle at Beth Shemesh in Judah. Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his home. Jehoash captured Amaziah and took him to Jerusalem. He broke down 400 cubits of the wall from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. He seized all the gold, silver, and articles found in the temple of the LORD and the treasuries of the royal palace, along with hostages, and returned to Samaria.

The rest of Jehoash's deeds are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel. Jehoash rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria, and Jeroboam his son succeeded him as king.

In 2 Chronicles 25:2,9, it is written that Amaziah did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not wholeheartedly. Being half-hearted is being lukewarm—it is disobedience! When God told him to send back the hired troops, he protested, saying he had already paid them and could not let them go. God assured him that He could give him much more than that, but Amaziah doubted.

This is similar to a person deciding to fast but breaking the fast because of receiving food, or a man marrying a second wife and refusing to let her go even when God commands him to, as He commanded Abraham.

Amaziah, son of Joash, king of Judah, lived for thirteen years after the death of Jehoash, king of Israel. However, conspirators rose against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. They pursued him there and killed him. He was brought back and buried in Jerusalem. Then the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

Uzziah reclaimed Elath for Judah. He sought guidance from the prophet Zechariah and did what was right in the LORD's eyes. However, when he became powerful, his heart grew proud, and he was unfaithful to the LORD. Uzziah reigned for 52 years.

He entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar, which was the priest's duty. Azariah the priest and 80 other courageous priests followed him and confronted him, warning that he was dishonoring God. Uzziah became angry, and while holding the censer, leprosy broke out on his forehead. The priests quickly escorted him out, and he hurried to leave because the LORD had afflicted him.

Uzziah lived in isolation for the rest of his life due to his leprosy. Pride is dangerous—it isolates and dishonors us. Even today, when God's servants warn us, we should not arrogantly ignore them.

In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash began to reign in Samaria, ruling Israel for 41 years. He did evil in the LORD's sight but restored the boundaries of Israel according to the word of the LORD through Jonah, son of Amittai.

When Jeroboam died, his son Zechariah succeeded him. In the 27th year of Jeroboam's reign, Uzziah began to rule Judah. He reigned for 52 years but was struck with leprosy because of his disobedience.

Let us pause and reflect on Uzziah, a 16-year-old who inherited his father's throne. He sought God, and the LORD made him successful. He was intelligent, innovative, and strong. However, after becoming powerful, pride led to his downfall. He overstepped his boundaries, refused to repent, and lost the LORD's favor.

Do you know a young person who needs spiritual counsel to avoid a tragic end like Uzziah's?

Zechariah, son of Jeroboam, ruled Israel for six months. He did evil before the LORD, and Shallum conspired against him and assassinated him publicly, fulfilling the LORD's word to Jehu that his descendants would sit on the throne for four generations. Shallum reigned for one month before Menahem killed him and took over.

Confession Must Be Specific
True confession is specific, acknowledging each sin. It may be private before God, directed toward those who have been wronged, or openly shared with a congregation when necessary. All confessions should be precise and cover every wrongdoing.

Why did Jehu's descendants reign for only four generations?

Why did King Uzziah burn incense?

How long did Zechariah, son of Jeroboam, reign?

What privilege did King Uzziah unlawfully claim?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verse: 2 Chronicles 26:15,16.

[15,16] He made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be set on the towers and on the corners, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. His fame spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, until he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, to his destruction;

for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

Prayer: Dear Father, I pray that when I have strength and wealth, my heart will not be lifted up in pride to do evil. Help me not to rebel against You with arrogance but to honor the workers who serve in Your house. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Introduce King Uzziah, how he came to the throne at age 16, the help he received from God, and his great achievements such as building cities, defensive walls, digging wells, and organizing a strong army. Show how he became a great and powerful king. Then discuss his downfall when pride led him to burn incense in the temple—a duty consecrated only for priests.

Explain the punishment: Tell the children that God struck Uzziah with leprosy as a judgment, showing that his pride caused his downfall.

DAY 140 (May 19)

TOPIC: More Kings

(2 Kings 15 and 2 Chronicles 28)



In the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi began to reign over Israel, and he ruled for ten years in Samaria. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. Pul, the king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver to secure his kingdom. Menahem taxed his people to pay the king of Assyria. After Menahem died, his son Pekahiah succeeded him.

In the fiftieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, Pekahiah began to reign in Samaria for two years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. Pekah, one of his officers, conspired against him, assassinated him in Samaria, and took over the kingdom. Pekah began to reign in the fifty-second year of Uzziah, king of Judah. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. During his reign, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, invaded and captured several cities, including Gilead and Galilee, and deported the people to Assyria.

Hoshea, the last king of Israel, plotted against Pekah, killed him, and took his place as king. In the second year of Pekah, Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign at the age of twenty-five. He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but the high places were not removed. After Jotham died, his son Ahaz became king.

Ahaz, son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign at the age of twenty and ruled for sixteen years. He did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD. He even sacrificed his son by fire, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before Israel. He offered incense on the high places and under every green tree.

Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to fight against Ahaz and besiege the city, but they could not defeat him. Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son; come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of Aram and the king of Israel who are attacking me.” Ahaz took the silver and gold from the house of the LORD and gave it as a gift to the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria listened to him, attacked Damascus, captured it, and killed Rezin.

Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser and saw the altar there. He sent a model of the altar to Uriah the priest, who built a replica in Jerusalem. When the altar was completed, Ahaz offered sacrifices on it.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz, Hoshea, son of Elah, began to reign in Israel and did evil in the sight of the LORD. The Israelites took captives from Judah and killed many others. Some were made servants. The LORD, through the prophet Oded, commanded that these captives be released, as the Israelites themselves were also guilty before God. The armed men obeyed, clothed the naked, gave them shoes, fed them, and treated their wounds. The weak were put on donkeys and taken to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to be returned to their brethren.

The names of the men who performed this act of kindness are worth noting: Azariah, Berechiah, Jehizkiah, and Amasa. These conflicts caused family divisions and deep sorrow, leaving children orphaned, women widowed, and many people displaced.

It is interesting to note that most kings only mention their fathers, but a few also mention their mothers! Remarkably, when a mother or wife is mentioned, there is often a statement about whether the king did what was right or evil in the sight of the LORD. In some cases, it is even stated that the king did evil

because his mother or wife encouraged him in that way! This emphasizes the significant influence a mother or wife can have, whether for good or evil.

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Hoshea, who became his vassal and paid tribute. However, Hoshea later stopped paying tribute, prompting the king of Assyria to besiege Samaria for three years. The Israelites faced this judgment because of their sins against the LORD—they worshiped other gods and forgot the LORD who brought them out of Egypt.

They committed secret sins against the LORD, followed the customs of other nations, served idols, and practiced wicked rituals that the LORD had forbidden. They made their necks stiff and rejected God's laws and commandments. They offered their children as sacrifices, practiced divination and witchcraft, and sold themselves to do evil.

The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon and other regions to live in the cities of Samaria in place of the Israelites. The LORD sent lions among them, killing some of the new settlers. These people brought their gods and continued the wicked practices of offering their children as sacrifices to Adrammelek and Anammelek, their gods, without fearing the LORD.

As parents, we need much prayer as we reflect on the stories of these kings. When we face the final judgment, how will we account for our actions? Many children have become slaves to greed and immoral desires, leading to ruined lives. These children will face their parents who failed to guide them.

Who else but the parents should bear this serious responsibility? Did the LORD make these young people corrupt? The answer is no! Who then is responsible for this terrible outcome? Did the sins of the parents transfer to the children through indulgence in appetite and immoral desires? And did these influences come from those who neglected to raise them according to God's principles?

Indeed, all such parents will be held accountable. Satan is always ready to do his work. He does not neglect to present temptations that children cannot resist. Through his schemes, he promotes constantly changing fashions and extravagant parties, distracting mothers from their sacred duty to educate and train their children.

Our young people need mothers who will teach them from an early age to control their appetites, resist selfishness, and live by the principles of God's kingdom. Mothers should embrace the holy calling that God has given them. The world needs mothers who are not only mothers in name but also in every sense of the word.

Mothers should recognize the sacredness of their mission and fulfill their calling with dedication and reverence to God. They should train their children for success in this world and prepare them for eternal life in the heavenly kingdom that is soon to come. Even those without biological children have an opportunity to influence and guide children in need. It takes a whole village or community to raise a child.

I urge believing mothers to recognize their responsibility—not to live for their own pleasure, not to be consumed by phones, fashion, or idle talk—but to glorify God. Christ did not live to please Himself. He left the courts of heaven, took on humanity, and became a servant to teach us how to become children of the heavenly King.

Jesus Hears the Simple Prayer for Forgiveness
Not everyone can identify the exact moment their sins were forgiven. Children should be taught to bring their sins and mistakes to Jesus from an early age. Teach them to ask for His forgiveness daily for any wrongdoing, assuring them that Jesus hears the simple prayer of a repentant heart and will forgive and accept them, just as He welcomed the children brought to Him during His earthly ministry.

Questions:

1. Why did Menahem give silver to Pul?

2. Who was Adrammelek?

3. What command did the prophet Oded give from the LORD?

4. Who was Tiglath-Pileser?

5. Are there any false gods where you live today?

6. Have we also forgotten the laws and commandments given by God?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Proverbs 8:13.

[13] The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate.

Prayer: Lord, help me to fear You and hate evil. Forgive my sins, bless my parents and my siblings. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Who are these people—Tiglath-pileser, Pekah, Rezin, Remaliah, Ben-Hadad? Or give instructions from Oded the prophet.

DAY 141 (May 20)

TOPIC: How the Ten Tribes of Israel Were Lost

(2 Kings 15-17)



It is important to understand that the strength and peace Israel enjoyed during the reign of Jeroboam II was short-lived after his death. His kingdom began to weaken, and his son Zechariah reigned for only six months before he was killed in public by Shallum, who declared himself king. However, after just one month, Shallum was killed by Menahem, who ruled for ten years marked by great evil and the oppression of the people—bringing distress to the land and plundering the wealth of Israel. It seems that during this time, the kings of Israel seized power by assassinating others, only to be assassinated themselves. This cycle of violence weakened the nation, and their enemies grew stronger and more victorious. All these troubles came upon Israel because they and their kings abandoned the God of their fathers and worshiped other gods and idols.

Hoshea was the last king of Israel—that is, of the ten tribes—and in total, there were nineteen kings. During Hoshea's reign, Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, came with a great army to Samaria and laid siege to the city. The siege lasted for three years and ended when Shalmaneser died. Sargon, the commander of the army, took over the throne. Sargon killed Hoshea, the last king of Israel, and carried the Israelites away to the eastern lands such as Mesopotamia, Media, and regions around the Caspian Sea. Sargon did this to weaken Israel and prevent them from rebelling against him.

The Israelites in their land had forsaken the LORD and worshiped other gods. They went even further by adopting the gods of the nations where they lived. They began to marry people from other nations, and thus, they ceased to be called Israelites. They lost the knowledge of their God, who had given them His Word and sent them prophets. This is how the ten tribes of Israel disappeared. They never returned to their land but were scattered among other nations.

In the places where these ten tribes once lived, the king of Assyria brought in other people. Because these newcomers were few, they began to suffer attacks from wild animals like lions. The people believed that the wild animals came because they did not worship the god of that land. So, they sent a message to the king of Assyria, saying, "Send us a priest to teach us the customs of the god of this land, for he has sent lions, and they are killing us." They believed that each land had its own god. The Philistines worshiped Dagon, the Moabites worshiped Chemosh, and the people of Tyre and Sidon worshiped Baal and Asherah. They did not know that there is only one God who rules heaven and earth—the Creator, who alone is to be worshiped by every creature.

The king of Assyria sent a priest from among the Israelites to try to teach the people to fear and worship the LORD. However, when they worshiped, they mixed the worship of the God of heaven with the worship of their own gods. We cannot worship God while mixing truth with error. There are only two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. These people became known as Samaritans, named after their capital city of Samaria, which Ahab had established as his royal city. They built their own temple on Mount Gerizim, near the city of Shechem. Even today, a small group of Samaritans still lives in that area.

Children, come to Jesus. Give God the most precious gift you can offer—your heart. He is speaking to you, saying, "My son, my daughter, give Me your heart." Though your sins may be as red as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow; for I will cleanse you with My own blood. I will make you members

of My family—children of the King of heaven. Receive My forgiveness and the peace I freely give to you. I will clothe you with My righteousness—the wedding garment—and make you worthy of the marriage supper of the Lamb. As you are clothed in My righteousness, through prayer, vigilance, and diligent study of My Word, you will reach the highest standard. You will understand the Truth, and your character will be shaped by the influence of the Lord. Pray for forgiveness, for this is God's will—even your sanctification.

Questions:

What did you learn from this story?

How did the ten tribes of Israel become lost?

Why can't we worship God and other gods at the same time?

Why did the Jews and Samaritans hate each other?

Read John chapter 4.

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Proverbs 29:1-2.

[1-2] He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. He that loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father; but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to harden my neck; help me to be righteous so that people may rejoice. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, forgive my sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Share with the children the stories about where the 10 lost tribes of Israel went. Find a map and help students understand the history and legends about those ten tribes and the other two.

DAY 142 (May 21)

TOPIC: King Hezekiah – Revival and Reformation

(2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-37)



In the third year of Hoshea, king of Israel, Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, became king of Judah. Hezekiah's mother was called Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah, the prophet who was killed by King Joash. This means Hezekiah was the grandson of Jehoiada the high priest and the great-grandson of Athaliah! Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for 29 years. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He removed the high places, broke down the Asherah poles, and smashed the bronze snake that Moses had made in the wilderness because the people had started worshiping it by burning incense to it. He called it Nehushtan.

He trusted in the LORD despite having a wicked father and ancestors. No king of Judah was as faithful to God as Hezekiah, for he did not turn away from following the LORD. I believe his mother played a role in his conversion. Hezekiah instructed the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves and remove the defilement from the temple. He told the priests that the LORD had chosen them to stand before Him, serve Him, and be His ministers. They followed his advice, offered sacrifices to the LORD, and obeyed the laws of Moses. He cleansed the house of the LORD, and wherever he went, he prospered. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territories.

Hezekiah restored the ministry of songs, lyres, and trumpets as commanded by the prophets Nathan and Gad. When the burnt offerings were presented, they began with a song to the LORD. Many people were willing to offer sacrifices, and even those who had fallen behind started bringing their tithes again. There was a spiritual revival and reformation. Hezekiah sent messengers throughout Judah to urge the people to return to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Indeed, the spiritual condition of the people is often a reflection of their leaders. The people were called to celebrate the Passover, though some did not observe the law properly. Hezekiah prayed for them, asking God to forgive them because they were ignorant. They had been living in darkness for a long time, but because they sought God with all their hearts, they were forgiven, and God heard their prayers.

It is an act of love to care for others and pray for them. REMOVE DEFILEMENT FROM THE SANCTUARY.

We are grateful for young leaders who are courageous and willing to stand for the LORD. Many who led church reforms throughout history were young men and women, and when they stood boldly against corruption and apostasy, the Lord gave them victory. In the history of our Remnant Church, many leaders were under 26 years old. We also thank God for the young leaders today who are active in media evangelism and are standing firmly for the LORD. Let us pray for all our leaders, especially the young ones whom God is raising in these last days.

Here is my question for you and me today: What defilement must we remove from the sanctuary in our time? Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit—are there things we need to let go of to keep our bodies, the temples, pure?

Abijah, Hezekiah's mother, was the daughter of the prophet Zechariah. It is possible that she influenced the character of this king. Children are young members of God's family, entrusted to parents for education and patient discipline so that they may develop heavenly characters, bless others in this life, and enjoy the life to come.

The most sensitive relationship in the world is that between a mother and her child. A child is more easily influenced by the life and example of the mother than by the father because a stronger and more tender bond connects them. A mother's thoughts and feelings will have a profound impact on the inheritance she gives her child. If she focuses on her emotions, indulges in selfishness, or is weak and overly strict, her child's character will reflect those qualities. Many have inherited tendencies that make it difficult to overcome evil. The enemy of souls understands this better than most parents. He will bring his

temptations to the mother, knowing that if she yields, he can influence the child through her.

A mother's only hope is in God. She can turn to the Lord for strength and grace, and He will not fail her. A Christian mother will be vigilant in recognizing the dangers surrounding her children. She will keep herself pure and holy, control her temper, and govern her life according to God's Word. She will faithfully perform her duties and overcome the small and great temptations that will constantly attack her.

In the 14th year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came to fight against Judah and captured their cities. Hezekiah sent a message to the king of Assyria, saying, "I have done wrong. Leave me, and I will pay whatever you demand." The king of Assyria required three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah gave him all the silver and gold from the house of the LORD and the king's treasury. However, this did not help, as the king of Assyria wanted more. He sent his commander and officers to Jerusalem, where they stood by the upper pool's aqueduct. They called for the king, and Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah went out to meet them.

The Assyrian commander mocked Hezekiah's faith, asking what hope he had to resist the king of Assyria. He spoke arrogantly, saying no one could save Hezekiah—not even the LORD. When Hezekiah's officials reported these words, Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and went to the house of the LORD. He sent his officials to the prophet Isaiah to seek counsel and prayer.

Isaiah sent back a message saying, "Do not be afraid. The LORD will cause Sennacherib to hear a rumor and return to his own land, where he will be killed."

That night, the angel of the LORD struck down 185,000 Assyrians. Sennacherib returned to Nineveh in disgrace, and while worshiping his god, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him. Esarhaddon, his son, succeeded him as king. Indeed, God performs wonders for His servants.

A Sincere Plea for Forgiveness Must Come from the Heart
"Do not cast me away from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11)

Repentance and forgiveness are gifts from God through the Messiah. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin and recognize our need for forgiveness. Only those with a broken heart are

forgiven, and it is the Lord's grace that brings the heart to repentance.

God understands our weaknesses and failures, and He will help us. He hears prayers of faith, but the sincerity of our prayers must be proven by our efforts to align ourselves with His commandments. We need to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit's influence and experience His transforming power.

Questions:

1. Why was it wrong for Hezekiah to give treasures from the house of the LORD to the king of Assyria?

2. What did Hezekiah do when he received the threatening letter?

3. What was Hezekiah's mother's name?

4. How did 185,000 Assyrians die?

5. What good things did King Hezekiah do?

6. Today, we do not celebrate Passover but the Lord's Supper—can you explain the difference between these two sacraments?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: 2 Kings 19:15,16.

[15,16] And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

Prayer: Thank You, our Father, who dwells between the cherubim, You alone are Lord of all kingdoms. Lord, bow down Your ear and hear my troubles, even the words of those who reproach You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Write a letter of all your troubles, bad people, etc., and place it before you, praying to God for what you want Him to help you with. Or draw the shadow moving back ten steps, and when Hezekiah was healed and later boasted by showing off his possessions – 2 Kings 20:9-20.

DAY 143 (May 22)

TOPIC: Hezekiah's Illness and the Sun Standing Still

(2 Kings 20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 38-39)

Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the prophet, came to him and told him to set his house in order because he would die and not recover. Hezekiah was saddened and turned his face to the wall, praying to the LORD with many tears. Hezekiah prayed, saying, "I beseech You, LORD, remember how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart and have done what is good in Your sight." Before Isaiah had left the city, the word of the LORD came to him, telling him to return to Hezekiah and say, "The LORD says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day, you shall go up to the house of the LORD." The LORD promised to extend Hezekiah's life by fifteen years and to deliver him and the city from the hand of the king of Assyria, protecting the city for His sake and for His servant David.

Isaiah instructed Hezekiah to take a cake of figs and apply it as a poultice on the boil, which was the source of his illness. God used a natural remedy—just as others have used items like potatoes or crushed onions to draw out poison or reduce pain from boils or swollen areas. While God has the power to heal without these, He sometimes uses natural or medical treatments. Other times, He calls us to exercise, drink water, get sunlight, or eat healthy food. When Hezekiah followed these instructions, he recovered. Isaiah then asked him to choose a sign—whether the shadow should go forward or backward. Hezekiah chose for the shadow to move backward ten steps. Isaiah prayed to the LORD, and the shadow on the sundial moved backward ten steps.

When we pray for the sick, we should not reject medical treatments, calling it "faith" when it may just be a personal belief. Sometimes, it is necessary to use remedies, as in Hezekiah's case. At other times, we must humbly accept God's will, understanding that some people, if healed, may live in sin, while if they rested, they might one day enter heaven.

If people believe that praying for healing must exclude the use of simple remedies God has provided to alleviate pain and support natural healing, they may be acting unwisely. Using natural remedies is not a denial of faith; rather, it aligns with God's plans. When Hezekiah was sick, God sent a message through the prophet that he would die. But when Hezekiah prayed,

God heard his prayer and performed a miracle, extending his life by fifteen years. Although God could have healed him instantly with just a word or a touch, He instead instructed him to use a fig poultice. We should always align ourselves with God's will in all matters.



At that time, Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, sent gifts to Hezekiah because he had heard of his illness and recovery. However, Hezekiah made a mistake—rather than giving glory to God before these Babylonian envoys, he showed them the treasures of his palace. He displayed his wealth—silver, gold, spices, precious ointments, his armory, and everything in his storehouses. There was nothing in his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

Later, Isaiah came to Hezekiah and asked, "Where did these men come from?" Hezekiah replied, "They came from a distant country—Babylon." Isaiah continued, "What did they see in your palace?" Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything. There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

Hezekiah failed to testify about the great things God had done—delivering him from the Assyrians, healing his illness, and the miraculous sign of the shadow

moving backward. Instead, he boasted about his possessions. Even today, God gives us opportunities to share His love and power with our friends, neighbors, and family. But sometimes, we focus on displaying our wealth instead.

This is a mistake—we should pray for God's help to avoid this trap. When some people are healed, they give more credit to their doctor's skill or their natural treatments rather than to God. When others find a job after searching for years, they may attribute it to their education, cleverness, or connections, even though those things had not helped them before. In all things, God deserves the glory. We may show people our homes, but not to boast about ourselves.

Isaiah told Hezekiah that because of his pride, a time would come when everything in his palace would be carried off to Babylon. Even his descendants would be taken as eunuchs in the Babylonian king's court. Hezekiah accepted God's judgment but said it was good as long as there would be peace during his lifetime. Unfortunately, he did not take responsibility for his mistake, leaving the consequences for his children to bear.

Hezekiah accomplished great reforms. The Levites resumed their duties, and the priests blessed the people. Their prayers reached heaven, God's holy dwelling place. The people brought morning and evening sacrifices, Sabbath offerings, and tithes. The chief priest Azariah testified that since the people began to bring their offerings, there had been enough food with plenty left over, for the LORD had blessed His people abundantly.

Hezekiah was honored with riches, food, drink, jewels, and livestock. For reforms to succeed, people need God's grace and joy. As God's children, we must remove idols from our hearts, homes, and churches. Idols cannot be removed from our hearts until we experience joy in worship. Where there is little joy, there is little revival.

When our lives are filled with joy and satisfaction, people naturally turn away from idols such as selfishness, entertainment, food, hatred, opinions, social media, beauty, status, education, or any other beloved idol. Hezekiah assured the people that God would not turn His face from them if they returned to Him. God does not reject anyone who repents. Like the prodigal son, God welcomes every repentant heart with grace and joy.

One might wonder whether Hezekiah's extra years were truly a blessing. If he had died at the time God initially planned, he would not have fathered Manasseh. Although losing a young person is painful, the Bible says, "The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away,

and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil." (Isaiah 57:1).

Parents should learn from Hezekiah's example—not to desire that their children bear the consequences of their own mistakes. Hezekiah eventually died, and his son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

It is essential to pray for strength to resist the enemy's temptations. Satan constantly seeks to keep people from praying by filling their time with business, pleasures, or sin. But Jesus has opened heaven for all who come to Him, inviting children and youth to approach Him freely. He says, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Jesus wants children and youth to come to Him with the same confidence they have when asking their parents for food. If your sins weigh heavily on your heart, go to God and say, "For the sake of the Messiah, forgive my sins." Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven, and every honest request for grace and strength will be answered.

Questions:

1. What remedy was Hezekiah told to use when he was sick?

2. How many additional years was he given to live?

3. What sin did Hezekiah commit?

4. If your friends visit your home today, what will you show them?

5. How can you give glory to God for the things He has done for you?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: 2 Kings 19:19,20.

Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech Thee, save Thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for hearing us, save us from the hand of our enemies so that the whole world may know that You are the Lord, and You alone. Help us to love people and to love You. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Hezekiah's healing after his illness, and then how he showed his treasures when he was visited by guests.

DAY 144 (May 23)

TOPIC: King Manasseh and Josiah

(2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33)



Manasseh began to reign at the age of 12 and ruled for 55 years. He reigned longer than any other king of Israel, yet he was the most wicked king ever to rule Judah. He was born during the 15 extra years his father had prayed for. Some have said that if Hezekiah had accepted to rest and not live those additional years, his son Manasseh would not have been born to bring great sorrow to many and to God as well. Many of those he led astray were lost forever, even after he returned to the Lord, showing the heavy influence of leadership.

Manasseh committed abominations by building altars for other gods, rebuilding the altars of Baal and Asherah poles that his father had torn down. He passed his son through fire, practiced divination, witchcraft, consulted spirits, and sorcerers, and provoked the Lord to anger. He placed a carved Asherah idol in the house of God. Manasseh led Judah and Jerusalem astray before God and shed much innocent blood. Historians say he even killed the prophet Isaiah by sawing him in two—a prophet who had served his father faithfully.

Let God be called God; He is merciful, slow to anger, and quick to forgive when we confess with true repentance. Being a leader is a sacred and high calling. Manasseh was drawn to idol worship. Today, there are many forms of idolatry: the love of money, gluttony, video games, social media, wasting time watching meaningless entertainment on television or online, being on the phone all the time, pride in status, obsession with fashion, education,

personal opinions, and forbidden desires.

Indeed, any habit that harms our health and causes us to fail is idolatry. Let us seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Manasseh returned to the Lord, and the Lord accepted him because He is merciful. “If You, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with You, there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve You.” (Psalm 130:3-4)

Manasseh repented after facing punishment, but by then, he had already led many astray who never returned to the Lord as he did. This teaches us that our sins, even when we abandon them, leave a lasting impact by leading or stumbling others permanently. Manasseh was taken captive by the king of Assyria to Babylon, with a hook in his nose like an animal. In his distress, his pride was humbled, and he cried out to God, humbling himself to be accepted. He remembered his father, a God-fearing warrior, and confessed. God heard his prayer and restored him to Jerusalem. Then he knew that the Lord alone is God.

Manasseh removed the foreign gods, offered thanksgiving sacrifices, and instructed the people to follow the Lord. When Manasseh died, his son Amon took over the throne at the age of 22. He did evil in the sight of the Lord like his father Manasseh. Amon’s servants conspired against him and killed him in his palace. However, the people of the land executed those who conspired against Amon and made his eight-year-old son Josiah king.

Josiah reigned for thirty years. Despite his youth, Josiah did what was right, like his ancestor David, and did not turn to the right or left. In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah sent Shaphan the scribe to the house of the Lord to Hilkiah the high priest to count the offerings brought by the people through the gatekeepers. The money was to be used to repair the temple, including carpenters, builders, and masons, who bought timber and cut stone to restore the temple.

Hilkiah the priest told Shaphan the scribe that he had found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord and gave it to him to read. Shaphan took the book to the king and reported that the money had been delivered to the workers managing the Lord’s house. Then Shaphan read the book to the king. Upon hearing the words, the king tore his clothes in distress. He commanded Hilkiah and other spiritual leaders to inquire of the Lord on behalf of himself and the people concerning the words of the book found in the temple, acknowledging that the Lord’s anger burned against them due to their ancestors’ disobedience.

Hilkiah and the delegation went to the prophetess Huldah to seek the Lord's counsel. Huldah declared, "This is what the Lord says: I am bringing disaster upon this place and its inhabitants according to all the words of the book the king of Judah has read, because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, provoking Me to anger by all the works of their hands. However, because the king's heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord, tore his clothes, and wept when he heard these words, the Lord heard his cry."

The best sacrifice to the Lord is a broken and contrite heart, willing to confess our sins and those of others. The Lord does not despise a broken heart. Some may appear to have no major sins, but the sin of pride is significant as it hinders God's grace. Those who refuse to repent are lost, while even the worst sinners, like murderers, can be forgiven if they sincerely repent and humble themselves. Josiah was promised that he would not witness the coming disaster but would rest in peace with his ancestors.

We learn from this story the importance of the Holy Scriptures and reading them to understand God's will for us. It transforms our lives, drawing us closer to God and fostering love for others. Reading the Bible is like shaking a fruit tree. You shake the whole tree, then the branches, and finally the fruit itself! Let us begin today to shake the tree of the Holy Word to receive its sweet fruits.

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles resemble the book of Judges in their repetitive pattern: people forsake God, face trouble, cry out to Him, and He restores them. Young people use the term "roller coaster" to describe life's ups and downs. How do we break this cycle? Young people need good parental role models. Although Manasseh returned to the Lord, how did his son, who witnessed idol worship, turn out?

God's love is unconditional. He loves even the worst sinners but hates sin. No matter how grave our sins, God is willing to forgive us if we respond positively to His commands. Sometimes the consequences we face are the natural results of our sins. The Lord means what He says: "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live." (Ezekiel 33:11)

Manasseh was forgiven and saved because he sincerely humbled himself and repented. This confirms God's promise: "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

Questions:

1. What evil did Manasseh commit?

2. Why did he repent?

3. What kind of book did Hilkiah find?

4. What was Shaphan's role?

5. Why did Josiah weep?

6. What did prophetess Huldah tell Josiah?

7. Why is pride such a dangerous sin?

8. Why do people say, "Do not sleep with your door open, hoping for someone else's luck"?

9. Why do parents grieve when they see their children making bad decisions?

Key Verse: 2 Chronicles 33:11-13.

[11-13] …They took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with chains, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And he prayed unto Him; and He was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God.

Activity: Explain the life of Manasseh and how he led people astray, his repentance, and starting afresh. Bring pencils and erasers—write and erase. Tell them the Lord has a big eraser for our sins.

DAY 145 (May 24)

TOPIC: Josiah Carries Out Reforms

(2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34-35)



The king sent messengers, and all the elders of Jerusalem came. The king went up to the house of the LORD—the temple—along with the prophets, priests, and all the people, both great and small. He read in their hearing the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. The king made a covenant before the LORD to follow Him and to keep His commandments, testimonies, and statutes with all his heart and soul. All the people accepted the covenant.

The king commanded the priests, including Hilkiah and the temple guards, to remove the articles used for Baal and Asherah worship, and he burned them outside Jerusalem. He dismissed the priests who had burned incense to Baal, the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, and all the heavenly hosts. He removed the Asherah pole from the house of the LORD, burned it, crushed it to powder, and scattered the ashes on the graves of the common people.

He demolished the houses of male shrine prostitutes that were within the temple. He banned the practice of sacrificing children through fire and

destroyed those altars. He burned the chariots dedicated to sun worship and removed the horses associated with these pagan rituals. Josiah destroyed the foreign altars that previous kings had made. He also demolished the altar at Bethel, which Jeroboam son of Nebat had built.

When he saw the bones in a grave, he recognized them as belonging to the man of God who had been killed by a lion, and he ordered that they be left untouched. He executed the idolatrous priests and burned their bones in accordance with the word of the LORD. After these reforms, Josiah returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah's story in the Old Testament parallels that of Timothy in the New Testament. Both were blessed because of their godly mothers and grandmothers. It is no coincidence that the mothers and grandmothers of these men—Jedidah and Adaiah for Josiah, and Eunice and Lois for Timothy—are mentioned in the scriptures. Do you have a godly mother or grandmother who has blessed your life? Give thanks to the LORD today and share your testimony!

David, as a father, also blessed his son Solomon by living a life of godliness. Indeed, having godly parents is a great blessing, and raising godly children is an even greater treasure! There can be no true reformation or revival without the Holy Scriptures.

"Every person has the power to choose righteousness when they heed God's commandments. In every life experience, God's word to us is: 'Choose this day whom you will serve.'"

When a young person dedicates their life to God, they become a powerful instrument for good in God's hands—even more so than the elderly. Satan knows this truth, which is why he has devised many ways to trap our young people. Unfortunately, he seems to be succeeding in some ways, as many young people are absent from church.

What can we, as church members, do? Some believe that loud music and entertainment will attract the youth, but these have not produced committed Christians! We should continue to pray for them and love them unconditionally—this may be the key to making a difference. What we cannot do, God can!

1 John 2:13 says, "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I am writing to you, children, because you know the Father." Let us claim these promises!

The pulpit is above the pew, meaning that if spiritual leaders fulfill their responsibilities faithfully, the spiritual condition of the nation is usually better. King Josiah set an example by publicly committing to follow all of God's commandments as written in the Book of the Law, and he remained faithful to that promise. The people followed his example, and there was a revival! Let pastors and church leaders rise up and lead, for the pulpit always stands above where the congregation sits.

Josiah continued to remove mediums, spiritists, household gods, idols, and all the detestable things found in the land to fulfill the laws written in the book Hilkiah the priest had found. There was no king before or after Josiah who turned to the LORD with all his heart, soul, and strength according to the Law of Moses.

Despite Josiah's efforts, the sins of his predecessors had gone too far, and the judgment of Babylonian captivity was inevitable.

Pharaoh Necho, the king of Egypt, went to fight the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went to confront him. God had commanded Necho to fight the Assyrians, but when Necho warned Josiah not to interfere with God's plan, Josiah refused to listen. As a result, Necho's archers struck Josiah down at Megiddo. His servants took him in a chariot to Jerusalem, where he died and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. The people mourned for him deeply.

If Josiah had heeded God's instructions, he would not have died in that way. Yet, we all struggle with stubbornness—so let us pray for God's help to surrender fully to Him.

The people of Judah took Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, who was twenty-three years old, and made him king. He reigned for three months and did evil in the eyes of the LORD. Pharaoh Necho captured him, imposed a heavy tribute on the land, and appointed Eliakim, another son of Josiah, as king. Necho changed his name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he ruled for eleven years while doing evil in the eyes of the LORD.

During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to conquer the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years before rebelling. After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin succeeded him. The Babylonian officials besieged Jerusalem, and Jehoiachin surrendered along with his family, nobles, craftsmen, and warriors.

Nebuchadnezzar took ten thousand captives, leaving only the poorest people behind. He also carried away the treasures of the LORD's temple and the royal palace, including the golden articles Solomon had made.

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, as king, changing his name to Zedekiah.

At first glance, Nebuchadnezzar may seem like a ruthless king, but he was also a thoughtful strategist and a ruler who valued what was truly precious. Notably, he never defiled the sacred articles of the temple—he treated them with great respect! Eventually, when he came to know who God was, he worshipped Him appropriately.

This astonishing story is part of the dramatic narrative in the prophetic book of Daniel. It is a thrilling account that you should read again and again!

When I read Daniel chapter 2, I feel as if I am soaring above the earth, looking down at Mount Kilimanjaro, the Great Rift Valley, the Serengeti, the Nile River, the Indian Ocean, the Congo River, the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara Desert, Lake Victoria, and other magnificent landmarks across the globe!

The same God of grace who worked in Daniel's life is still working in our lives today—Hallelujah!

The Kings of Israel in the Order of Their Reigns, They Are:

Name, Years of Reign, End of Reign, and Significant Events During Their Rule

Saul – 40 years. He was killed in battle against the Philistines and was succeeded by Ish-bosheth. He was anointed under opposition.

Ish-bosheth – 2 years. He was killed by conspirators and succeeded by David, who was declared king but was not anointed.

David – 40 years. He died and was succeeded by Solomon. He brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Solomon – 40 years. He died and was succeeded by Rehoboam, who ruled Judah, while Jeroboam became king of Israel during Rehoboam's reign. He built the First Temple.

Jeroboam I – 22 years. He died and was succeeded by Nadab. He seized power during a civil war that divided the united kingdom. Judah retained the

Davidic dynasty.

Nadab – 2 years. He was killed by Baasha, son of Ahijah, who took his place.

Baasha – 24 years. He died and was succeeded by Elah.

Elah – 2 years. He was killed by Zimri, who succeeded him.

Zimri – 7 days. He committed suicide by setting the royal palace on fire. A brief civil war broke out between the houses of Tibni and Omri, during which Tibni died, and Omri became king.

Omri – 12 years. He died and was succeeded by his son Ahab. He established Samaria as the capital city of Israel.

Ahab – 22 years. He was killed in battle and succeeded by his son Ahaziah.

Ahaziah – 2 years. He suffered severe injuries and was succeeded by his brother Joram (Jehoram).

Joram (Jehoram) – 12 years. He was killed by Jehu, who succeeded him.

Jehu – 28 years. He died and was succeeded by Jehoahaz. He killed both the king of Israel and the king of Judah.

Jehoahaz – 17 years. He died and was succeeded by Jehoash (Joash).

Jehoash (Joash) – 16 years. He died and was succeeded by Jeroboam II.

Jeroboam II – 41 years. He died and was succeeded by Zechariah. He was the last king from the house of Jehu.

Zechariah – 6 months. He was killed by Shallum, son of Jabesh, who took his place.

Shallum – 1 month. He was killed by Menahem, son of Gadi, who succeeded him.

Menahem – 10 years. He died and was succeeded by Pekahiah.

Pekahiah – 2 years. He was killed by Pekah, son of Remaliah, who took his place.

Pekah – 20 years. He was killed by Hoshea, son of Elah, who succeeded him.

Hoshea – 9 years. He was captured and taken to Assyria.

The Bible Fandom provides these estimates.

Pray for Others
Let us strive to walk in the light as Christ is in the light. The Lord turned Job's captivity when he prayed not only for himself but for those who opposed him. When he felt a deep desire for the souls that wronged him to receive help, he himself found deliverance. Let us pray—not just for ourselves—but for those who have hurt us and continue to do so. Pray, pray—especially in your mind. Do not give the Lord rest; for His ears are open to sincere, persistent, and humble prayers when the soul humbles itself before Him.

There are those around you who are sorrowful, who need words of compassion, love, kindness, and our humble, heartfelt prayers that express true concern.

Questions:

1. How did King Josiah die?

2. What is the reward of wickedness?

3. Who ruled Judah after Josiah?

4. Which king of Judah was taken captive to Babylon?

5. Who were the people who remained in Jerusalem without being taken into captivity?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Isaiah 57:15.

[15] For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Prayer: Father, thank You for reviving our spirits when we repent. Help us to read Your Word and to experience revival and reformation in our church, our homes, and our nation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Go through the chart of the names of kings below—step by step.

DAY 146 (May 25)

TOPIC: The Last Kingdom of Judah

(2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 35; Isaiah 45)



Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to reign, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. He did evil in the sight of the LORD and was stubborn, mocking the messengers God sent to him. Zedekiah was the last king of Judah before the third and final exile to Babylon. Although the prophet Jeremiah advised him to follow the orders of the king of Babylon, Zedekiah refused to listen to the prophet's counsel. He was not even willing to protect Jeremiah from harm.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar came with his entire army to fight against Jerusalem. They set up camp around the city and built siege works all around it. The city was under siege, and there was severe famine within it. Eventually, a breach was made in the city wall. All the soldiers fled at night through a gate near the king's garden. Although the Babylonians surrounded the city, they pursued the king and captured him on the plains of Jericho, where his entire army scattered and abandoned him.

Zedekiah was taken to Nebuchadnezzar, who killed his sons before his eyes, then blinded him, put him in chains, and took him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar

later returned to Jerusalem and burned down the temple of the LORD, the royal palace, and all the houses of the people. He demolished the walls around Jerusalem and carried into exile the remaining people in the city, along with those who had defected to him. He only left behind the poorest people to work in the vineyards and fields.

The Babylonians seized the bronze articles, such as pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons, and all other vessels of gold and silver. They also took the bronze pillars and decorative pomegranates. The high priest, Seraiah, and his deputy, Zephaniah, were also taken. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the Babylonian guard, oversaw the destruction and appointed Gedaliah as governor over those left behind.

When people came to Gedaliah to express their fears, he reassured them, saying they should not be afraid but serve the king of Babylon, and it would go well with them. However, they did not like this advice. Ishmael, one of the royal family members, went to Gedaliah, struck him down, and killed him. Afterward, they fled to Egypt, fearing the Babylonians.

In the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's exile to Babylon, Evil-Merodach, the king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, released Jehoiachin from prison. He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor above the other kings in Babylon. Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes and ate at the king's table for the rest of his life, receiving a daily allowance. Without a doubt, his stubbornness in rejecting the prophets had left him completely.

The people who were taken into exile served the kings of Babylon until the kingdom of Persia rose to power, fulfilling the word of the LORD spoken through the prophet Jeremiah—that the land would enjoy its Sabbaths while it lay desolate for seventy years.

When parents fail to raise their children in the ways of the LORD, they expose them to the danger of calamity. Whatever seeds parents plant in their children's lives will surely yield a harvest. Likewise, when leaders fail to do what is right, they allow their communities to be stripped of their best resources and left in ruins.

Some sufferings come through God's wisdom to draw us closer to His throne of grace. He softens and humbles His children through sorrow and trials. This world is God's workshop, where He shapes us for heavenly purposes. He uses the pruning knife to refine our hearts, removing sharpness and flaws, fitting us perfectly into His heavenly building. Through tribulations and distress, a Christian is purified and strengthened to develop a character that reflects

Christ's example.

Often, God's punishments come upon a few so that many may be saved from similar consequences. Examples such as Uzzah, Korah, and others serve as warnings.

As parents and leaders, we must train our children in the ways of the LORD and choose to do what is right in God's eyes, so that things may go well for our families and communities.

In the first year of Cyrus, the king of Persia, the word of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The LORD stirred the spirit of Cyrus, who issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom, declaring:

"This is what Cyrus, king of Persia, says: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build a temple for Him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of His people among you—may the LORD their God be with them, and let them go up."

King Cyrus of Persia was a servant of the LORD prophesied about 150 years earlier. God prepared him to assist in rebuilding the temple, support His people, subdue nations before him, and restore what was broken. He provided resources for the work, including gold, timber, horses, and donkeys. Although Cyrus was a Persian, he recognized the LORD as the one true God and served Him with reverence.

Try reading the story of Cyrus as a child—it is an incredible account of how he was taken in by childless parents and escaped death as an infant.

When we strive to bring others to Christ, carrying the burden of souls in our prayers, our hearts will be touched by the reviving power of God's grace. Our dedication to the Lord's work will shine more brightly, and our Christian lives will become more sincere, more zealous, and more prayerful.

Questions:

1. Who was Gedaliah?

2. What did Evil-Merodach do for Jehoiachin?

3. What punishment did Zedekiah receive for not listening?

4. How was Cyrus a servant of God?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

The Names of the Rulers of Judah, Their Reign Periods, and the Nature of Their Rule (All Descendants of David Except the Illegitimate Ruler)

King Rehoboam (930-913 BC). Evil. 17 years. Son of Solomon; mother: Naamah the Ammonite.
1 Kings 11:42; 14:31; 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:16

King Abijah (Abijam) (913-911 BC). Evil. 3 years. Son of Rehoboam; mother: Maakah (Micaiah), a descendant of Absalom, the son of David.
1 Kings 14:31; 15:8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-23

King Asa (911-870 BC). Good. 41 years. Son of Abijah; mother unknown, grandmother: Maakah.
1 Kings 15:8-24; 2 Chronicles 13:23-16:14

King Jehoshaphat (870-848 BC). Good. 25 years. Son of Asa; mother: Azubah.
1 Kings 15:24; 22:41-51; 2 Chronicles 17:1-21:1

King Jehoram (848-841 BC). Evil. 8 years. Son of Jehoshaphat; mother unknown.
2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21:1-20

King Ahaziah (841 BC). Evil. 1 year. Son of Jehoram; mother: Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
2 Kings 8:24-29; 9:14-26; 2 Chronicles 22:1-12

Queen Mother Athaliah (Illegitimate Ruler) (841-835 BC). Evil. 7 years. Daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
2 Kings 8:26; 11:1-20; 2 Chronicles 21:6; 22:2, 22:9-23:21

King Joash (Jehoash) (835-796 BC). Good. 40 years. Grandson of Athaliah and son of Ahaziah; mother: Zibiah of Beersheba.
2 Kings 11:1-12:21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-23; 24:27

King Amaziah (796-781 BC). Good. 29 years. Son of Joash; mother: Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.
2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chronicles 24:27-25:28

King Uzziah (Azariah) (781-740 BC). Started well but turned evil later. 52 years. Son of Amaziah; mother: Jecoliah of Jerusalem.
2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23

King Jotham (Co-reigned during his father's illness and officially ruled later) (740-736 BC). Good. 16 years. Son of Uzziah; mother: Jerusha, daughter of Zadok.
2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 26:21-23 (regent); 26:23-27:9 (king)

King Ahaz (736-716 BC). Evil. 16 years. Son of Jotham; mother unknown.
2 Kings 15:38; 16:20; 2 Chronicles 27:9-28:27

King Hezekiah (716-687 BC). Good. 29 years. Son of Ahaz; mother: Abijah, daughter of Zechariah.
2 Kings 16:20; 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 28:27-32:33

King Manasseh (697-642 BC). Evil. 55 years. Son of Hezekiah; mother: Hephzibah.
2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 32:33-33:20

King Amon (642-640 BC). Evil. 2 years. Son of Manasseh; mother: Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.
2 Kings 21:18-26; 2 Chronicles 33:20-25

King Josiah (640-609 BC). Good. 31 years. Son of Amon; mother: Jedidah, daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.
2 Kings 21:26; 23:30; 2 Chronicles 33:25-35:27

King Jehoahaz (609 BC). Evil. 3 months. Son of Josiah; mother: Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.
2 Kings 23:30-34; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4

King Jehoiakim (Name changed from Eliakim by Pharaoh Neco, indicating vassal status) (609-598 BC). Evil. 11 years. Son of Josiah; brother of Eliakim/Jehoahaz; mother: Zebidah, daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.
2 Kings 23:34-24:6; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8

King Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah; called Jeconiah in the New Testament) (598-597 BC). Evil. 3 months. Son of Jehoiakim; mother: Nehushta, daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.
2 Kings 24:6-17; 2 Chronicles 36:8-10

King Zedekiah (Name changed to Zedekiah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, indicating vassal status) (597-586 BC). Evil. 11 years. Son of Josiah; uncle of Jehoiachin; mother: Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah (also mother of King Jehoahaz).
2 Kings 24:17-25:30; 2 Chronicles 36:10-13; Jeremiah 52:1-3; 37-39; Ezekiel

17:13-16

Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, the Son of God (30 AD – Forever). Eternal. Sinless. Son of God; mother: Mary of Nazareth, a descendant of King David. Matthew 1:1-17, 20; Luke 1:26-38; 2:5; 3:23-38; Revelation 12:1-17

All dates are estimates and may vary according to different scholars.

Agape Ministry. May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Isaiah 45:1-3.

[1-3] Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Prayer: Thank You because You know us and have called us by our names. Thank You, we ask to live in Your will, Lord, and to help remove the chains of the enemy. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of King Zedekiah, his disobedience and what happened to him. Include the utensils taken away such as bronze vessels, pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons, and vessels of gold and silver.

DAY 147 (May 26)

TOPIC: The Example of Ezra the Priest

Ezra was a priest and a scribe of the Law of Moses. The Book of Ezra is a historical account and a record of genealogies. This book was written around 450 B.C. The key figures include King Cyrus, the priest Ezra, the prophet Haggai, the prophet Zechariah, King Darius, King Ahasuerus, and the leader Zerubbabel. In the Scriptures of Jeremiah and Isaiah, God promised His people that they would return from Babylonian exile after 70 years. Cyrus was the instrument God used to bring about their return (Isaiah 45:1 and 44:28). Families from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the priests and the Levites, and those whose hearts God had moved, returned to rebuild the house of God, the wall, and to restore spiritual services.

Ezra 1:5 shows that Ezra was willing to go; he was a leader and a teacher of the Scriptures. This verse carries a profound meaning that challenges us to do the same: "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). Zerubbabel responded to the Lord's call and went to rebuild the temple around 538 B.C., while Ezra helped revive the knowledge of the Scriptures in 457 B.C., and Nehemiah rebuilt the wall in 444 B.C. Ezra was called into service the same year that King Ahasuerus issued the decree to restore Jerusalem—a decree connected to Daniel 9:24-27. Read further about the 2300-day prophecy in Daniel chapters 8 and 9. The writings in the Book of Ezra fill in the historical gaps in the Book of Daniel, especially regarding the prophetic ministry of Christ and His work on our behalf.

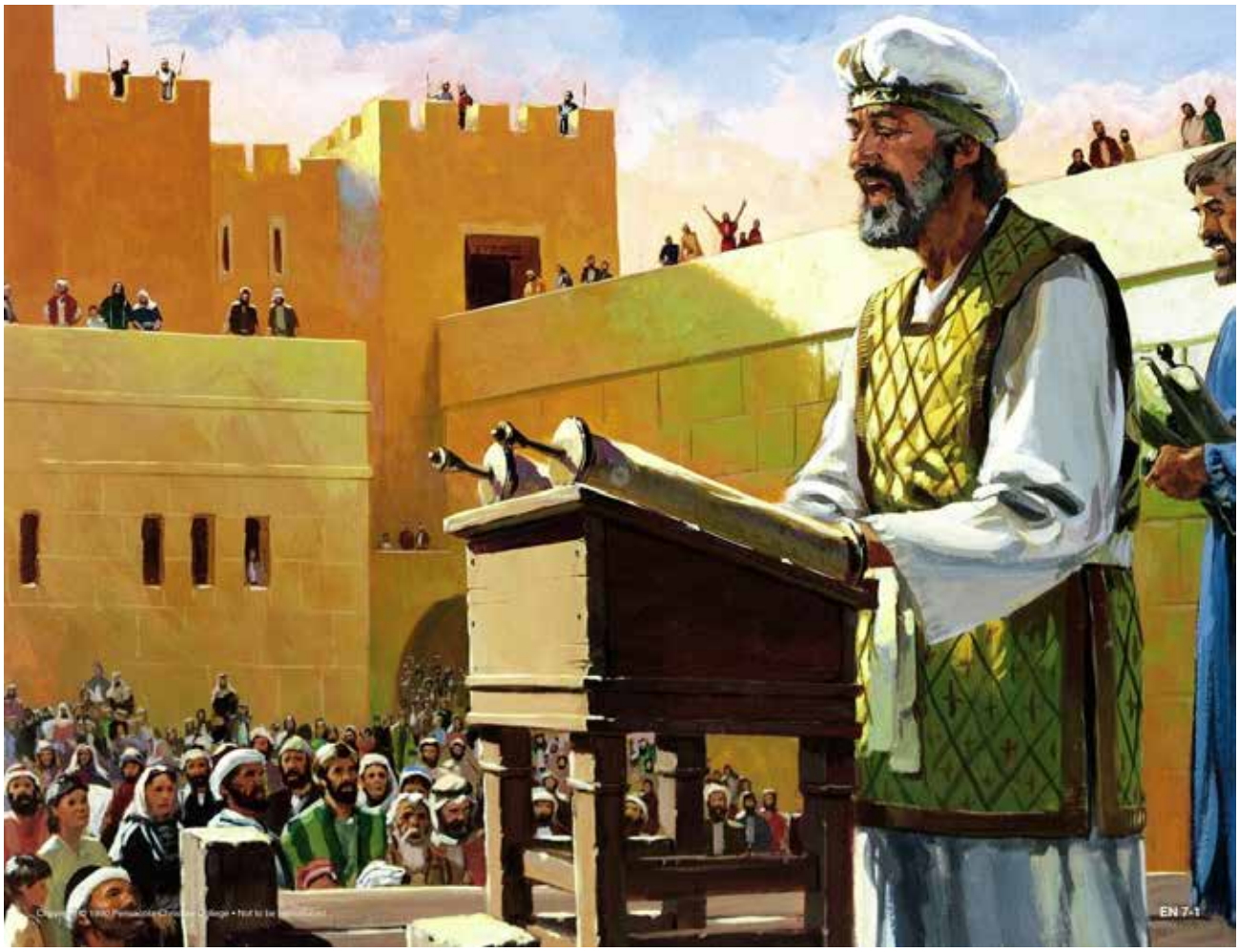
The timeline includes the 70 years that began in 457 B.C., the 490 years ending in 34 A.D., the 2300 days (which symbolize 2300 years), the 490 years, the remaining 1810 years, and the significant year of 1844. Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah were responsible for spiritual revival and reformation among the returning exiles.

After the exile, the captives were allowed to return during the reign of the Medes and Persians under King Cyrus. Zerubbabel was the first to return with 50,000 people to build a new temple. They organized themselves, gathered materials, and began construction. However, the work proceeded slowly due to opposition and threats from their enemies. Construction halted for two years but was eventually completed after twenty years. They then celebrated

the Passover feast and purified themselves for seven days before dedicating the temple.

Some people, like Daniel and Ezekiel, as well as other elders or those content to live in Babylon, did not return but remained in exile. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah do not conclude on a hopeful note. Sin is a serious issue that spreads easily and quickly. The greatest challenge does not come from external enemies but from within—when those who know God's revealed will fail to follow it. Remaining faithful to the Lord and adhering to His instructions is a significant test for God's people. Ezra understood that the only true power for change comes from diligently studying, understanding, and applying the Scriptures.

To fulfill the beginning portion of the prophecy of the 70 weeks and the 2300 evenings and mornings (both of which started in 457 B.C.), God intervened through His grace and influenced King Artaxerxes I to allow Ezra and a group of Israelites to return to Jerusalem. Ezra sought the king's protection for their journey and also secured financial and physical provisions needed for the temple services (Ezra 7:11-28). The main themes of these two books (Ezra and Nehemiah) are God's providence, His faithfulness, and His covenant. God fulfilled His promises despite the narrow-mindedness, confusion, distraction,



and stubbornness of His people. Through His servants, He called them out of their spiritual lethargy into revival and reformation.

Ezra was led by the Holy Spirit and became an inspiring influence on both the young and the old. Many people in Jerusalem, having returned from exile, were willing to obey God, even to the point of ending their pagan relationships. Ezra was strengthened by these faithful people. In a great public assembly during heavy rain, Ezra read aloud the names of those involved in unlawful marriages. Many listened and chose to abandon their sinful ways.

Jesus Christ, our Creator, Savior, and the greatest leader of all, humbled Himself before a fallen world. He offered His life as the ultimate sacrifice for all generations and for eternity. Therefore, even though we are sinful and weak, we can find strength through our hope and faith in Him. My response is: Jesus, I find strength in You. I will follow You and live by trusting in You, even when faced with opposition.

The genealogies recorded in this book remind us that this is a true historical account and that God's promises are always fulfilled. It is likely that many returning exiles left friends and relatives behind in Babylon and thought of them often. Sometimes, in life, we must be willing to leave behind friends, family, or others who refuse to walk with us, so that we may accomplish greater things for ourselves and for the glory of God.

When reading these lists of names, one question arises: IS MY NAME WRITTEN THERE? This question applies to you and me! We may wonder why the Bible includes such long lists of names, but the answer is simple: it is a record of history and a testimony of the choices people made. It confirms the truth of prophecy. Indeed, God knows each of us personally and cares deeply about the smallest details of our lives. As the psalmist said about our records, even the place of our birth matters to God: "The LORD will write in the register of the peoples: 'This one was born in Zion.'" (Psalm 87:6). For instance, when He counts me, He will say, "This one was born in Bariadi, Tanzania!" This encourages me because it means God cares about every detail of my life more than I could ever comprehend. Surely, there are even greater things God will reveal to us when we reach heaven!

There is a record of names in the Lamb's Book of Life. I am deeply grateful that my name and yours were written there the moment we accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. What do you say, my friend?

The once-desolate city of Jerusalem was now being inhabited again, and even choirs were organized to sing praises.

There are souls who have lost their courage—speak to them and pray for them. There are those who hunger for the Bread of Life—read God's Word to them. There are spiritual wounds that no earthly medicine can heal—pray for these people and bring them to Jesus Christ. In all your efforts, Christ will be present to influence the hearts of people.

Questions:

1. Explain the roles of Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah.

Key Verse: Ezra 7:10,11.

[10,11] For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, set my heart to seek Your law, to do it, and to teach it to others. Fill us with the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Activity: Build the Temple

1. Story: Explain that after the Israelites returned from exile, they rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem.

2. Collect boxes or blocks and let the children build the temple and the walls around it.

3. Discussion: Talk about how the temple represents God's presence, and how, even after it was destroyed and rebuilt, God's people still needed to remember and obey His Word.

Make a scroll/book: Ezra read the Law of Moses to the people from a scroll. Tell the young people to read aloud to others, imitating how Ezra taught the people.

DAY 148 (May 27)

TOPIC: Ezra and Nehemiah – We Cannot Come Down from the Wall



The book of Nehemiah is historical. It was written by Ezra and Nehemiah themselves. Many believe Ezra was more involved, and these books were originally one but were later separated. The main characters include Nehemiah the cupbearer, Ezra the priest, Sanballat, and Tobiah. Jerusalem had a temple, but there was no wall to provide security. It took 52 days to build the walls. Nehemiah says:
"When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God."

In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, the word of the LORD spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. Cyrus issued a proclamation

throughout his kingdom that God had commanded him to build a house for Him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Cyrus allowed the people to return and rebuild the house of the LORD and promised to assist them with resources and materials. He also helped with transportation to facilitate their journey.

Cyrus released the articles belonging to the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon. These items were handed over by the treasurer and counted, and Sheshbazzar took them back. About 50,000 people, including Zerubbabel, returned to Jerusalem. Upon arrival, the people gave generously for the rebuilding of God's house.

Some people who sought to disrupt the mission pretended to want to help, but Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest told them, "You have no part with us in building a house for our God. We alone will build it, as King Cyrus of Persia commanded." These opponents hired people to discourage the builders, such as Tattenai, but God helped them to complete the work. When they finished, they praised the LORD with trumpets and cymbals, giving thanks to Him. However, those who remembered the magnificent temple built by Solomon wept because the new structure seemed inferior, though there were also loud shouts of joy.

Another significant event is that the elders who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple mourned because the new building seemed unimpressive. Nehemiah requested permission from the king to go and rebuild Jerusalem, and after returning to his position as the king's cupbearer, he sought permission again and returned for a second time. Nehemiah was deeply distressed when he heard about the condition of Jerusalem. Ezra led the people in a renewed commitment to the LORD, teaching and explaining the law. They realized that if they wanted to be restored as a nation, they needed to obey the law.

The people gathered as one in the square before the city gate, and Ezra the scribe brought out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. He read it aloud to everyone who could understand.

Nehemiah reinstated the Levites and provided them with allowances so they could continue serving in the temple. He assigned everyone their duties—whether to guard or to provide wood for the offerings. Nehemiah prayed, "Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services."

Nehemiah saw people treading winepresses and doing work on the Sabbath. Others were bringing goods from the fields and loading them onto their donkeys. They brought all kinds of merchandise—fruits, fish, and other

goods—into Jerusalem and sold them to the people of Judah on the Sabbath. Nehemiah rebuked the leaders, saying, “What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day?”

He reminded them that their ancestors’ disobedience had brought disaster upon them and led to their captivity. Nehemiah commanded that the city gates be shut before sunset on Friday to prevent the entry of goods until the Sabbath was over. He also observed some merchants camping outside the wall, waiting for the Sabbath to end so they could sell their goods. Nehemiah warned them that he would arrest them if they returned, and after that, they no longer came back on the Sabbath.

Nehemiah instructed the Levites to purify themselves and guard the gates to ensure the sanctity of the Sabbath. The major reforms of the faith were handled by these two spiritual warriors—Ezra and Nehemiah.

Nehemiah also found that some Jews had married foreign women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Their children could not even speak the language of Judah. Nehemiah rebuked them severely—he beat some of them and pulled out their hair. He made the people swear an oath not to marry foreign women who did not fear God. He reminded them, “Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon, king of Israel, sinned? Even though he was loved by God and was the wisest man, foreign women led him into sin.”

Nehemiah ordered the expulsion of a priest who had married a foreign woman. Both Ezra and Nehemiah took strong actions to enforce spiritual purity. Ezra, in grief, pulled out the hair from his head and beard and sat down in astonishment. Even today, there is a great danger in forming close relationships or yoking ourselves with people who do not honor God. This puts us in serious spiritual jeopardy.

Nehemiah prayed to God concerning those who had married foreign women. The people came near to Ezra, who was weeping and confessing, and they made a covenant with God to separate from their foreign wives in accordance with the Law. Ezra urged them to confess their sins and avoid further guilt in Israel.

Nehemiah’s prayers were marked by a firm purpose. There is a need for Nehemiahs in the church today—not just people who can pray and preach, but those whose prayers and preaching are strengthened by a resolute purpose, zeal, and deep desires.

Consider this: the all-wise and all-powerful God had no other way to save us

except by coming to earth and enduring suffering and anguish. If He did that, we should recognize that the battle between good and evil is very intense. Jesus loves us more than we can comprehend—He loves us more than He loves Himself or than we love ourselves!

Perhaps the angels in heaven were the first to realize this truth. At first, some angels sided with Satan, while others remained with God but were not entirely sure of His great love. However, when they saw Jesus being humiliated, tortured, and finally killed, they were shocked and awed. Maybe they thought to themselves, "This God! How deeply He loves these human beings, even more than Himself!" This profound mystery will be told and cherished for all eternity.

After the chaos brought by Satan, the entire universe was at risk. But in His wisdom, God resolved the conflict once and for all. No one can deny that God loves us more than He loves Himself.

Let those who are spiritual reach out to these souls—pray with them and for them. Spend much time in prayer and in close study of the Word. Let everyone experience the truth of faith personally through the Holy Spirit, who will be given to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Questions:

1. How did Nehemiah deal with those who conducted business on the Sabbath?

2. Why did Ezra pull out his beard?

3. What sin did Solomon commit?

4. How many people returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel?

5. If a church leader today were to beat people and shave their heads to enforce spiritual reforms, how would the congregation react?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Nehemiah 13:23-25.

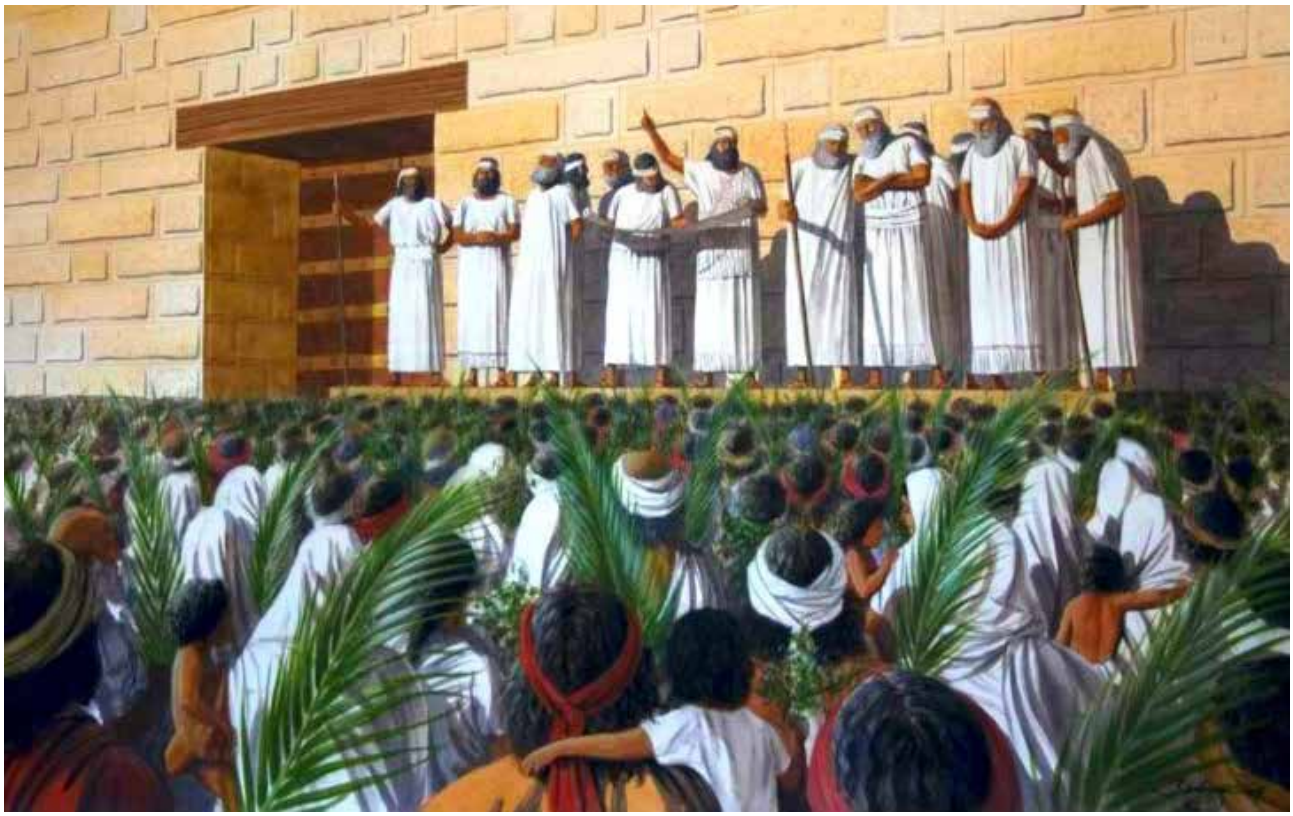
[23,25] In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, help me to choose friends according to Your will and not my desires. And when the time comes to marry, help me to prepare to be a good person and find a good wife/husband so that I may remain faithful. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss why Nehemiah was angry with the people who married unbelievers. Why was it important to know the Jewish language at that time? Talk about the dangers of friendship or marriage between a believer and an unbeliever.

DAY 149 (May 28)

TOPIC: Our God Will Fight for Us



As the cupbearer to the king of Persia, Nehemiah asked the people who had returned from Judah about the condition in Jerusalem. It had been 90 years since the first exiles returned to Judah. They told him that there was great distress and reproach because the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down and its gates burned with fire. Nehemiah sat down, wept, and mourned for several days, then fasted.

Indeed, prayer is a great secret to victory. He pleaded with God to listen to his prayers on behalf of His people, Israel. He said, “We have sinned, we have committed many evils against You, and we have not kept the commandments, statutes, or judgments that You commanded Your servant Moses.” He asked the LORD to incline His ear to His servants who feared Him and to grant them success. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the king—a dangerous job because he had to taste the king’s drinks before the king did to ensure they were not poisoned.

King Art*axerxes was the ruler at that time, and Nehemiah served him wine. Nehemiah had never appeared sad before the king, but after hearing the news about Jerusalem, his heart was heavy. It was risky to show sadness before the king, as it might suggest hidden intentions or conspiracies.

The king asked Nehemiah why he was sad—was he sick? Nehemiah replied that he was not ill but had sadness of heart. He said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates are burned with fire?" The king asked him what he wanted. Nehemiah responded, "If I have found favor in your sight, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried." The king, sitting beside the queen, asked how long the journey would take. Nehemiah gave him a time frame and also requested letters of authority for the leaders in Judah to support the work. He also asked for a letter to obtain timber and other materials. Nehemiah testified, "And the king granted my requests, because the gracious hand of my God was upon me."

Nehemiah arrived at the governors beyond the river, and the work of rebuilding began. However, when Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite heard that the work was progressing, they were disturbed because they opposed the work of the LORD. They mocked the builders. Tobiah said, "What they are building—even if a fox climbs on it, it will break down their stone wall." Despite their insults, Nehemiah continued to pray.

He inspected the work at night to avoid giving the opponents an opportunity to sabotage it. The people worked while also being on guard. They carried out the work with swords, spears, bows, and shields. Nehemiah stationed a trumpeter to sound the alarm if there was any danger because the workers were spread out. The builders did not remove their clothes when they slept and always carried their weapons, even when fetching water.

Nehemiah also instructed the people not to charge interest on loans to their fellow Jews or sell their brethren into slavery. Even today, it is a sin to exploit others with high-interest loans. Consult with those who fear God about what is just and fair. You may be oppressing the helpless without realizing it, but their cries reach their Father in heaven, and He will answer them.

Nehemiah believed, "Our God will fight for us," even amidst opposition. This same faith will sustain God's people during times of trouble. God is with us—but are we standing with and supporting others, or are we oppressing them?

The more God's people strive to do His will, the harder the enemy works to hinder them. Satan does not attack those who do nothing to disturb the

kingdom of darkness but targets those who are doing God's work. Some may think that because Nehemiah prayed and trusted God, he and the people would not need to do anything about their difficult situation. However, it is crucial to understand that God expects His people to do everything they can on their part while fully trusting Him for protection. It is by doing both that God fights for them.

Words of encouragement from leaders carry great power during hard times. Nehemiah encouraged the people by saying, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord!"

Sanballat sent a message, inviting Nehemiah to meet in the plains, intending to harm him. But Nehemiah replied, "I am doing a great work and cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it to go down to you?" Eventually, the enemies gave up, and Nehemiah finished the work.

The people gathered, and Ezra the scribe brought out the Law of Moses before the assembly. He read from dawn until noon before the people. Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and the people responded, "Amen, Amen!" They lifted their hands and bowed down in worship.

Some of the people wept because they realized they had forgotten God's law and committed many sins. Their hearts were moved. Ezra told them to go home and celebrate, not to mourn, because they had confessed their sins and God had helped them complete the work. He said, "The joy of the LORD is your strength."

The next day, they gathered again, read the Law, and discovered the Feast of Tabernacles. They cut branches and made booths, living in them for seven days. It had been a long time since this feast was celebrated. Even today, many people still observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Does your church celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles?

Ezra praised the LORD and gave Him glory. He recounted the history of God's faithfulness, from choosing Abraham to the people's sins that led to their exile. The people made a covenant to turn away from evil so they could be free and blessed. Different family leaders sealed the covenant.

Nehemiah stayed in Jerusalem for 12 years, then returned to serve the king before coming back to oversee the community. He also addressed social issues, such as helping families without charging interest and removing unworthy individuals from temple service. The people began to faithfully give tithes and offerings again.

The Scriptures encourage us to “pray without ceasing.” This does not mean spending all our time on our knees in formal prayer. Rather, it means living with a prayerful heart in all circumstances—whether on a bus, at school, washing dishes, or in church. You do not always need to close your eyes to pray; you can lift up holy hands without anger or disputing (1 Timothy 2:8). If a police officer says, “Hands up,” you obey—why not lift your hands to God in surrender and worship? One day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Prayer is our communication with God. He speaks to us through His Word, and we respond through prayer. God always listens to us. We cannot weary Him with our prayers.

We are living in challenging times. The events in our world require every follower of Christ to be deeply committed to their relationship with God. To strengthen this relationship and meet our emotional, social, physical, financial, and spiritual needs, we must learn the power of prayer. We should plead with the Lord, as the disciples did, saying, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

We must emphasize three key elements in our prayers: Sincerity, Diligence, and Fervency. Research these words to understand their profound meaning and share your findings with us!

Intercessory prayer is a ministry that even children and youth can participate in. God is our Father, and we can speak to Him at any time about our concerns and the needs of others. Write down your prayers so that when they are answered, you can remember to give thanks.

We must remain focused on the work God has given us. The enemy wants us to stop, but we must press on and keep praying.

Questions:

1. Why was Nehemiah sad?
2. What was the name of the king who ruled at that time?
3. What did the king give Nehemiah?
4. Why did Nehemiah and the builders carry weapons?
5. What message did Sanballat send?
6. Why did Nehemiah say he could not come down from the wall?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Nehemiah 9:6,7.

[6,7] Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant, which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against You. Both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Prayer: Lord, we pray that You hear our prayers. We confess our sins. Yes, we have sinned against You by not keeping the laws and judgments You set in the Bible. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so we may have enmity with sin. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Nehemiah serving as the king's cupbearer, and his conversation with the king.

DAY 150 (May 29)

TOPIC: The Lord Says, "Come, Let Us Reason Together"

The prophet Isaiah wrote around 700 B.C. Isaiah came from a royal lineage. The name Isaiah means "Salvation is of the LORD." The Book of Isaiah is called the Gospel Book of the Old Testament because of its prophecies about the Messiah. The prophets who lived during Isaiah's time included Hosea and Micah. A prophet does not only foretell the future but also speaks to the people on behalf of God. In this passage, the nation is called to return to God.

Israel had committed evil. They carved wood—some pieces were used for firewood, others for building, and others were made into idols to worship. This was a great sorrow. Israel was a wealthy and powerful nation but became poor in just 200 years because they disobeyed God's commandments and worshipped foreign gods. They broke God's laws. The LORD had sent many prophets over the years to call them back from evil ways and to keep His commandments, but they hardened their hearts and continued to worship idols. If they had remained faithful to God, these blessings would still be with them today. They would have enjoyed honor and wealth, and the LORD would have protected them from their enemies. Their cities would have been examples of beauty, success, and order. The sins they committed were serious, and the consequences were heavy.

The first half of the book of Isaiah emphasizes the need for salvation; the second half presents the prophecy of the Savior. He calls heaven and earth to witness what He says. First, we must recognize our condition, then we will be in the right state to humble ourselves before God and ask for forgiveness, cleansing, and strength to resist temptation and live pure lives. God is not pleased with religious rituals that lack sincerity of heart; He desires true worship from the heart and a living, joyful relationship with each of us.

We thank our dear Almighty God for caring so much as to reveal our sins and offer us a remedy. I must always be ready to follow where He leads. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Isaiah spoke words of warning and encouragement to his people. He lived during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. This means he lived during the last seven kings of Israel, from Jeroboam II to



Hoshea. His prophecies were not only for Judah but also for Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Tyre, Edom, Arabia, Babylon, Philistia, and even the fall of Satan in heaven (Isaiah 14). The kings Hezekiah and Sennacherib are mentioned here, as well as how Hezekiah was healed of his illness but failed to give testimony of God's great works and instead displayed his wealth and pride.

Through Isaiah, the LORD said, "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand." Woe to the sinful nation, a people burdened with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

Because of their disobedience, the Lord asked them, "Why do you bring so many sacrifices before Me? What are they to Me?" The LORD wanted them to wash themselves, cleanse their sins, seek justice, defend the oppressed, and plead the case of the widow and the orphan. He said to them, "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall become like wool. But if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword."

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted. He saw seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. They praised God's glory, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory." The temple was filled with smoke from the LORD's glory. Isaiah cried out, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

One of the seraphim flew to him with a live coal from the altar, touched his mouth, and said, "Your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for." Then Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah responded humbly, "Here am I. Send me." This vision never left Isaiah's thoughts. In times of trouble, he knew that the LORD was on the throne and in control. He spoke words of comfort to the people, telling them that one day God would send a Redeemer, and the government would be on His shoulders. He would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and His reign would never end.

Isaiah encouraged the people by saying, "Though the mountains be shaken, My kindness will never depart from you." He also urged, "Seek the LORD while He may be found."

Isaiah described heaven in chapters 35, 65, and 66. The lame will leap, the blind will see, and the deaf will hear. There will be no death in heaven or the new earth. The lion will eat straw like an ox, and wolves and lambs will feed together. Isaiah reminds us to lift our voices like trumpets and speak out against wrongdoing. He says that the feet of those who bring the Good News of God's kingdom, peace, and salvation are beautiful.

Do you want to have beautiful feet? Beautiful feet are not just about appearance—they represent carrying the light of God's Word to others. Although you may be young, the LORD has given you His Spirit and called you to share the Good News, to heal the brokenhearted, comfort those who mourn, set the captives free, and proclaim that Jesus Christ is coming back.

God is willing and ready to listen and answer our heartfelt prayers in all situations, which is a great comfort. He is a loving Father who cares when things go well and when life's hardships bring sorrow, pain, and fear. When we feel like crying out, "God, where are You?" it is reassuring to know that He is near through prayer. Just as Isaiah was given a heavy message to deliver, we are entrusted with the same message of the Messiah today.

Oh, if only sincere and faith-filled prayers would arise everywhere! "Give me souls buried in the mire of sin, or else I die!" Bring them to the knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus.

Questions:

1. What was Isaiah's relationship with the kingdom?

2. What prophecies did Isaiah give about the Messiah?

3. What did Isaiah see the year King Uzziah died?

4. How many types of angels are mentioned?

5. If God asks, "Whom shall I send?" how will you respond?

6. Why did Israel lose its wealth?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Isaiah 35:4-6

[4-6] Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, He will come with vengeance; with divine retribution He will come to save you." Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Prayer:
Thank You, Lord, because You have prepared a new heaven and a new earth, and You have told us not to be afraid. We rejoice to hear that the eyes of the blind will be opened and that all who are sick or suffering will be healed. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity:

1. Place your hands on a sheet of paper and trace around them with a pencil or pen.

2. Write the words "I have called you by name, you are Mine" from Isaiah 43 inside the outline, then above it write the message: "God has written my name in His hand."

3. Make a megaphone out of a paper plate and hold it close to your mouth as you say: "Here am I, send me, Lord" in connection with Isaiah's call to be a prophet (Isaiah 6:8).

DAY 151 – May 30

TOPIC: More Messages from Isaiah



Israel, which was the chosen nation, became proud, and Isaiah compares them to proud daughters or women who walk with outstretched necks and seductive eyes, walking with graceful steps and jingling ornaments on their feet. A warning was given that the LORD would strike them with scabs on their heads and expose their nakedness. The LORD would take away their beauty—the anklets, earrings, bracelets, headbands, sashes, perfume bottles, charms, signet rings, fine robes, purses, mirrors, linen garments, and veils. Instead of fragrance, there will be stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. Their men will fall by the sword, and mourning will follow.

Isaiah was known as a major prophet because his book is longer than other prophetic books. The book of Isaiah is considered the Gospel of the Old Testament. The Gospel is the good news of humanity's redemption through Jesus Christ, who was prophesied in Isaiah's writings. The good news is about Jesus' birth, His life among people, His death, and resurrection. While

Isaiah continued to talk about the physical captivity of the Israelites, he also emphasized the coming of the Messiah who would deliver us from spiritual bondage—a bondage far more severe and with greater consequences than physical captivity. If we do not escape this spiritual bondage, we will be lost forever.

The prophet Isaiah was shown the suffering of the Messiah and the life He would live, as described in Isaiah 53:
He was despised and rejected by men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom people hide their faces,
He was despised, and we did not value Him.
Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
Yet we considered Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He was pierced for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him,
And by His wounds, we are healed.

All of us, like sheep, have gone astray;
Each of us has turned to our own way,
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth;
By oppression and judgment, He was taken away.
Yet who of His generation considered
That He was cut off from the land of the living
For the transgression of my people He was punished.
He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
And though He had done no violence,
Nor was any deceit in His mouth,
He bore the sins of many and was numbered with the transgressors.

When people later read this prophecy, they understood the mission of the Messiah—to come and save people. Today, as we read this prophecy, let us accept Him, so He may see the results of His suffering and be satisfied, making many righteous and preparing us to one day enter heaven.

We will plant gardens and enjoy the work of our hands forever. If there is anything our families love with all our hearts, it is a garden! We will be descendants of the blessed ones, and before we even ask, we will receive answers. Won't it be joyful to touch lions and live peacefully with animals that were once fierce before sin? There will be nothing to harm us anymore.

It will be a new heaven and a new earth. We will gather for worship from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, to worship before the LORD, says the LORD.

The LORD will keep in perfect peace those whose hearts trust in Him. Let us trust and depend on the LORD. Isaiah speaks of the return from Babylonian captivity and concludes with the prophecy of a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no more wars, no more suffering, no more violence, no more fear, no more worries, no more hunger, no more thirst, no more sorrow, no more crying, and no more death. People will live peacefully as friends everywhere. This was Isaiah's message of hope during troubled times.

Today, we live in troubled times too—let us take heart and seek the face of the LORD. Just as a mother comforts her child, so will the LORD comfort us, and our hearts will rejoice, and our bones will flourish.

Bring your needs, your joys, your sorrows, your worries, and your fears before GOD. You cannot overburden Him; you cannot exhaust Him. He who counts the hairs on your head is not indifferent to the needs of His children. The LORD is full of compassion and mercy (James 5:11). His loving heart is touched by our grief, even when we voice it. Bring to Him every matter that troubles your mind.

There is nothing too great for Him to bear because He upholds the universe. Nothing that concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. No part of our experience is too dark for Him to read; no problem is too difficult for Him to resolve. No disaster can befall even the least of His children without His knowledge. No anxiety weighs on the heart, no joy brings delight, no sincere prayer escapes His attention. "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

The relationship between GOD and every soul is as distinct and complete as if there were no other soul on earth to share His care or as if He had given His beloved Son for that soul alone.

Begin to pray for souls; draw close to Christ, near to His side that was pierced for you. Let the spirit of gentleness and peace adorn your life. Let your sincere and humble prayers rise to Him for wisdom—not only to save your soul but also to save others.

Questions:

1. What wonderful things will be in heaven?

2. What does Isaiah 53 say about Jesus or the Messiah?

3. What are the characteristics of the daughters of Zion?

4. Why will there be no death in heaven?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Isaiah 40:28-31

[28-31] Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Prayer:
Thank You, Lord, because You do not grow tired or weary, and You give us new strength so that we can soar high and run without fainting or growing weary. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity:
Read Isaiah 3:16-24, 10, 11. Act it out by putting jingles on your feet, skipping around, and then reading these verses aloud.

DAY 152 (May 31)

TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Jeremiah

(Baruch the Scribe - 625 BC)



Jeremiah warned about the destruction that was coming upon Judah and urged the nation to confess, turn away from evil, and return to God. He reminds us that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure—who can understand it?" He was given a heavy message for the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Although he loved Judah, he loved God even more. Despite the sorrowful message, he delivered it and prayed for mercy. We too must obey God, even in difficult situations, for in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

The scribe of the prophet Jeremiah was called Baruch. He was willing to suffer, even though he came from a wealthy family, to assist the prophet in his work. Other main characters in this book include the kings of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar, the Rechabites, and Ebed-Melech the Cushite. Jeremiah's father was Hilkiah the priest.

When the good King Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, there was great confusion in the kingdom of Judah. The Assyrian empire, which had dominated the region, had collapsed, and even its famous city of Nineveh had been destroyed. Egypt and Babylon were at war, fighting over the remnants of Assyria. Pharaoh Neco took King Jehoahaz, who reigned for only three months. Jeremiah began his prophetic work during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. He also continued during the reign of Josiah's son, Jehoiakim, and later during the reign of Zedekiah.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah, being a young man, said, "Ah, Sovereign

Lord, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the Lord told him, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out His hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth, saying, "I have put My words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

Young children should know that they too are God's servants. Jeremiah was called while still a child—so if God calls you, be ready at all times. Let His hands touch your mouth, and do not be afraid.

Jeremiah lived both before and after Judah was taken captive to Babylon. He wept bitterly and is known as the "weeping prophet." He wrote the book of Lamentations, where he mourned for Jerusalem, describing how all the mighty men had been taken away, leaving the city desolate. Later, Jeremiah wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon, telling them to build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their produce, and allow their children to marry. He urged them to pray for the peace of the city where they were exiled because they would remain there for seventy years before returning home.

Jeremiah also spoke about the leaders of God's people who received wages but were unwilling to shepherd God's flock. The Lord instructed Jeremiah to go to the potter's house to learn that God is the potter and we are the clay. Can the clay tell the potter how to shape it? God also told Jeremiah to break a clay jar to symbolize how He would destroy the people who worship Baal and offer their children as sacrifices. Just as the potter's broken vessel could not be repaired, so would God destroy those who disobey Him.

When Pashhur the priest heard these prophecies, he beat Jeremiah and put him in stocks at the upper gate of Benjamin. Jeremiah told Pashhur that he and his people would go into exile. Jeremiah lamented, saying, "O Lord, You deceived me, and I was deceived; You overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me." Whenever he spoke, he cried out about violence and destruction. At times, he wanted to remain silent because of the ridicule, but the message was like a fire burning in his bones—he could not hold it in.

Jeremiah told King Zedekiah that God wanted him to obey King Nebuchadnezzar and keep his promises; but Zedekiah refused. When the Babylonians returned, because Zedekiah failed to pay tribute and submit to them, he fled the city. Nebuzaradan captured him and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon.

There, Zedekiah's sons were killed before his eyes, and then his own eyes were gouged out. It would have been better if he had heeded Jeremiah's words.

Babylon laid siege to the city, and there was a great famine. It had been 400 years since David ruled, and things had changed drastically. The Lord told Jeremiah to place a yoke on his neck to symbolize that the nations would be under Babylon's yoke. Hananiah broke the yoke, but the Lord declared that they would now have an iron yoke. Hananiah, the false prophet who misled the people with lies, died as a result.

When Jehudi read the scroll to King Jehoiakim, instead of repenting, the king burned the scroll despite pleas not to destroy the word of God. Jeremiah was later thrown into a cistern filled with mud. Ebed-Melech the Cushite approached the king and requested permission to rescue Jeremiah. The king allowed him to take thirty men to lift Jeremiah out of the cistern.

Gedaliah was appointed governor over the people who remained in Judah. Nebuzaradan, the commander of Babylon's army, gave Jeremiah the option to stay with Gedaliah or go to Babylon. Jeremiah warned the people not to go to Egypt or elsewhere, but they did not listen, and eventually, Gedaliah was assassinated.

God knows the plans He has for us—plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a future and a hope. He promised, "Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."

The Rechabites were a nomadic group known for their strict adherence to their ancestral commands—they did not drink wine, build houses, sow seeds, or plant vineyards (Jeremiah 35:6-7). Their loyalty stretched for over 200 years, from the time of Jehu (2 Kings 10:15) to Jeremiah's era. God used their faithfulness to teach Israel a lesson in obedience.

The Lord instructed Jeremiah to invite the Rechabites to the temple and offer them wine (Jeremiah 35:2). They refused, remaining faithful to their father Jonadab's command. Because of their obedience, God promised that Jonadab's descendants would always serve Him (Jeremiah 35:19).

We learn much from the Rechabites. They resisted cultural pressures and remained faithful to their principles. God desires His people to live in obedience and steadfastness.

Reflection Questions:

1. What did God say to Jeremiah when he claimed he was only a child?

2. Why is Jeremiah known as the “weeping prophet”?

3. What wrong did Pashhur commit?

4. What good thing did Ebed-Melech do?

5. What does “The heart is deceitful and beyond cure” mean?

6. What remarkable thing did the Rechabites do?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Jeremiah 29:11-13

[11-13] “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.”

Prayer:
Lord, thank You because You think only good thoughts towards us, and I call upon You and pray. Thank You for listening to me; I seek You with all my heart and I know I will find You, my Redeemer. In Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

Activity:

1. What do we know about Jeremiah?

2. What is his message? Is this message important in my life today?

3. Can I see Jesus in this chapter?

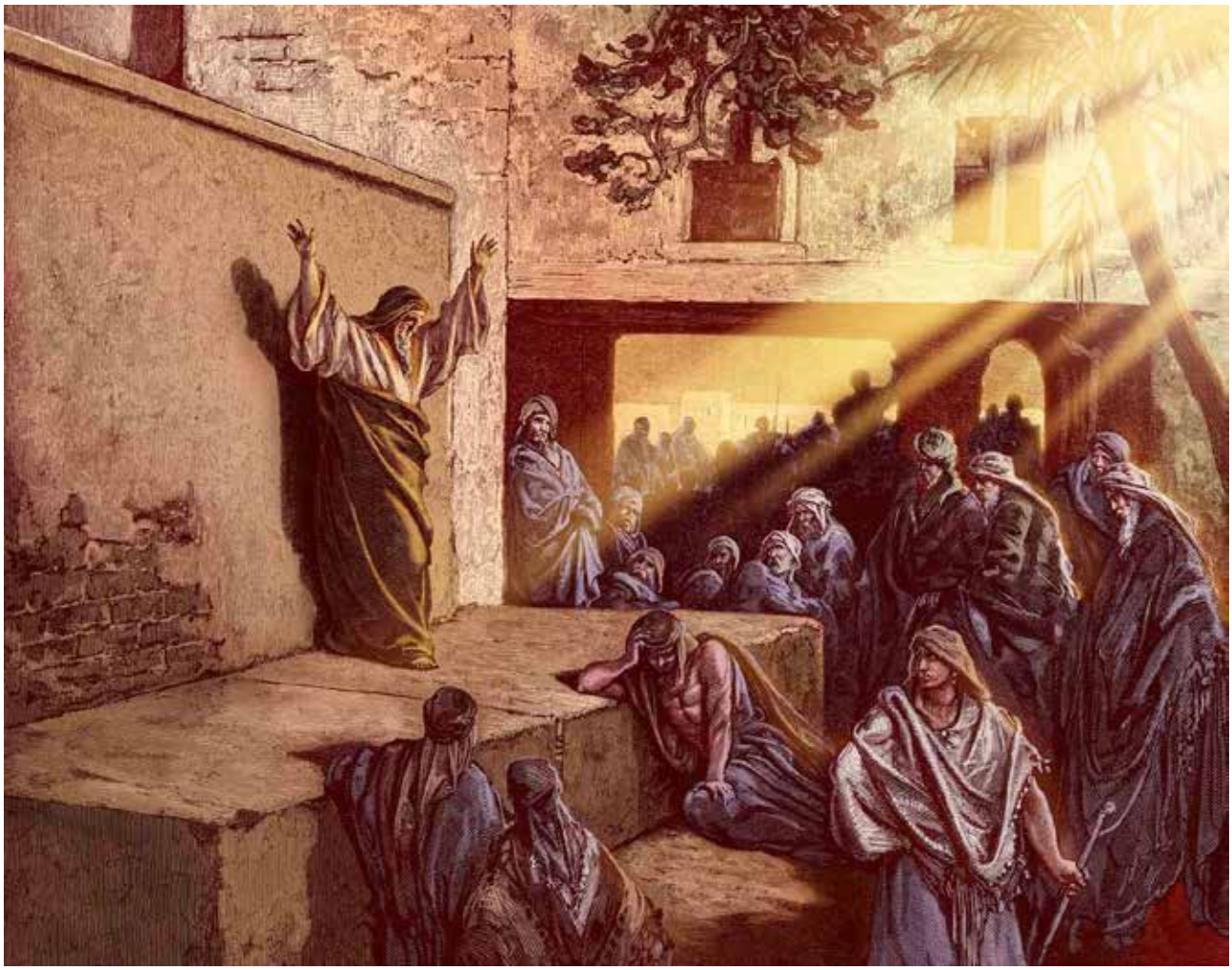
4. Can I see the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan in this chapter?

5. What will my response to the message be?

6. Why is Jeremiah called a watchman prophet?

DAY 153 (June 1)

TOPIC: The Further Message of Jeremiah



Everything that Jeremiah prophesied about Jerusalem came to pass. Many people were taken into exile, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The good thing is that these individuals continued to worship God in a foreign land. Their troubles drew them closer to God, and they were even willing to die for their faith. Although many call Jeremiah the "weeping prophet," and he indeed wrote the book of Lamentations, he was not the only one crying! Our God also weeps for His children when they put themselves in suffering. Sometimes, when reading the book of Jeremiah, it is hard to tell whether it is Jeremiah crying or God Himself!

Truly, the passage in John 3:16-17 is absolutely true—both in the Old and New Testaments:
"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever

believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

Indeed, our God sheds tears for us when we place ourselves in pain and distress. Today, as we hear His voice, let us not harden our hearts. His commandments are for our benefit and the benefit of our fellow human beings! In Zephaniah 3, God also rejoices over us with singing when we do not harm ourselves or others—when we live with true love. Today, let us pray for that true love—to love our neighbors as ourselves and to love God with all our hearts, minds, strength, and souls. In the glorious name of the Messiah, Amen! And then, the world will be like heaven on earth!

The Lord said, "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth." (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

He also told them that even the birds of the sky know when to migrate, but His people do not understand. Jeremiah emphasizes that God's people should not rely on humans more than God. "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water." (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

The book of Lamentations is a collection of poems or songs of sorrow and mourning. The title reflects Jeremiah as a prophet who laments. He wrote it after the Babylonians (or Chaldeans) destroyed Jerusalem. He describes how the faces of the elders were no longer respected, and young men were forced into hard labor. Even compassionate women resorted to eating their own children.

Jeremiah wrote Lamentations after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.. He had prophesied its downfall and witnessed it firsthand. The book reflects his deep emotional distress and teaches us that disobedience to God brings suffering and pain. Jeremiah pours out his sorrows to the Lord and prays for mercy.

"How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations!" (Lamentations 1:1)

Jeremiah knew the people had sinned, but perhaps he did not expect that God would use idol-worshiping nations to punish those who knew Him. Yet, in

the midst of this sorrow, he finds hope:

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for Him.’ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him. It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” (Lamentations 3:22-26)

God sees the foolishness of many of us and says:
“My people are fools; they do not know Me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.” (Jeremiah 4:22, NKJV)

Prayer:
Dear God, I am a teacher whether I want to be or not. People learn from my words and actions. Please teach me how to be a good teacher who honors You. Let others see Your words and actions through my life, and may they be drawn to You. Amen.

This work requires you to care for souls as someone who must give an account for them. The gentleness of Christ must fill the heart of the intercessor. If you love souls, you will show genuine concern for them. You will offer humble, sincere, and heartfelt prayers for those you visit. The fragrance of Christ’s love will be evident in your work. The One who gave His life for the world will cooperate with the selfless worker to touch human hearts.

Questions:

1. What was the benefit of being exiled to Babylon?

2. What is the book of Lamentations about?

3. According to Jeremiah, what is the only reason to boast?

4. Why is the one who trusts in man cursed?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Memory Verses in this book

Jeremiah 6:16 – This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

Jeremiah 33:3 – “Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

Jeremiah 1:5-7 – The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.”

Jeremiah 17:5 – This is what the Lord says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”

Prayer:
Thank You, Lord, that You knew us even before we were in our mothers’ wombs, and You set us apart to do Your work. We are ready to go where You send us; help us to obey You. We call to You and we know You will answer and show us great and unsearchable things we do not know. In Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

Activity:
Make clay pots or visit a potter, and then read and reflect on the lesson about what it means.

DAY 154 (June 2)

TOPIC: The Prophet Ezekiel



Ezekiel was taken captive during the second invasion of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. He lived during the same period as Daniel. Ezekiel received visions while in exile in Babylon near the Kebar River. He emphasizes individual responsibility, while the Israelites believed they would either be saved or perish together. Often, God instructed him to perform symbolic actions as signs of his prophetic message. God refers to Ezekiel as "Son of Man," representing humanity. Jesus was also called the Son of Man. Ezekiel encouraged the people by telling them that their captivity would end, and God would bring them back home.

Nebuchadnezzar treated them kindly, giving them fertile land to cultivate, and they built homes. Some lived in cities and even became wealthy. Others worked in the king's palace or his administration and held high positions, such as ministers. Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, was 30 years old when he began

his prophetic ministry, five years after being taken to Babylon, which is approximately 570 B.C. The name Ezekiel means “God strengthens.” Ezekiel ministered to people who were shameless and had hardened hearts. God promised to restore their glory after judgment so that everyone would know that He is the LORD.

One day, Ezekiel had a vision in which he saw the heavens open and four living creatures. Above them was the throne of God, which appeared like sapphire. He fell face down and heard a voice speaking to him. These four living beings had a human appearance but each had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight and gleamed like polished bronze. Each being had the face of a human in front, a lion on the right, an ox on the left, and an eagle at the back.

These visions were beyond his understanding and left him confused due to their complexity. Yet, Ezekiel witnessed remarkable harmony, for the creatures moved with perfect accuracy and unity. The Spirit is mentioned ten times in the first three chapters of Ezekiel. It was the Spirit who directed and coordinated the various powers. The Spirit brought order to what seemed mysterious. Indeed, the Spirit is the main hero of the book of Ezekiel. Even today, the Spirit of God remains the greatest hero and Leader in our work. Let us remember that He can bring order from chaos, harmony from conflict, unity from division, and life to dry bones. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of Hosts (Zechariah 4:6).

Some of the symbolic actions Ezekiel performed to deliver God’s message include:

1. Lying on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days to symbolize the years of Israel and Judah’s punishment.

2. Preparing bread from mixed grains—wheat, barley, beans, lentils, and millet—and eating it for 390 days, symbolizing scarcity and famine. He was instructed to cook it over human dung to signify the defilement of the people, but after pleading with God, he was allowed to use cow dung instead.

3. Shaving his head and beard with a sharp sword, dividing the hair into three parts: burning a third in the city, striking a third with a sword, and scattering the last third to the wind. This symbolized that a third of the people would die by famine, another third by the sword, and the rest would be scattered in exile.

4. Digging through a wall during the day while people watched and carrying

his belongings on his shoulders at night. This demonstrated how the people would be taken into captivity in sorrow and shame, covering their faces because they would never see their homeland again.

Ezekiel was commanded to eat his food and drink his water trembling to show how the people of Jerusalem would eat in fear as their land became desolate. Although Ezekiel faithfully conveyed these warnings, people mocked him, saying, “The days are prolonged, and every vision fails!” Indeed, a deaf ear will not listen to instruction.

God also told Ezekiel that He would kindle a fire in the Negev forest that would consume every green and dry tree, a fire that would not be quenched. Enemies would come and destroy many people. Despite these warnings, the people dismissed him, saying, “He only speaks in riddles.”

God instructed Ezekiel to demonstrate a sword striking twice or even three times, symbolizing the severity of the judgment. He was told to cry out in anguish to reflect the pain that would come upon the people through their enemies.

One day, God told Ezekiel that his beloved wife would die, but he was forbidden from mourning or weeping openly. Instead, he was to grieve silently. When asked the meaning of this, he explained that the temple—their pride and joy—along with their sons and daughters would be destroyed. The people would not publicly mourn but would grieve in silence.

God compared Israel and Judah to two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, who were unfaithful and engaged in immoral relationships with many lovers instead of being loyal to one husband. In this metaphor, God portrays His people as a pure bride and views idolatry as spiritual adultery. Just as marital unfaithfulness brings pain and destruction, turning to other gods brings serious consequences to both individuals and the community.

Ezekiel was also instructed to take two sticks—one labeled “Judah” and the other “Joseph”—and join them together. This act symbolized that God would reunite the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, cleanse them, and restore them to live in peace under His rule.

Pray for Blessings to Bless Others

Our prayers should not be selfish or solely for our benefit. We should pray so that we can bless others. The principle of Christ’s life must be our guiding principle. Speaking about His disciples, Jesus said, “For their sakes, I sanctify

Myself, that they also may be sanctified" (John 17:19). The same selflessness, the same dedication, and the same obedience to God's Word shown in Christ must be reflected in His servants.

Our mission to the world is not to serve ourselves or seek our own pleasure. We are called to glorify God by working with Him to save sinners. We should seek God's blessings not just for our own gain but so that we may share them with others. The capacity to receive is maintained by giving. We cannot continue to receive the treasures of heaven without sharing them with those around us.

Questions:

1. Mention four symbolic actions that Ezekiel was instructed to perform to deliver God's message.

2. What were the four faces of the living creatures?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Ezekiel 18:21, 30-32

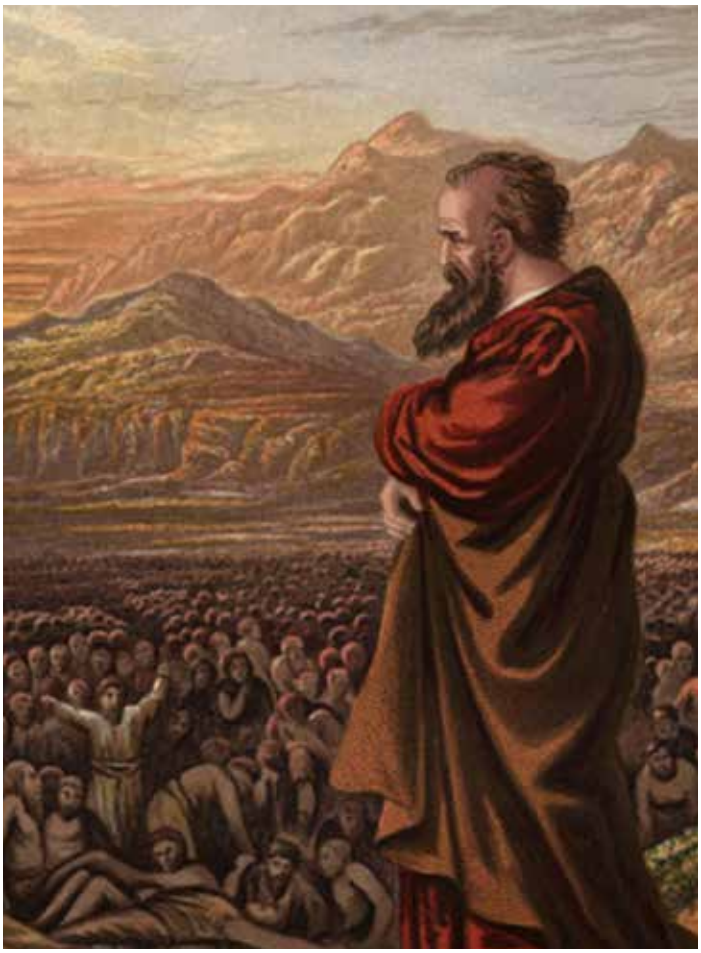
[21, 30-32] "But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all My decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. … Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!"

Prayer:
Thank You, Lord, because You do not delight in the death of the wicked. I return to You, repent, and turn from my sins by Your grace. I ask for a new heart and a new spirit. In the glorious Name of Your Son, Amen.

Activity:
Bring ingredients to bake Ezekiel bread, or act out the shaving of Ezekiel's beard, or list the dramatic actions Ezekiel was told to perform!

DAY 155 (June 3)

TOPIC: Ezekiel's Message Continues



Ezekiel was not called to preach to people far away, but to his own people. Preaching to your friends and family can be challenging. Indeed, his calling was difficult because those people did not listen. Effective evangelism is God's work; He is not limited by our weaknesses. This is both good news and a humbling truth. It is humbling because, even if you are the most eloquent speaker and skilled in every aspect of evangelism, without the Spirit of God, you will not succeed in reaching the lost. Our calling from God today is not very different from Ezekiel's time. Our response should also be one of obedience and complete surrender to God. Then He will come to you and make all the difference in your life.

While in Babylon, the Jews never forgot their homeland. Consider the words of Psalm 137:
"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there, those who carried us away captive required of us a song; and those who tormented us required joy, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill. Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Ezekiel prophesied that Edom would be defeated, Tyre would be invaded by other nations and never rebuilt, and Egypt would no longer rule over other nations. Then, the children of Israel would return to their land.

It was during this captivity that the exiles began to be called Jews, meaning "people of Judah." The Jewish people scattered around the world originated from here. Today, the terms "Jews" and "Israelites" are often used interchangeably.

Ezekiel was called to be a watchman for the house of Israel, to warn God's people. The LORD said, "When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him, that wicked man will die in his sin, but I will hold you accountable for his blood." However, if Ezekiel warned the wicked man and he did not turn from his wickedness, Ezekiel (or we) would save his own soul.

Often, we are ashamed or afraid to warn our friends when they are doing wrong, even when the sin is obvious. Maybe we fear they will point out our own faults in return. However, it is good when someone warns us, and we should not remain silent when we see wrongdoing—we should help one another with love.

Ezekiel was told that the people would bind him with ropes, and his tongue would stick to the roof of his mouth so that he would be silent and no longer able to rebuke them because they were a rebellious people. But later, the LORD told him to open his mouth and speak—whether the people would listen or not.

He warned against dishonest and unjust scales. The LORD declared that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job—who were righteous—prayed for the people, their prayers would not save them. Only they themselves would be saved. We cannot force a stubborn person into heaven; everyone must personally believe and obey. We are saved by God's grace, but we must also have faith, and our faith must produce works, because "faith without works is dead."

The LORD called His people to honor His Sabbaths, as a sign between Him and humanity so that they would know He is the LORD their God. The Sabbath is a seal of God's creative work and a commandment given to remind us of creation.

God took Ezekiel to a valley filled with dry human bones and asked him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel replied, "O Sovereign LORD, You alone know." The LORD told him that these dry bones represented the whole house of Israel and instructed him to prophesy that God would breathe life into them and they would live again.

When Ezekiel prophesied as commanded, there was a great noise and a

shaking, and the bones came together—bone to its bone. Then, tendons and flesh appeared on them, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. The LORD commanded Ezekiel to call for the wind to breathe into the slain so that they might live. Breath entered them, and they came to life, standing on their feet—a vast army.

God explained that this vision gave hope to His people, who said, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off completely." God promised to open their graves, bring them back to life, and restore them to the land of Israel.

Therefore, let us know that our God is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is able to do whatever we ask or need because He is the LORD. He will transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, so we can humble ourselves and fear Him.

When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray not only for ourselves but also for others. And we acknowledge that whatever God gives us is not just for our benefit—He entrusts us with resources so that we may feed the hungry.

Questions to Reflect On:

1. Describe the vision of the dry bones.

2. Why couldn't Noah, Daniel, and Job save anyone else?

3. What happens if we fail to warn a wicked person of their wrongdoing?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Ezekiel 37:11-14

[11-14] Then He said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, My people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put My Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

Prayer:
Lord, we are dry bones; put Your Spirit within us so that we may live and have both spiritual and physical strength. Forgive our backslidings. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity:
Bring bones if possible, then sing the "Dry Bones" song from Cedarmont Kids. https://youtu.be/-AhAdII3yAc

DAY 156 (June 4)

TOPIC: Esther Becomes Queen



The Book of Esther is one of the books that narrates part of the history of the Jews during their exile. Esther is one of the main characters. She assisted Ezra and Nehemiah through her position as the king's wife and their "home girl!" This book covers the era of King Ahasuerus, who ruled over regions that today are part of Europe, Africa, and Asia. His native country was called Persia. He ruled after Kings Cyrus and Darius. Susa, the citadel, was his capital city. After ruling for three years, King Ahasuerus held a grand banquet for his officials and leaders, inviting people from various provinces. He displayed his wealth, glory, and majesty for 180 days.

People drank without restrictions, as the king commanded. He allowed everyone to do as they pleased. His wife, Queen Vashti, also held a banquet for the women in the royal palace. On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, he sent his attendants to bring Queen Vashti before him wearing her royal crown, for she was beautiful to behold. However, Vashti refused to come with the attendants. Her reasons are not stated—perhaps she was expected to come partially dressed, or she lacked respect, or she feared being humiliated by the king's drunkenness. If so, Queen Vashti was also a wise woman like Esther. She did nothing wrong, but it seems she had no way to cover her husband's mistake, as he followed the counsel of his drunken advisors.

Wine mocks and takes away sound judgment. We should act according to our consciences, guided by the Word of God, even if it brings us suffering. This happened to Martin Luther, the German reformer, and many others. However, it is better to be persecuted by humans than to be judged by God. Take this from our Lord Jesus:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The king became very angry and asked his legal experts what should be done. They told him that Vashti had not only wronged the king but also the leaders and all the people. They claimed that when other women heard of Vashti’s defiance, they would likewise despise their husbands. Thus, they advised that Vashti should never again appear before the king and that her royal position should be given to someone better than her. An edict was issued declaring that every man should rule his household, and no wife should dominate her husband. Even today, it is wrong for a wife to rule over her husband, for the husband is the head of the wife. Both men and women need wisdom here, as being the head is a serious responsibility. However, if we make God our head, we will overcome and not be controlled by evil emotions. We will be like the Messiah.

When the king’s anger subsided, he remembered Vashti and what had happened, but perhaps because of his pride, he did not apologize. Seeing the king’s sorrow, his attendants suggested a search for a new queen. They sent out orders to gather beautiful young virgins from all the provinces. The girl who pleased the king would become queen. Hegai was in charge of these women and their beauty treatments.

This story reflects a broken family, and many of us have experienced brokenness in our families. Yet, God can work even in difficult and confusing situations. We may not understand how He does this, but God can use even the world’s evils to advance His work. For example, many faithful Christians in France were burned alive during the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It is written about these martyrs:
“Many bore witness to the truth amid the flames. Through their courage and faithfulness at the stake, these humble Christians spoke to thousands who would never have heard their testimony otherwise.” (The Great Controversy, p. 215).

Praise be to God for His wisdom and power, which can turn Satan’s evil into blessings for His work and His people. There could be nothing worse than Satan crucifying the sinless Son of God on a wooden cross. Yet, that greatest act of evil became the greatest blessing the world has ever received. One thing is sure—God will turn the tears of His children into eternal joy if they remain faithful to the end (see Romans 8:28).

In the city of Susa, there was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai. He had been exiled along with King Jeconiah of Judah. Mordecai

had a cousin named Hadassah (Esther), whom he had raised as his daughter because she was an orphan. Esther was beautiful in form and appearance. When the king's decree to find a new queen was issued, many young women were brought to Susa. Mordecai brought Esther to Hegai, who was in charge of the women. Hegai was pleased with Esther's demeanor and treated her favorably, providing her with beauty treatments, special food, and seven maids. The young women were placed in the best quarters of the harem.

Mordecai instructed Esther not to reveal that she was Jewish, possibly to avoid discrimination. Every day, he would check on her well-being. When a young woman's turn came to see the king, she did not return unless the king delighted in her and summoned her by name. This was a tragic fate for these women—they became concubines and were effectively cast aside if the king did not choose them.

The women underwent twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics. They were also trained in court etiquette and how to behave as a queen. When Esther's turn came, she requested nothing beyond what Hegai recommended. She found favor with everyone who saw her.

When Esther was brought to the king, he loved her more than all the other women and made her queen in place of Vashti, placing the royal crown on her head. The king held a great banquet in her honor and declared a holiday, granting generous gifts. Mordecai continued to watch over Esther from his position at the king's gate.

One day, Mordecai overheard two royal guards, Bigthana and Teresh, plotting to assassinate the king. He informed Esther, who reported it to the king. Upon investigation, the plot was found to be true, and the conspirators were hanged. The event was recorded in the royal chronicles.

Later, the king promoted Haman the Agagite, a descendant of the Amalekite king killed by the prophet Samuel. Everyone at the king's gate bowed to Haman—except Mordecai. When asked why, Mordecai said he was a Jew. Haman, enraged by this defiance, sought to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom. Haman convinced the king that the Jews disobeyed his laws and should be annihilated. The king, unaware of Haman's true intentions, gave him his signet ring to seal the decree. Orders were sent to all provinces to kill the Jews and plunder their goods. The king and Haman drank wine, but the city of Susa was in turmoil. This was the sixth year of Esther's reign as queen, yet the king still did not know she was Jewish.

Beloved: “Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:33).

Lord, give us Christian homes—homes where fathers are true and strong, where mothers guide with wisdom and love, and where You are the honored Guest. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. What did Vashti refuse to do?

2. Who planned to assassinate King Ahasuerus?

3. Why did Haman hate Mordecai?

4. Why did Ahasuerus not know his wife was Jewish?

5. What are your best qualities?

6. How did your parents, teachers, or guardians influence your life?

7. How can you share Christ-like qualities with others?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Memory Verse: Esther 2:17-18

[17-18] Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. And the king gave a great banquet, Esther’s banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

Prayer:
Lord, thank You for Your providence, even in confusing circumstances like those in Persia. Help us not to put any intoxicating drink to our lips, not even coffee. Forgive us for our mistakes, and if we have been involved with harmful drinks such as energy drinks, help us to stop. In the Name of Your dear Son, Amen.

Activity:
Discuss how Vashti lost her queenship. Where did her children go, or even she herself? Discuss the unfair world full of sorrow, and how alcohol affects the mind. Why do the Scriptures say strong drink is not for kings? Why does the Bible say drunkards will not enter heaven? Is it okay for non-kings to drink? Why?

DAY 157 (June 5)

TOPIC: Esther and the Jews Hold a Special Prayer

(Esther 4-7)

When Mordecai heard of Haman's plot to kill all the Jews, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and covered himself with ashes. He went out and cried bitterly, and throughout the entire kingdom where the king's command and decree had reached, there was great mourning among the Jews—with fasting, weeping, and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about it, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent clothes for Mordecai to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he refused.

Mordecai explained to Esther what had been planned against the Jews and urged her to go to the king to plead and intercede for her people. Esther responded by reminding him that no man or woman could approach the king in the inner court without being summoned. The law was clear—anyone who did so would be put to death unless the king extended the golden scepter to spare their life. Esther added that she had not been called to go to the king for thirty days.

Mordecai sent an urgent message to Esther, saying, "Do not think that because you are in the king's palace you alone will escape when all the Jews are killed. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

Esther sent a reply to Mordecai, asking him to gather all the Jews in Susa to fast for her, neither eating nor drinking for three days. She and her maids would fast in the same way. Then, she would go to the king, even though it was against the law, and said, "If I perish, I perish." Mordecai did everything as Esther had instructed.

On the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace. The king was sitting on his royal throne, and when he saw Queen Esther standing there, she found favor in his sight. The king extended the golden scepter, and Esther approached and touched its tip. The king asked, "What is your request? It will be given to you—even up to half the kingdom."



Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet she had prepared. The king agreed immediately. At the banquet, the king asked Esther again, “What is your petition? It will be granted to you.” Esther requested that the king and Haman return the following day for another banquet. The king accepted her invitation again.

Haman was overjoyed because of the honor he received, being the only one invited to accompany the king to the queen’s banquet. However, when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate refusing to bow down to him, he was filled with rage. Controlling his anger, Haman returned home and boasted to his wife Zeresh and his friends about his wealth, many children, and the honor the king had given him by promoting him. He bragged about being the only guest invited to Esther’s banquet. Yet, he said, “All this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”

His wife and friends advised him to set up a gallows seventy-five feet high and suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it. This idea pleased Haman, and he ordered the gallows to be built.

That night, the king could not sleep, so he ordered the book of records to be brought and read to him. There, he discovered that Mordecai had once saved his life by uncovering a plot against him. The king asked, “What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?” The king’s attendants replied, “Nothing has been done for him.”

The king then asked, “Who is in the court?” At that moment, Haman had just entered the outer court to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared. The king’s servants informed him that Haman was there, and the king summoned him. Without explaining whom he was referring to, the king asked Haman, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?”

Thinking the king meant him, Haman suggested, “Let a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head, be brought. Let the robe and the horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble officials, and let them robe the man the king delights to honor and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

The king commanded Haman, “Go at once and do just as you have described for Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have suggested.”



Imagine Haman's humiliation as he led Mordecai through the city! Afterward, Haman rushed home, mourning, and told his wife and friends everything that had happened. His wife Zeresh wisely warned him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin."

While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs arrived to take Haman to the second banquet Esther had prepared. At the banquet, the king asked Esther once more, "What is your petition? It will be granted to you."

Esther revealed her identity and the plot against her people, pleading for her life and the lives of the Jews. She exposed Haman as the enemy who planned their destruction. The king, furious, left the banquet to walk in the palace garden. When he returned, he found Haman pleading for his life before Esther. Seeing Haman fall on the couch where Esther was reclining, the king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

Immediately, Haman's face was covered, a sign that he would be executed. One of the king's eunuchs informed the king about the gallows Haman had prepared for Mordecai. The king ordered, "Hang him on it!" Haman was then hanged on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

When we wish evil upon others, it can come back to us. Wishing harm on God's people is especially dangerous—even if they wrong you, leave vengeance to God.

Why should we listen to God's counsel?
"God is not human, that He should lie." (Numbers 23:19)

Esther and the Jews prayed and fasted, and we see how it changed their situation. Our Heavenly Father is waiting to pour out His blessings. It is our privilege to draw deeply from the fountain of His boundless love.

When young people go to preach the Truth, they should be surrounded by prayer. Pray that God will guide them, grant them wisdom, and protect them from the snares of the enemy. Support your pastors in prayer, just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands.

How did the king reward Mordecai?
What happened to the gallows Haman built for Mordecai?
Why did Esther fast?
Why is it sinful to wish harm on others?
What did the king do when he could not sleep?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 14:12-16

[12-16] Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My Name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask Me for anything in My Name, and I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever.

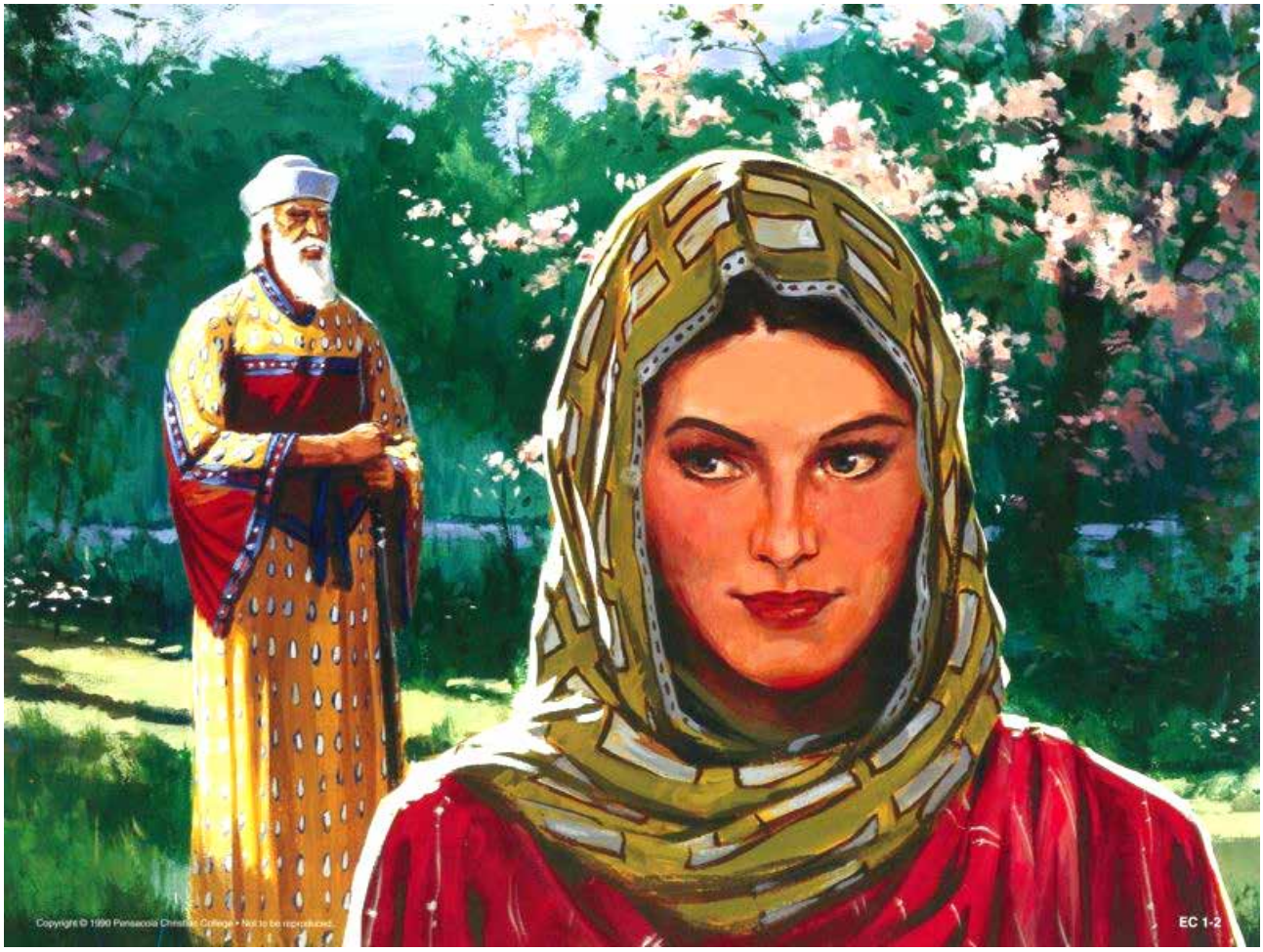
Prayer:
Thank You, Lord, we believe in You, and that whatever we ask in Your Name, You will do it. Today we pray that You bless our families to reach others, forgive our sins, and give us love. In Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

Activity:
Act out Mordecai mourning in sackcloth and ashes, being honored after the king reads how he uncovered a plot, and then being led on horseback with Haman clearing the way!

DAY 158 (June 6)

TOPIC: Mordecai is Promoted and the Jews Defend Themselves

(Esther 8-10)



On that day, the king gave Esther the estate of Haman. Esther told the king about her relationship with Mordecai, and he came before the king. The king took off the signet ring he had taken from Haman and gave it to Mordecai, meaning that Mordecai took Haman's position as the prime minister or the king's second-in-command. Esther fell at the king's feet, pleading and reminding him that letters had already been sent ordering the killing of the Jews. According to the laws of the Medes and Persians, once a decree was issued, it could not be revoked, meaning the Jews were still under threat of annihilation. She begged the king to revoke the letters so that harm would not come to the Jews, who were the queen's people and relatives.

The king told her that he had given her the authority to write any decree to cancel the evil planned against the Jews, and he would seal it with his ring. The king's scribes were summoned, and letters were written to all the provinces under his rule, covering Europe, Asia, and Africa. The decree allowed the Jews to gather and defend their lives and possessions so they would not be destroyed—in other words, to take revenge on their enemies. Couriers rode on fast royal horses to deliver the message to all the provinces, and the proclamation was made in the citadel of Susa. Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments and a large golden crown, and the city of Susa rejoiced. For the Jews, it was a time of light, joy, happiness, and honor. Many people even became Jews out of fear, realizing that the harm they intended toward the Jews might turn against them.

When the appointed day for the Jews' destruction arrived, the king's second decree allowed them to defend themselves. Non-Jews were filled with great fear, realizing that both the queen and the prime minister were Jews. Mordecai's reputation spread because he was a God-fearing and wise man. The Jews struck down their enemies with great destruction and did as they pleased with those who hated them. In Susa alone, they killed 500 people, including Haman's ten sons. When the king received the report, he asked the Jews if they had any further requests, promising to grant them. The Jews were allowed to continue defending themselves the next day and even hanged Haman's ten sons on gallows. That day, they killed more enemies, bringing the total number slain to 75,000. However, they did not take any plunder or spoil.

It was a tragic event that the evil intentions of one selfish man could cause so much death and suffering, even to the innocent. Sometimes, when you see someone doing wrong, do not join them—instead, advise them to stop. Who knows if you were placed in your current position to prevent such harm? If you remain silent, you may end up among those who are hurt rather than those you think you are protecting.

The Jews rested and celebrated with feasts and the giving of gifts. Mordecai wrote to the Jewish people, instructing them to commemorate this day because they had experienced relief from their enemies—what was once sorrow turned into joy. They called this celebration "Purim," meaning "lots," because Haman had cast lots to determine the day to destroy the Jews. All these events occurred because Haman the Agagite, out of ignorance and without cause, chose to be an enemy of the Jews, and his wickedness ultimately turned back on him.

We must overcome evil with good. The Jews decreed that future generations

should observe this festival, and Purim was never to be forgotten. King Ahasuerus imposed tribute across the empire, including the coastlands and islands. His acts of power, might, and the greatness of Mordecai were recorded in the annals of the kings of Media and Persia. Mordecai continued to do good for his people.

The name “Esther” means “star.” She was truly a star to her people by saving them. Although she was beautiful in appearance, more importantly, God chose her and made her beauty stand out to save His people—the lineage of the Messiah. Even today, God has a special plan for you to ensure you do not perish. Pray and ask Him to reveal His plans through His Word.

Esther was not impulsive or quick to anger; she approached the king with wisdom and patience. Even her maids were willing to fast with her because they loved her—if she had treated them badly, they might have wished for her death. Esther supported the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, as her husband granted many favors to the Jews for her sake.

In fact, the decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem in 457 BC was issued by her husband. God blessed these Persian kings—Darius, Cyrus, and Ahasuerus—for showing kindness to the Jews after the Babylonians had treated them harshly. These kings allowed the Jews to worship and carry out their activities freely. Nehemiah and Ezra found favor with the king during this time.

It is important to remember that the Scriptures say the Babylonians were given permission by God to punish the Jews for their disobedience to His laws and for worshiping other gods. They had broken His Sabbaths—including the Jubilee Sabbath, which required releasing captives every 50 years, and the seventh-year Sabbath, during which they were to let the land rest so the poor could gather food. When we focus only on our own needs and ignore the poor and the needy, we bring great suffering upon ourselves.

Haman planned evil because he hated one man, but his hatred nearly caused the death of thousands. However, God had long prepared to save His people by ensuring Esther became queen and that Mordecai would support her.

Reflecting on Haman’s life, ask yourself: What kind of harmful seeds am I sowing in the lives of others? Do anger and pride reside in my heart? Let us pray that God removes such attitudes and plants His seeds of goodness and mutual respect in us, so we may reflect His love to others. Selfishness and pride cause harm and destruction, but kindness, generosity, and compassion bring healing and hope.

Are there relationships in your life that need healing? How can you, like Esther, face your greatest challenges with courage, supported by friends who pray for you?

A powerful force is at work in the world—in entertainment, the pursuit of wealth, the struggle for power, and the fight for survival. This force drains the body, mind, and spirit. Amid this turmoil, GOD speaks. He calls us to withdraw to a quiet place and commune with Him:

“Be still, and know that I am GOD.” —Psalm 46:10

How did the Jews defend themselves?

Why were the Jews taken into captivity?

What does “Jew” mean?

What was Esther’s other name?

What position was Mordecai given?

What was the significance of the Purim festival?

Have you experienced blessings by blessing others?

How did the king show his gratitude?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Psalm 54:1-5.

[1-5] Save me, O God, by Your name, and judge me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Behold, God is my helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in Your truth.

Prayer: Lord, thank You so much because You prepare a table before us in the presence of our enemies. Even those who seek after our lives, You will help us to face them. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the event of Esther going to seek favor from the king. The king taking away Haman's ring and giving it to Mordecai, etc. Discuss moments when you had great difficulties and the Lord made a way.

Activity: Ask yourself, Do I have envy? Do I sow seeds of hatred? List the fruit of the Spirit and ask yourself for each one, Do I have this? Draw a fruit and write those qualities inside it. Consider other traits such as pride, selfishness, dictatorship. Also emphasize—God is faithful to His people, stopping evil plans and ensuring that those who oppose Him are defeated, often turning their own schemes against them.

CHAPTER 159 (June 7)

LESSON: The Man of God, Job



Before the time of Moses, there was a man in the land of Uz. It is believed that Moses wrote the book of Job. This book was written after the book of Genesis. This man was blameless, upright, God-fearing, and turned away from evil. He had seven sons and three daughters. He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, and 500 donkeys. His household was large. Job was wealthy and highly respected by the people. He regularly offered sacrifices for his children, saying, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Job did this continually.

One day, the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord asked Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth on it.” Then the Lord asked, “Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth—blameless and upright, fearing God and shunning evil.” Satan replied, “Is it for nothing that Job fears God? Have You not put a hedge around him, his household, and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and strike all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face.” The Lord allowed Satan to test Job but forbade him

from taking his life. So, Satan left the presence of the Lord.

One day, while Job's children were eating and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the donkeys were grazing nearby, when the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived and said, "Fire from God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, yet another messenger arrived and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it collapsed on them. They are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

At this, Job got up, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell to the ground in worship. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this, Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.

On another day, the sons of God again came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord asked Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan replied, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth on it." Then the Lord said, "Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth—blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And still, he maintains his integrity, though you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause." Satan answered, "Skin for skin! A man will give all he has for his own life. But now, stretch out Your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse You to Your face." The Lord allowed Satan to afflict Job's body but forbade him from taking his life.

Satan afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But Job replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin with his lips.

When Job's three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—heard about his troubles, they came to comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they

could barely recognize him. They began to weep aloud, tore their robes, and sprinkled dust on their heads. They sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights without saying a word because they saw how great his suffering was.

Eventually, Job broke the silence and cursed the day of his birth, wishing he had never been born. At the time, people believed that suffering was a sign of God's anger and a result of one's sins. Job's friends insisted that he confess his sins, claiming his suffering was due to his wrongdoing. However, Job defended his innocence, stating he had done no wrong and did not understand why he was being afflicted.

Job did not comprehend the spiritual battle occurring between God and Satan. Despite his confusion, Job remained steadfast in his faith, declaring, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end, He will stand on the earth. After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh, I will see God."



Later, a young man named Elihu spoke, acknowledging that neither Job nor his friends had fully understood God's ways. Finally, God Himself spoke out of a storm, questioning Job, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell Me, if you understand." (Read Job 38-42).

God rebuked Job's friends for their false accusations and instructed them to offer sacrifices and have Job pray for them. Job prayed for his friends, and God forgave them. Job also repented, recognizing that his understanding was limited. God restored Job's fortunes, giving him twice as much as before.

He was blessed with seven more sons and three daughters, named Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren-Happuch.

The book of Job reveals the cosmic conflict between good and evil, known as "Theodicy." It addresses the question: If God is all-powerful and loving, why does He allow suffering? God respects the freedom of His creation, and this freedom allows for both good and evil choices. Although God does not always intervene, His ultimate plan will bring justice and restore peace.

One day, God will end suffering forever (Nahum 1:9). Until then, the universe observes this grand conflict. Revelation 12 describes a war in heaven where Michael and His angels fought against Satan and his angels. Although we may not understand everything, God's love remains constant.

PRAYER:
Dear God, many innocent people suffer, and only You know why. We trust in Your promise of eternal blessings. Remember us in Your kingdom of grace. Amen.

When selfishness dies, a greater desire to save others will emerge. Let us pray sincerely and persistently for those who are perishing.

Questions to Reflect On:

Where did Job live?

What did God ask Satan?

How did Job respond to his suffering?

How do you think Job felt when his friends blamed him?

Why is it wrong to judge others?

May God bless you, dear child and youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Job 19:25-29.

[25-27] For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my heart be consumed within me.

Prayer: Thank You Lord because You are my Redeemer, and You live. And one day I will surely see You face to face. Forgive my sins and give me endurance when Satan tries to discourage me. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of Almighty God speaking with Satan. The servants telling Job about the things that have been lost. Job sitting down and saying—Job 1:21, 22.

DAY 160 (June 8)

TOPIC: Daniel Goes into Exile

(Daniel 1)



The Book of Daniel contains a brief history, prophecies of his time, and future prophecies. These prophecies inform us of where we are now and when the end of the world will be. It does not reveal the day or the hour but provides us with a map of its nearness and what we should do. Daniel himself wrote it. The primary purpose of prophecy is to reveal God's promises, not to disclose future events.

When we focus on events, the prophecy of beasts, and other details, these are just highlights that reveal God's character and love—they are not the main point. The prophets examined prophecies to find promises, not mere events. Let us not teach prophecy that is meaningless, nor seek God in vain:

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully." (1 Peter 1:10).

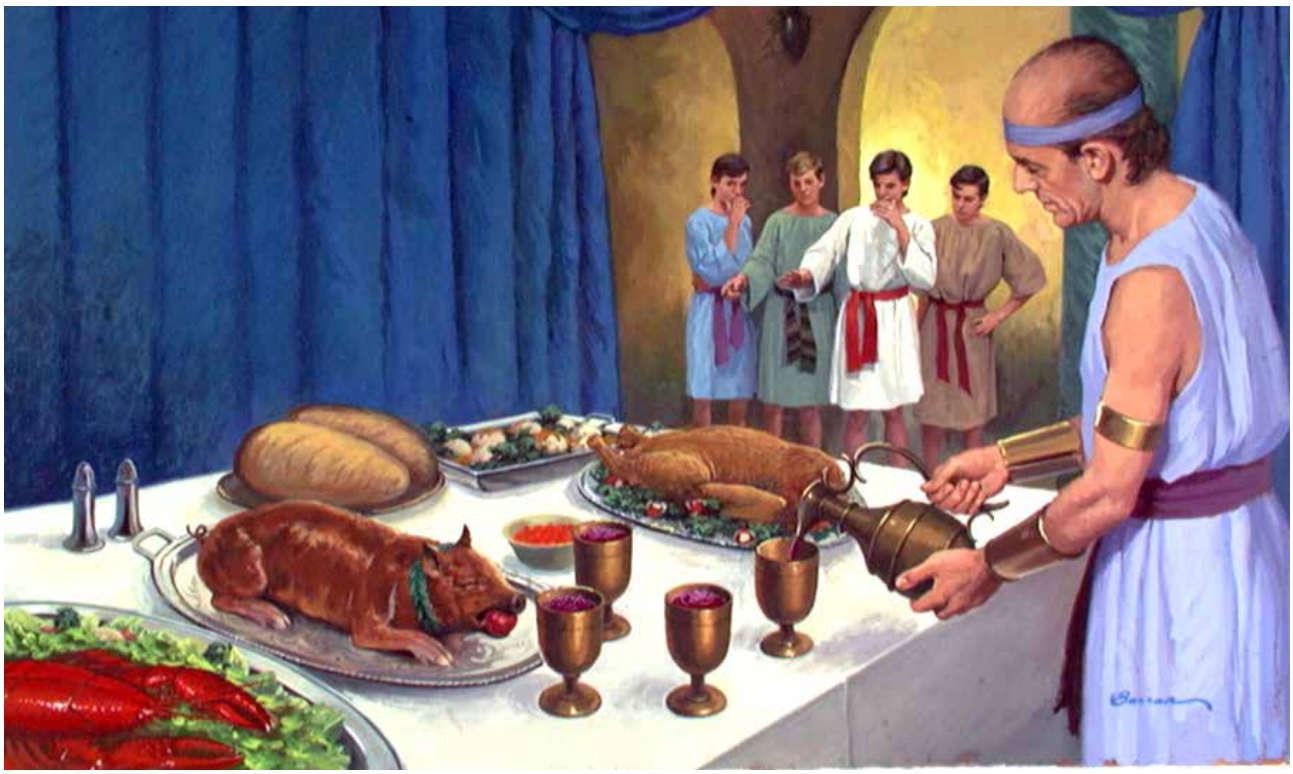
We should not only have intellectual knowledge but also reach salvation.

As we have seen previously, Daniel was among those taken into exile in Babylon from Judah. This was around 600 B.C. The king instructed Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well-informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

The king assigned them a daily portion of the food and wine from his table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that, they were to enter the king's service. Even today, if we were invited to eat the king's food, we would expect it to be delicious and expensive, although it might also be harmful to our health.

Among these young men from Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: Daniel became Belteshazzar, Hananiah became Shadrach, Mishael became Meshach, and Azariah became Abednego. These new names were offensive because they were associated with the Babylonian gods.

But Daniel resolved in his heart not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. He asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. It is possible that this food had been offered to Babylonian idols, or that it included unclean meats such as pork, shellfish, or other forbidden foods.



God caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel. However, the official said, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.”

Indeed, the food we eat and the health practices we follow either bless or harm our health. God gave dietary laws to His people in His Word. Even today, we should not eat recklessly out of greed, thinking that “food is just food.” Sin entered through food—the Garden of Eden was lost because of food.



Daniel then asked the guard to test them for ten days by giving them only vegetables (such as grains and legumes) and water. Then he could compare their appearance with that of the young men who ate the royal food. So, the guard agreed and tested them for ten days.

Foods that are sprouting—such as grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds—are richer in minerals and vitamins than ordinary foods. These were the kinds of foods Daniel and his friends ate, along with vegetables and water.

At the end of the ten days, they looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who ate the royal food. So, the guard took away their choice food and wine and gave them vegetables instead.

God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

At the end of the three years of training, the chief official brought them before King Nebuchadnezzar. The king spoke with them and found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.

Daniel remained in the royal court until the first year of King Cyrus of Persia. This means Daniel served for over 70 years because the Babylonians ruled for 70 years before the Medes and Persians conquered the kingdom. Daniel and his friends stood before the king—meaning they served in the palace of Babylon.

There are people who have lost their courage—speak to them and pray for them. There are those who need the Bread of Life—read to them from the Word of God. There is a spiritual sickness that no balm can touch and no medicine can cure. Pray for these souls and bring them to Jesus Christ. In all your work, Christ will be present to influence the hearts of men.

Why were Daniel and his friends taken into captivity?

Which king was ruling?

What did the chief official tell them to do?

What kind of food did the young men request?

Why are some foods harmful to our bodies?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Daniel 1:8-9.

[8-9] But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and compassion with the prince of the eunuchs.

Prayer: Lord, help us to purpose in our hearts not to defile our bodies which are Your temple. Help us to eat what You want us to eat. Remove gluttony, help us exercise, and to trust in You. Help us to be temperate, learning all that is within our ability concerning our spiritual, physical, economic, and social health. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Focus on the topic of making wise decisions, putting God first, and standing firm in faith even under pressure. Youth and children may discuss 8 health principles and show Daniel's food choice, play a memory game to learn his Hebrew name and those of his friends, or sing a song about choosing the right way. Other activities include puppets to retell the story or using a "vegetable" game to show switching places.

DAY 161 (June 9)

TOPIC: Suitable Food

(Genesis 1:29 and Daniel 1)



The following is a general summary regarding matters of food. Parents will handle most aspects for their children, but we must all understand these principles and resolve to follow them like Daniel. The four young men in Babylon show us health practices we should learn and apply. They controlled their desires and appetites, refusing to eat anything unclean. The first sin in the Garden of Eden was related to food. A person who can control their eating habits—while having access to all kinds of food—is a true hero. It is said that a large percentage of diseases can be prevented or treated through proper nutrition. According to health experts, 80% of the factors affecting human health are related to diet.

Why is it important to eat healthily? When we are healthy, we have better mental clarity to understand the Word of God and to succeed in our studies. Good health reduces medical costs and allows us to serve others effectively. We cannot assist our neighbors or family members if we are bedridden. Good

health also makes us cheerful and improves our relationships with others. It helps us to be self-reliant rather than dependent on others. While some dependency may occur due to aging or disability, we should not contribute to this through poor lifestyle choices. Many people live to an old age without being afflicted by disease—look into that!

50-80% of your diet should consist of raw or unprocessed foods, such as vegetables, fruits, sprouts, and other natural items like those the four young men in Babylon consumed. The Garden of Eden had no cooking pots; do not always destroy your food's nutrients by overcooking it. Eat raw what can be consumed raw. The seeds and grains the four young men ate improved their health in just 10 days—making them ten times healthier and wiser than their peers. Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food.

Avoid refined foods such as polished rice, refined wheat, and corn. Eat whole grains—unrefined wheat bread, brown rice, and whole cornmeal. Sugar and oil are also refined products; for instance, it takes about 14 corn cobs to produce one large spoonful of corn oil. God intended for you to eat five cobs and feel satisfied, but eating just five fried potato chips is equivalent to consuming 84 cobs of corn. Aim to eat at least five fruits a day. If possible, grow a garden to cultivate your fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes. Gardening has therapeutic benefits for our mental health.

Two meals a day are ideal unless you engage in heavy manual labor, such as farm work or military service. Avoid imitating the diets you see on TV or in other cultures—many of these are unhealthy. Different communities prepare similar ingredients in diverse ways. For example, Indians make chapati from wheat, Africans prepare ugali, and Westerners bake bread. Among these, plain ugali made from unrefined flour is the healthiest since it contains no added salt or oil.

Maintain a healthy body weight appropriate for your height. Consult a healthcare provider to determine your ideal weight. Our bodies are designed by God, just like machines come with manuals for proper use.

Be cautious about eating hotel food, as it often contains excessive additives to enhance taste at the expense of health. Since we consume around 1,000 meals a year, it is crucial for parents to learn to cook healthy meals. Many people die due to poor dietary habits. Avoid refined foods, those high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day—never skip it. Eat substantial, nourishing breakfasts and wait at least five to six hours before eating again. Have your evening meal early and allow at least four hours before going to bed. When eating an orange, do not just suck

the juice—eat the pulp too, or you lose vital nutrients.

Certain items should never enter your mouth, including paraffin, soap, and other inedible substances. Likewise, avoid alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and unclean meats such as pork, shellfish (shrimp, crab), birds of prey, donkeys, dogs, crows, insects like termites, and reptiles like lizards and frogs—refer to Leviticus 11 for guidelines. Eat fish only if they have both fins and scales. Many animals today are fed unnatural diets or injected with growth hormones—avoid eating such animals. For instance, in Minnesota, a friend witnessed turkeys being injected with female hormones to enlarge their breasts for commercial demand. Many people who consumed such poultry developed health issues, including chest ruptures.

Incorporate fresh vegetables like cucumbers, carrots, beetroot, and seeds such as sesame, sunflower, peanuts, cashews, and coconut into your diet. Different plant colors provide various nutrients—diversify the colors in your meals. Learn to cook with natural seasonings like lemon, garlic, ginger, turmeric, onions, sage, oregano, and coriander seeds. These not only add flavor but also reduce the need for excess salt and oil. Avoid fried foods; if you must use oil, choose plant-based oils. Margarine is harmful because it contains hydrogenated fats that act like plastic in the body. Use stainless steel cookware instead of aluminum, which can leach harmful metals.

Avoid processed and canned foods, and if you must consume them, read the ingredients carefully. Refrain from drinking coffee, soda, and other stimulants. Do not bring unhealthy items into your home. Be mindful of food and beverage advertisements, which often prioritize profits over your well-being.

Unrefined sugar (such as molasses) is better than white sugar. Avoid chewing gum—it generates gas and harms the digestive system. Chew your food thoroughly, at least 32 times per bite. Separate vegetables and fruits in your meals, as their digestive enzymes differ. For instance, do not eat carrots with fruits. Do not eat while drinking liquids—wait at least 30 minutes after a meal before consuming water.

We eat to live, not live to eat. Avoid excessive consumption of sweets like candy and cakes—keep them as occasional treats. Do not consume improperly slaughtered meat. Avoid spicy and overly acidic condiments like mustard, vinegar, and hot peppers.

Other health practices include regular exercise, drinking at least eight glasses of water daily, ensuring adequate rest, practicing moderation, maintaining cleanliness, getting sunlight and fresh air, and trusting in God. Despite all

health measures, only God can save sinners—even healthy ones.

Our most vital health goal is eternal life. We maintain our physical health to keep our minds clear and receptive to God's Word. A person who can control their appetite is equipped to overcome many temptations. Establish times for prayer and fasting—these strengthen both physical and spiritual health. While natural remedies are helpful, always seek professional medical care when needed, such as in emergencies like broken bones.

If earnest and faithful prayers were offered everywhere, many souls trapped in sin would be saved.

Questions:

1. Why is it important to eat healthy food?

2. How did sin enter the Garden of Eden?

3. What is the most important type of health?

4. Name 10 types of vegetables.

5. Name 15 types of fruits.

6. Name 10 types of grains.

7. Name 5 types of nuts.

8. Name 10 types of legumes.

9. What are refined foods?

10. Why should we avoid candy?

Key Verse: Proverbs 23:1-4.

[1-4] When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before you: And put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies: for they are deceitful food.

Prayer: Thank You so much Father, we are grateful for the wisdom of Daniel, that You revealed to him great and difficult things he did not know because he knew how to deny himself. Help us also Lord not to be gluttonous when invited to eat somewhere, and to think of others who are in need and hungry more than us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss aspects of health such as nutritious food, fresh air, self-denial/avoiding gluttony, sunlight, exercise, farming, entrepreneurship, cleanliness, a thankful heart, attitude, trusting God, water, rest, etc.

DAY 162 (June 10)

LESSON: The King Dreams a Dream

(Daniel 2)

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans, had a dream; his spirit was troubled, and he could not sleep. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to explain his dream. This king did not know the God of heaven well, which is why he summoned these people who used dark powers to reveal his dream. When they arrived, the king told them that he had a dream and was deeply troubled, desiring to know both the dream and its interpretation.

The Chaldeans replied in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show you its interpretation." Perhaps you have also had a dream before and could not remember it. This dream was significant because God was revealing future events to the king. God used Nebuchadnezzar in various ways until he eventually repented. This king had been instructed by God Himself to take the Jews captive as a punishment for their rebellion and worship of other gods. Now, God revealed to him a prophecy—one of the longest prophecies ever—stretching from Nebuchadnezzar's reign to the end of the world.

Indeed, God shows no favoritism. The king said that he had called them because the dream had escaped him, and he did not want them to waste time with lies. He warned them that if they could not tell him the dream and its interpretation, they would be cut into pieces, and their houses would be turned into heaps of rubble. But if they revealed the dream and its interpretation, they would receive gifts, rewards, and great honor. He stressed that there was only one decree for them, as they had agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before him until times changed. He urged them again to tell him the dream quickly.

The wise men answered the king, saying that no one on earth could show the king his dream—no magician, enchanter, or astrologer—except the gods who do not dwell among mortals. This angered the king, and he issued a decree to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. The order was given, and the time of execution was near. They also sought Daniel and his companions to kill them, although Daniel had not been present when these events were unfolding.



Daniel, with wisdom and discretion, asked Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, why the king's decree was so harsh. Arioch explained the matter to Daniel. Then Daniel went to the king and requested more time so that he could interpret the dream. Daniel returned to his house and informed his companions—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—urging them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that they would not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

That night, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Daniel praised the God of heaven, saying:
"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons; He deposes kings and raises others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him. I thank and praise You, God of my ancestors; You have given me wisdom and power, and You have made known to me what we asked of You. You have made known to us the king's matter."

Daniel thanked God and then went to Arioch, who had been commanded to execute the wise men of Babylon. He told Arioch, "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Bring me before the king, and I will interpret his dream." Arioch, relieved, brought Daniel quickly before the king and said, "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

The king asked Daniel, "Can you tell me the dream I saw and its interpretation?" Daniel humbly answered, "No wise man, enchanter, magician, or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come."

The lesson we learn here is humility—to acknowledge that we cannot do things by our own power but to give glory to God. Today, many claim to predict the future by reading stars or palms—do not seek such fortune-tellers. Instead, kneel and pray to God to reveal the hidden things to you. Daniel's life was a life of prayer.

Daniel's prayer was effective, sincere, and powerful. He did not exalt himself or claim righteousness, but instead prayed:
"O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! Do not delay, for Your own sake, my God."

His prayers were earnest and diligent. In response to his prayer, Daniel received

light and truth, which he and his people greatly needed, as well as insight into major future events—including the coming of the world's Redeemer.

All who love God should have a desire to study the Scriptures and wrestle with God in prayer to gain a clear understanding of the truth of the Bible and to be sanctified by it.

Start praying for souls; draw near to Christ, close to His side where the blood flows. Let a spirit of gentleness and calmness adorn your life. Let your sincere, humble, and fervent prayers rise to Him for wisdom, so you may succeed not only in saving your soul but also in saving the souls of others.

Where did Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah come from?
What did the king say would happen to the wise men?
Why was Arioch relieved?
Who alone can reveal hidden things?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Jeremiah 29:11-14.

[11-14] For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall you call upon Me, and you shall go and pray unto Me, and I will listen to you. And you shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you, says the Lord: and I will bring you back from your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive.

Activity: Discuss how the prophecy of Daniel is the foundation of the Book of Revelation. That God wants even people who do not know the Bible, like Nebuchadnezzar, to read this prophecy. Give a historical outline of future kingdoms and finally the establishment of God's eternal kingdom, and how the theme continues in the visions of Revelation concerning the future (apocalyptic). Connect world history that people read in books with end-time events. Key connections include overlapping prophetic time periods, symbolic imagery such as the ten horns, and Daniel's instructions to seal the prophecy of the future which would only be revealed in the last days, as seen in Revelation.

DAY 163 (June 11)

TOPIC: The Kingdoms That Will Rule the World

Daniel 2

Daniel said, "Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, are these: You, O king, as you lay on your bed, your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future, and He who reveals secrets, God, has made known to you what will happen." Daniel explained that this mystery was not revealed to him because of any wisdom he possessed more than others, but so that the king would understand the interpretation of the dream he had.

He told the king that he saw a great statue, whose brightness was extraordinary, standing before him. Its appearance was terrifying. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its feet were partly iron and partly clay. Then a stone was cut out—not by human hands—and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, smashing them to pieces.

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were broken into pieces together and became like chaff on the threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Daniel finished explaining the dream by saying, "This is the dream, and we will interpret it to the king."

It was as if the king was watching an event on television while sitting and being told about the things that would happen in the future until the end of time. Daniel told the king that he, King Nebuchadnezzar, was the king of kings, for he ruled over the entire known world of that time. He explained that it was God who had given him the kingdom, power, strength, and glory. Wherever people, wild animals, and birds lived, God had placed them under his authority, making him the head of gold.

After him, another kingdom, inferior to his, represented by silver, would arise. Then a third kingdom, of bronze, would rule over the whole earth. Finally, a fourth kingdom, as strong as iron, would come. Just as iron breaks and crushes everything, so this kingdom would shatter and crush all others. However, the feet and toes being partly clay and partly iron meant that this kingdom would be divided. While it would have some strength like iron, it



would also be weak like clay.

Just as iron does not mix with clay, the people in this kingdom would not remain united. Daniel explained that during the time of these divided kings, represented by the iron and clay, the God of heaven would set up His kingdom. This kingdom would never be destroyed or conquered by another people. It would crush and bring an end to all these earthly kingdoms but itself will stand forever.

Daniel declared, “The great God has shown the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and the interpretation is certain.”

When King Nebuchadnezzar heard this, he bowed down before Daniel, recognizing that God was with him. The king ordered that an offering and incense be presented to Daniel. He said, “Truly, your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”

The king then promoted Daniel, giving him many great gifts and making him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief over all the wise men of Babylon. At Daniel’s request, the king also appointed his friends—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—to be in charge of the affairs of Babylon. Meanwhile, Daniel remained at the royal court.

Daniel did not forget God or his friends.

Do you want to be ten times better than your peers? Do you want to know what will happen in these last days? Read and follow His Word, and you will be ten times better and understand the mysteries of heaven.

Souls need to be sought after, prayed for, and worked on. Sincere appeals must be made. Earnest prayers must be offered. Our weak, lifeless prayers must be transformed into fervent, passionate prayers.

Why did Daniel not boast that he could interpret dreams?

What was the king’s dream?

What is its interpretation?

What jobs did Daniel’s friends receive?

Why do you think the wise men of Babylon were grateful to Daniel?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Isaiah 46:9-10.

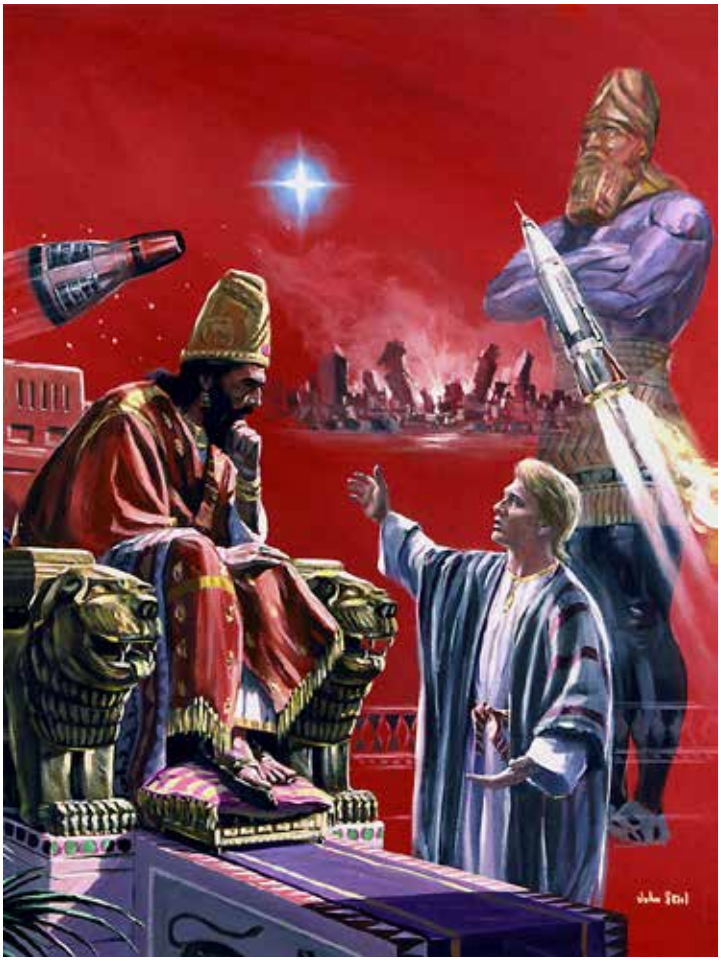
[] Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.

Prayer: Father, thank You because You are God and there is no other, for You lead in righteousness and love. We pray that Your counsel and will stand in our hearts forever.

Activity: A play of Daniel before the king—interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

DAY 164 (June 12)

TOPIC: The Importance of the Prophecy of Daniel 2



All the history books of the world tell us that Babylon ruled the world—represented by the head of gold—from 606 BC to 539 BC. After Babylon, Belshazzar reigned until the Medes and Persians came and overthrew the Chaldeans, taking over the kingdom under King Darius. They entered the city through the Euphrates River, finding the people feasting and drunk, unaware of the invasion.

When the Persians took over, King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the children of Judah to return to the Promised Land. Among those who returned at different times were Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, and Ezra. It seems that Daniel and his companions chose to remain in Babylon since they are not mentioned among those who returned.

The Medo-Persian Empire lasted from 539 BC to 331 BC. After that, the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great of Macedonia rose to power. Alexander conquered many nations but died at the young age of 32 due to alcoholism. Although he had conquered vast territories, he could not control himself against drunkenness.

After Alexander's death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals—Lysimachus, Cassander, Ptolemy, and Seleucus—each ruling a portion of the empire. The Greek Empire ruled from 331 BC to 168 BC. Following Greece, the Roman Empire took over and dominated the known world from 168 BC to 476 AD.

Jesus Christ was born during the reign of Rome under Caesar Augustus, who decreed that everyone should be registered in their hometown. This led Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem of Judea, where Jesus was born. The Roman Empire changed many things, such as the start of the day from evening (as it is in the Bible) to midnight. They also changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week (Sunday).

After the fall of the Roman Empire, it was divided into ten kingdoms, symbolized by the ten toes of the statue in Daniel's prophecy. These kingdoms were not as strong as Rome itself. The ten kingdoms of Europe included England, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and three others that no longer exist (the Vandals, the Heruli, and the Ostrogoths).

Throughout history, rulers like Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Hitler tried to unite these kingdoms but failed. At one point, the Queen of England was called "The Mother of Europe" because of her family ties to various European royal families. Many royal marriages were arranged between England, Germany, and Spain to foster unity, but the kingdoms remained divided. This division led to two World Wars, where more than 50 million people died during World War II.

Even today, Europe remains divided despite efforts to unite through the European Union. This reflects the prophecy in Daniel 2, where iron cannot mix with clay. Recently, the United Kingdom left the European Union (Brexit), fulfilling the prophecy that these kingdoms would not fully unite.

Daniel 2 concludes by saying, "In the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed." We are now living in that time, and Jesus said we should watch for signs of His coming. All the earthly kingdoms have had their time—the only kingdom left to come is God's eternal kingdom.

There are many signs that God's kingdom is near. The gospel is being preached worldwide, lawlessness is increasing, and natural disasters such as earthquakes are becoming more frequent. Seismologists in England report that there were only 15 major earthquakes between the 1st and 15th centuries. However, in the 17th century alone, there were 378 earthquakes, and in the last century, there were 2,119.

The Bible also says there will be wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation—all of which we see today. In 2 Timothy, the Bible describes the last days as perilous times when people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful,

unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Such people are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, opposing the truth and having corrupt minds.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, when people were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, so it will be in these last days. And as in the days of Sodom, immorality is rampant today. We see these things on news outlets (radio, newspapers, and online) and even in books. People live together without marriage, engaging in immoral acts. All these are signs that the end of the world is near.

Every day, we witness alarming events—floods, deadly diseases like Ebola, and other disasters. Our only safety is in trusting God, who is our peace and eternal life.

One positive sign that God's kingdom is near is that the gospel is being preached everywhere. The Bible has been translated into many languages, and people continue to spread the good news of the kingdom through technology and personal evangelism.

Even today, God calls you to share the good news of His kingdom with others.

The dream that Nebuchadnezzar saw did not concern him alone or the people of Judah, but it also concerns us. It described the end of the conflict between Satan and God, or between good and evil. This message is encouraging because after the kingdoms of the world have ruled, God will establish His kingdom of love, peace, joy, and tranquility, which will last forever. Have you begun to prepare yourself to be part of that kingdom? This work requires you to guard souls as one who must give an account for them. The gentleness of Christ must fill the heart of the Intercessory Prayer Worker. If you have love for souls, you will show genuine concern for them. You will offer humble, sincere, and heartfelt prayers for those you visit. The fragrance of Christ's love will be evident in your work. He who gave His life for the life of the world will cooperate with the selfless worker to impress the hearts of men.

What does the head of gold represent? What do the chest and arms of silver represent? What do the belly and thighs of bronze represent? What do the legs of iron represent? What do the feet of iron and clay represent? Where are we today on this statue? What lesson do we learn from this prophecy?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Daniel 2:19-21.

[19-21] Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons: He removes kings, and sets up kings: He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.

Prayer: And blessed be our Lord, for wisdom and might are Yours. We ask You to grant us wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to know You, to know Your Word, and to love it. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen. (Also mention your needs in prayer).

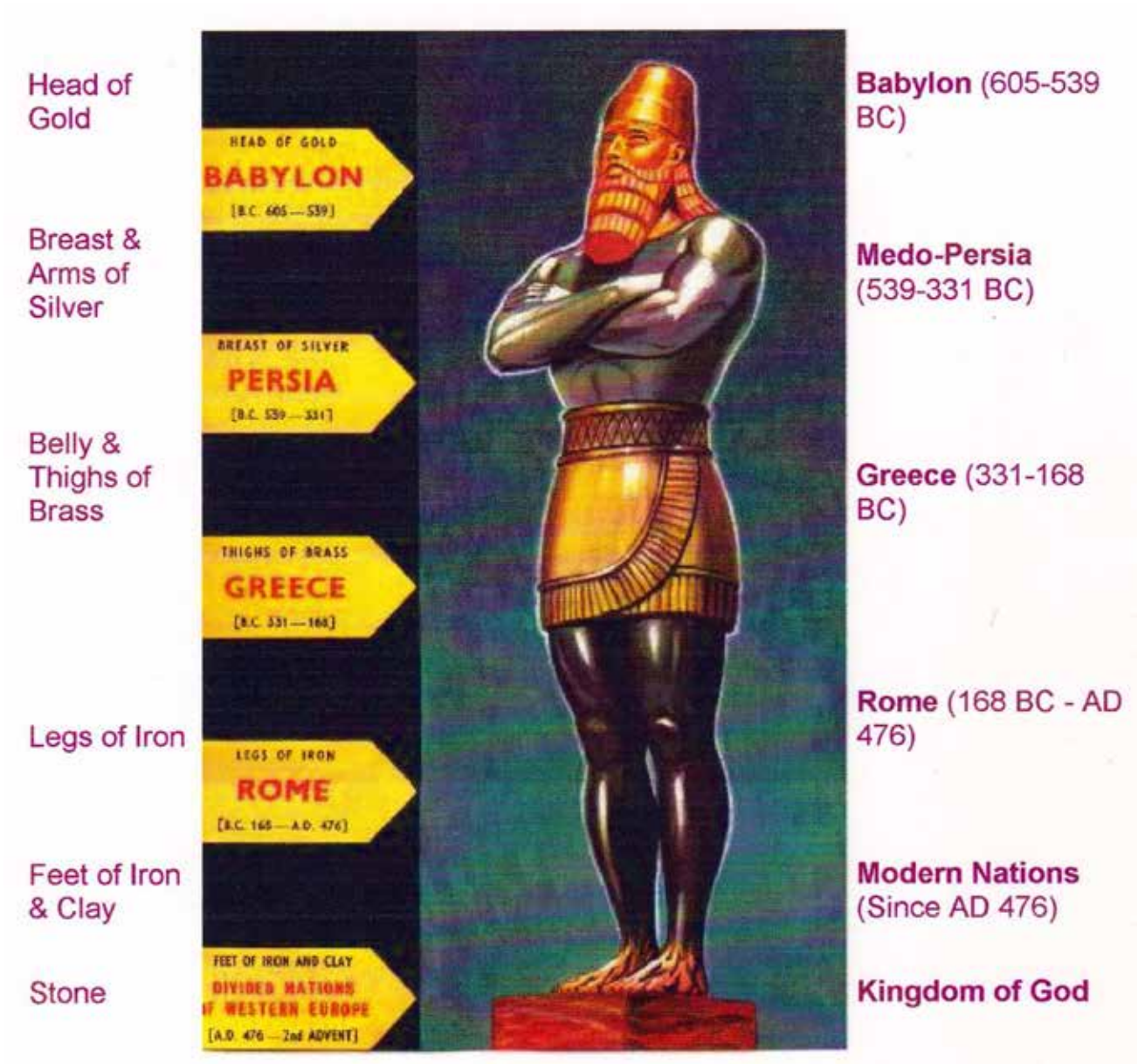
Activity: Build the statue of Daniel 2 using clay, and distinguish the kingdoms by drawing a line.

DAY 165 (June 13)

TOPIC: An In-depth Study of Daniel 2 Prophecy

A remarkable prophecy about all the kingdoms that will rule the world before the end of the world. The statue that the king dreamed of and its interpretation (read Daniel 2). Because of the times we are living in now, which are at the very edge, as you read this prophecy, we would like to revisit this prophecy in greater depth. Take time to read it yourself as well, because it does not contain many mysteries. Many things are clear. And these kingdoms are the same ones you can verify in history books and see how accurately they align.

DIAGRAM of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Statue



WHAT GOD PREDICTS HAPPENS: Ancient Prophecy Reveals the Future .One of the oldest prophecies in the world describes that our planet is about to witness a remarkable event in human history—the end of kingdoms as we know them. This prophecy does not specify an exact date, year, decade, or even century. However, its description of human history has been so accurate that only one final stage remains to be fulfilled with absolute certainty.

The story begins with the tragic event of the exile of thousands of Jews from their homeland in Palestine. Among the captives taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar were four young royal men: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In a situation that may seem strange to us but was normal at the time, Nebuchadnezzar enrolled these four young men in the University of Babylon to be trained as royal advisors.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Shortly after this, the king had a dream. It was a frightening dream that deeply troubled him, but he could not remember it when he woke up the next morning. Convinced that the dream was of great importance, Nebuchadnezzar summoned his advisors and commanded them to tell him both the dream and its meaning. The wise men protested this extraordinary request. But the king declared, "Either you tell me the dream, or I will have you executed!" Despite the threat of death, the king's advisors could not provide an answer.

At that time, Daniel and his three friends had not been called to the king's court along with the other royal advisors. However, since they were still trainees in wisdom, the king's decree included them as well. When the guards came to arrest them, Daniel requested additional time. His request was granted, and that same night God revealed to Daniel the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. (It was God who had given the king the dream in the first place.) The next morning, the guard brought Daniel before the king.

Daniel Explains the Dream

After the formal greetings, Daniel told the king the dream he had seen:

"You, O king, saw a great statue. The statue was large and exceedingly bright, and it stood before you in great splendor. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its feet were partly iron and partly clay. As you watched, a stone was cut out—not by human hands—and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, breaking them into pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were shattered and became like chaff on the

summer threshing floor. The wind carried them away, and no trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." (Daniel 2:31-35)

Essentially, the king was eager to know the meaning of the dream. The beginning of Daniel's explanation likely filled the king with pride: "You, O king, are the head of gold." But the following words were not as encouraging: "After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours."

Daniel explained that after Babylon, three more kingdoms would follow. Most Bible scholars agree that these represent the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and the Roman Empire.

However, Rome was the last of these mighty empires. After its fall, its remnants became the various nations of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East that we know today. The destruction caused by the stone striking the statue represents the end of these earthly nations at the close of human history, after which God will establish His eternal kingdom.

What Is So Amazing?

Here is the astonishing thing about this prophecy: Daniel wrote this prophecy around 600 B.C. He was familiar with Babylon because he lived there, and he may have known about the Medo-Persian Empire during his time, although that empire did not overthrow Babylon until several years later. But humanly speaking, there is no way Daniel could have predicted the rise and fall of Greece and Rome or the breakup of the Roman Empire into separate nations. Yet, every world history textbook confirms that Nebuchadnezzar's dream unfolded exactly as Daniel revealed to the king!

Some Bible critics claim that Daniel wrote his prophecy around 150 B.C., rather than 600 B.C. as traditionally believed. They argue that there is nothing miraculous about his historical descriptions. But even if Daniel had written his prophecy in 150 B.C., there is no way he could have known about the fall of the Roman Empire and its fragmentation into separate nations, which occurred four centuries later.

Thus, we are faced with an extraordinary truth: A prophet who lived over 2,500 years ago foresaw future events in remarkable detail and accuracy.

We can reach no other conclusion than that Daniel received this information about future events from God Himself. And because everything in Daniel's prophecy about world history has been fulfilled, we can be certain that the

final event—the end of the world as we know it and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom—will also come to pass. Therefore, it is wise to prepare ourselves for the coming of God's eternal kingdom, for this present life is only temporary!



Daniel chapter 2 describes this prophecy. Daniel chapter 1 provides the background to these events.

(For more studies, write to Kibidula Mission, P.O. Box 17, Mafinga, Tanzania.)

Pray for Others in Private Prayer

In private prayer, everyone has the opportunity to pray as they wish and to be as open as they desire. They can pray for their family and friends. The prayer closet is a place to share all personal struggles, exams, and trials. Public worship gatherings are not the place to reveal personal matters or heart secrets.

Why is it important to study Daniel 2? What shows us that this prophecy is nearing fulfillment today? How are you preparing yourself for the return of Jesus?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Young Person of Jesus!

Key Verse: Daniel 2:43-44.

[43, 44] And just as you saw iron mixed with clay, they will mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they will not cling to one another, even as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Prayer: Lord, thank You because You are going to establish Your kingdom which will never be destroyed. A kingdom where there will be no tears, no death, nor pain. We pray we may always long to live with You forever. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw the Statue of Daniel as you see below, and the years when these kingdoms ruled.

DAY 166 (June 14)

TOPIC: Forced to Worship an Idol

(Daniel 3)

After receiving an amazing and remarkable interpretation, and even the king beginning to glorify the God of heaven, King Nebuchadnezzar faced the temptation of pride. Without a doubt, he thought about the statue day and night, desiring his kingdom to last forever. He felt that the seventy years or just the head of gold were not enough—he wanted to rule forever and have people worship him. So, he decided to make an image similar to the one he had seen in his dream, but instead of using different metals, he made it entirely of gold from head to toe. This meant that his kingdom would last forever! But no human lives forever, nor does any kingdom reign forever—it is only God's kingdom that will last eternally.

The king gave an order for this statue, measuring sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, to be set up on the plain of Dura and commanded that all the officials come for its dedication. Without a doubt, people wondered what the king intended to do with the statue. Once it was completed, the king proclaimed its dedication, and the satraps, prefects, governors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all provincial officials gathered. The herald loudly declared: "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe, and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." So, when all the people heard the sound of these musical instruments, they fell down and worshipped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

However, some Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! You issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe, and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the golden image, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."



When the king heard this, he was furious and summoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So, these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image I have set up?”

These young men refused to break the second commandment. The king gave them another chance, saying that when they heard the sound of the music, they must fall down and worship the statue. The king had forgotten the mighty acts of the God of heaven and was now exalting himself again. He warned them that if they did not worship the statue, they would immediately be thrown into the blazing furnace, and he asked, “Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, “We do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and He will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if He does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”



Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. These men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans, and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the furnace. The king's command was so urgent, and the furnace was so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" If you were with Jesus in the fire, would you want to come out? So, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire, and all the royal officials saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

This event was told and retold, and if there had been radio and television in those days, it would have been breaking news! These young men had passed another test of faith. When they were about seventeen years old, they passed the test of health by choosing better food. Now, about twenty years later, possibly in their forties, they had passed another test of faith.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants! They trusted in Him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God." The king decreed that anyone who spoke against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would be cut into pieces, and their houses turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

This was an extraordinary testimony to the whole world under the king's rule. God did not delay in rescuing His children. The ropes burned, but not a single hair was singed. Let God be called God. Let us worship, trust, and obey Him. This story gave hope to the captive youth, and even today, God can do great

things for you—just trust Him.

When young people go out to preach the Truth, you must set aside time to pray for them. Pray that God will connect them to Himself and give them wisdom, grace, and knowledge. Pray for their protection from Satan's hidden traps and for their minds to be kept pure and their hearts holy.

What mistake did King Nebuchadnezzar make? Why is the sin of pride so hard to see and overcome? Why did the three young men refuse to worship the image? What was their reward for obedience? Why should we be willing to obey God, even to the point of death? How did the king recognize the fourth man in the fire as resembling a son of the gods? If you were told to come out of the fire while being with Jesus, would you?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Daniel 3:17-20.

[17-20] If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

Prayer: Almighty God and our King, help us not to be afraid when people want us to worship or serve their gods instead of worshiping You. Remove all evil from us and help us to love You deeply. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego inside the fire, together with the Messiah.

DAY 167 (June 15)

TOPIC: King Nebuchadnezzar Lives in the Wild

(Daniel 4)



King Nebuchadnezzar decided to testify about what had happened to him in the book of Daniel, chapter 4. It appears that the king himself wrote this chapter. He said:

"I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs! And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation."

Nebuchadnezzar continued, saying that he was living in his luxurious palace, reigning in his kingdom, when he had a dream that frightened and disturbed him while on his bed. He commanded the wise men to be brought in, forgetting again that only God could reveal the meaning of his dream. The

magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers came, but none of them could interpret the dream.

Finally, Daniel came in, in whom dwelt the spirit of the holy gods, and the king told him the dream. The king said that because the spirit of the holy gods was in Daniel, no secret could be hidden from him. This time, the king remembered the dream but did not understand its meaning.

He described the dream: He saw a tree in the middle of the earth, tall and strong. Its height reached the heavens, and its sight extended to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit was abundant, and it provided food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the air dwelled in its branches, and all living creatures were fed from it.



In the dream, he saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and proclaiming with a loud voice:

“Chop down the tree, cut off its branches, strip its leaves, and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. 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. Let his heart be changed from that of a man to that of a beast, and let seven times pass over him."

The decree was given by the watchers and the command by the holy ones so that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills and sets over it the lowest of men.

King Nebuchadnezzar then requested Daniel, whom he called Belteshazzar, to interpret the dream, as no other wise man could do it. Daniel was astonished and troubled for a while, but the king urged him not to let the dream or its meaning disturb him. Knowing that the interpretation foretold calamity for the king, Daniel wisely said:

"My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you and its interpretation concern your enemies."

The Lord gave Daniel the interpretation of the dream immediately. He told the king:

"The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached the heavens and was visible to all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and fruit abundant, providing food for all and shelter for the beasts and birds, is you, O king! You have grown and become strong; your greatness has increased and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion extends to the ends of the earth."

The holy watcher's command to cut down the tree but leave the stump meant that the king would be driven from men to live with beasts, eating grass like oxen and being wet with the dew of heaven. This would last for seven times (years) until he recognized that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He pleases. The stump left in the ground meant that the kingdom would be restored once the king acknowledged God's sovereignty.

Daniel urged the king to heed the warning, saying:

"O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by practicing righteousness and show mercy to the poor. Perhaps your prosperity will be prolonged."

The king may have considered obeying Daniel's advice, but his pride, power, and wealth overcame him. Twelve months later, while walking in his royal palace in Babylon, the king boasted:

“Is this not the great Babylon I have built for my royal residence, by my mighty power, and for the glory of my majesty?”

While the words were still on his lips, a voice came from heaven:

“King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you. You shall be driven from men to live with the beasts of the field. You will 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 wills.”

At that very moment, the prophecy was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men and ate grass like an ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like eagle’s feathers and his nails like bird’s claws.

Indeed, our God is wonderful. He gave this king many chances out of love, but Nebuchadnezzar wasted them. Likewise, we should not waste the opportunities of salvation we are given but should repent, confess, and remain on the Lord’s side.

At the end of seven years, Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven, and his understanding returned to him. He blessed, praised, and honored the Most High, acknowledging:

“His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation.”

Finally, he realized that God alone reigns over heaven and earth, and no one can resist His will.

Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his throne, and his kingdom became even greater than before. He publicly testified:

“I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are truth, and His ways are justice. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

Pride led to Lucifer’s fall (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17) and caused Adam and Eve’s downfall (Genesis 3:3-7; Romans 3:23). God hates pride because it seeks to remove Him from His throne in our hearts (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Paul said, “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31), meaning he fought against his selfish nature every day. This battle can only be won by allowing Christ to live

in us (Galatians 2:20).

God is merciful. The ministers sought Nebuchadnezzar and restored him to his kingdom. God increased his greatness because he humbled himself and honored the Lord publicly.

Questions to Reflect On:

Who wrote this chapter of Daniel?

What dream did Nebuchadnezzar have?

What was the dream's interpretation?

How did the king appear when he lived like a beast?

Why couldn't he restrain his pride?

Why is boasting dangerous?

Why did God restore Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom?

How can someone avoid the trap of pride?

May God bless you, dear child and young person of Jesus.

Key Verse: Daniel 4:34, 37.

[34] And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.
[37] Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.

Prayer: Lord, help us to be humble and to praise and honor You who live forever, and who have dominion and a kingdom from generation to generation. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity:

Skit: Let the children act as Nebuchadnezzar, boasting or showing pride, then act like animals when you shout, “Pretend to be an animal!” After about one minute, tell them to return to their normal state.

or

Draw a large tree with children around it, then add leaves, fruits, birds, and animals.

DAY 168 (June 16)

TOPIC: The Bloodless Hand Writes on the Wall

(Daniel 5)



When Nebuchadnezzar died, his son, who was weak and named Evil-Merodach, inherited the kingdom. However, he loved to travel to various countries and live a life of pleasure, so he left his son Belshazzar to rule the capital city. The father and son co-ruled the kingdom. King Belshazzar was wicked and did not learn from the experiences of his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. One day, he decided to hold a great feast for his nobles. While tasting the wine, he ordered the sacred vessels from the temple in Jerusalem, which his grandfather had taken when he besieged Jerusalem, to be brought so that he and his concubines could drink from them. The golden vessels from the house of God in Jerusalem were brought, and they drank from them, praising the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

At that very moment, the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing on the wall. When the king saw the floating hand writing by itself, his face changed, his thoughts troubled him, his legs gave way, and his knees knocked together in fear. The king cried out loudly and ordered the magicians, Chaldeans, and astrologers to be brought. Even today, some people, when faced with problems, turn to magicians and astrologers who use the powers of Satan to solve their problems. This is wrong—we should kneel and pray to the God of heaven, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not to Satan or his followers.

The king promised a reward to anyone who could read the inscription and interpret it. He said that person would be clothed in royal purple, given a gold chain, and become the third ruler in the kingdom, as he and his father were co-rulers. All the king's wise men came, but none could read the writing or interpret its meaning.

While the king was troubled, trembling, and his knees knocking together, the feast turned into fear and sorrow. He thought the living and true God could be mocked. He had many cups available, but he chose to openly blaspheme God by using the consecrated vessels. His grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had respected these sacred objects.

The queen, who knew Daniel well, was summoned by the nobles. Because of the king's and nobles' words, she entered the banquet hall and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your face change. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light, understanding, and wisdom like that of the gods were found in him. King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—yes, your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and diviners. This man Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, has an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, and the ability to interpret dreams, solve riddles, and explain mysteries. Let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."

Daniel was summoned, now an old man, possibly over 85 years old. The king said to him, "Are you that Daniel, one of the captives from Judah whom my father brought from Jerusalem? I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that you have light, understanding, and excellent wisdom. The wise men and astrologers have been brought before me to read this writing and explain its meaning, but they could not interpret it. But I have heard that you can interpret and solve mysteries. Now, if you can read the writing and interpret it, you shall be clothed in purple, have a gold chain around your neck, and be the third ruler in the kingdom."

It is surprising that the king did not know Daniel, even though Daniel had worked marvelously with his grandfather. Daniel did not need the king's gifts. Then Daniel answered the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known its interpretation.

O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, a kingdom, majesty, glory, and honor. Because of the greatness He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared him. He killed whom he wished, spared whom he wished, exalted whom he wished, and humbled whom he wished. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit became proud, he was deposed from his royal throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from men, his heart was made like that of a beast, his dwelling was with wild donkeys, he ate grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven until he knew that the Most High God rules over the kingdom of men and appoints whomever He wills.

But you, his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this. Instead, you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven. You brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, wives, and concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see, hear, or know. But the God who holds your breath and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was inscribed. This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. This is the interpretation:

MENE – God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.

TEKEL – You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

PARSIN – Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Belshazzar kept his promise, rewarding Daniel with purple robes, a gold chain, and the proclamation that he was the third ruler in the kingdom. However, that very night was the end of Babylon's kingdom. The Medes and Persians entered the city through the riverbed, as the city had high, thick walls. While people feasted wickedly, the invaders captured the city, and that night Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, was slain. Darius the Mede received the kingdom at the age of 62.

This is a great lesson for us—we must be humble like Daniel, and God will lift

us in His time. Let us cast aside Belshazzar's pride, which dishonored God and disrespected sacred things. May the Lord help us to respect holy things. The church is not a place to run around, destroy property, or misuse sacred items. Truly, the heart of man is full of foolishness.

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt and have committed abominable injustice; there is none who does good." (Psalm 53:1)

Those who love sin choose to ignore God in their thoughts, teachings, and lives. The Bible calls this foolishness because God is real, and such people will be held accountable for their evil deeds. Sadly, we often fail to learn from the mistakes of those before us, insisting on experiencing things ourselves—until it is too late.

Sabbath School Teachers, Pray for Your Class Members
As God's workers, we need to be more like Jesus and less self-centered. We must have a greater burden for souls and pray daily for wisdom and strength for the Sabbath. Teachers, meet with your classes, pray with them, and teach them how to pray. Let your heart be softened, and let your prayers be short and sincere.

Reflection Questions:

1. What sin did Belshazzar commit?

2. Who wrote on the wall?

3. Who suggested calling Daniel?

4. What lesson do you learn from this story?

5. What do "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN" mean?

Each day, ask yourself: If God weighed me on His scales, what would He find?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Daniel 5:24-28.

[24-28] Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; you are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting. PERES; your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for helping us in our lives with fresh air and the light of the sun. Help us not to be arrogant and proud like King Belshazzar, and not to use things of the church for common purposes. Keep us from the evil one, our Creator. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Write these words on paper and stick them on the wall, and explain their meaning—MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PERES. Act out the frightened face of the king and his knees knocking together.

DAY 169 (June 17)

TOPIC: Daniel is Thrown into the Lions' Den

(Daniel 6)

It pleased Darius, the king of the Medes, to appoint 120 satraps and three administrators to oversee them. Daniel was not dismissed or killed but was taken by the new administration to be one of the three administrators, so the satraps would report to them, and the king would not suffer loss. Others were displeased that a man from the previous kingdom would hold a high position in the new one. Daniel's excellence surpassed all the satraps because the Spirit of God was in him, and the king planned to set him over the entire kingdom. This aroused jealousy among the other leaders, and they sought to find a way to accuse him without cause. They conspired, saying, "We will not find any charge against Daniel unless it is related to the law of his God."

Daniel was determined to obey God, and this is a lesson in obedience for us today. The ministers and governors gathered before the king and said, "King Darius, live forever. All the royal ministers, governors, counselors, and satraps have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered."

Before the king thought carefully or realized their trap, he agreed to the decree, seeking his own honor without knowing it was a trap against his beloved friend, Daniel. The king signed and sealed the decree, making it unchangeable by the law of the Medes and Persians. When Daniel learned that the decree had been signed, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. He knelt down and prayed three times a day, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. He did not change his practices because of the new law.

The leaders gathered and found Daniel praying and seeking God. They approached the king and reminded him, "Did you not sign a decree that anyone who prays to any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they said, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, does not pay attention



to you, O king, or to the decree you signed but prays three times a day."

Daniel was a man of integrity. He did not hide or wait for the thirty days to pass but remained faithful to the God of heaven, who deserved his worship. How else would these people, who did not know God, learn about Him?

The king was greatly distressed and tried to rescue Daniel. Until sunset, he worked to find a way to save him, but he could not change the law. The leaders insisted that the law must be enforced. So, the king gave the order, and Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. Before he was thrown in, the king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you."

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and the rings of his nobles so that nothing concerning Daniel could be changed. The king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating, without entertainment, and without sleeping. At the first light of dawn, the king hurried to the lions' den. When he came near, he called out in a distressed voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

To his relief, he heard Daniel's voice. Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel, and He shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent before Him. Also, I have not done any wrong before you, O king." The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted out of the den. No wound was found on him because he had trusted in his God.

The lions, though hungry and roaring all night, did not touch the prophet of God. The leaders who had accused Daniel were furious that their plan had failed. The king then commanded that those men, along with their wives and children, be thrown into the lions' den. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Those who dig a pit to harm others will eventually fall into it themselves.

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages throughout his kingdom:
"May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom, people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and He endures forever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, and His dominion will never end. He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

The king publicly declared the greatness of God throughout his kingdom. Even today, wherever you are, you should testify of God's mighty works. Praising God is also a form of offering.

Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian. We too will prosper if we honor and follow God's commandments, and He Himself will lift us up. As the saying goes, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it."

The Bible says, "Whoever digs a pit may fall into it" (Ecclesiastes 10:8). In the days of Esther, Haman was envious of Mordecai and secretly built a tall gallows to hang him. What happened? Haman himself was hanged on the same gallows he had prepared (Esther 7:9-10).

Let us be people of love and not those who plot harm against others, lest we fall into our own traps.

Students should pray for their teachers—
Students should have regular prayer times where they can offer simple, heartfelt prayers for their teachers. They should pray for their teachers to be blessed with physical strength, sound minds, moral integrity, and spiritual insight, and that each teacher may be qualified by God's grace to perform their duties effectively.

Why did people want Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den?

Why was the king distressed?

How did God rescue Daniel?

What happened to those wicked men when they were thrown into the lions' den?

Why did Daniel prosper during the reign of Darius and Cyrus?

Praising God is an offering—do you praise Him?

Will there be persecution for God's people in the last days?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Verse: Daniel 6:26-28.

[26-28] I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and steadfast forever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, because You live forever and Your kingdom will never be destroyed. Thank You for deliverance and healing. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of Daniel in the lions' den, the lions, and the king peeking into the pit.

DAY 170 (June 18)

TOPIC: Strange Beasts

(Daniel 7)

In the first year of King Belshazzar's reign, Daniel had a dream and visions while on his bed. He wrote them down and gave an account of all these things. In his vision at night, he saw the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea. Then, four great beasts, each different from the other, came up from the sea.

The first was like a lion with eagle's wings. Its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a human heart was given to it. Then he saw a second beast, like a bear, raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. They said to it, "Arise, devour much flesh."

After this, he saw another beast, like a leopard, which had four wings like a bird on its back and four heads. It was given dominion. Then in his vision at night, he saw a fourth beast, dreadful, terrifying, and very strong. It had large iron teeth, devoured and broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts before it and had ten horns. As he was considering the horns, another little horn came up among them, before which three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. This little horn had eyes like a human and a mouth speaking great things.

As Daniel watched, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was like fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A river of fire flowed from before Him. Thousands upon thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Then Daniel saw One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom will never be destroyed.









Daniel was troubled by these visions and sought to understand their meaning. He was told that the explanation would be given to him. God does not want His people to be in darkness about this kingdom. Although the world currently exalts this power, it will eventually lead to the destruction of the entire world, and the earth will come to an end (Revelation 17:8-11; 6:14-17; 19:11-21).

The saints will be taken to heaven to reign with Jesus for 1,000 years (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:4). During this time, the earth will be desolate (Jeremiah 4:23-27). After the 1,000 years, the saints will return to earth with the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10). The wicked will then be resurrected and will try to capture the city, but fire will come down from God and destroy them (Revelation 20:7-10, 15). This is the second death or the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14).

The lake of fire is not burning now—it will burn after the 1,000 years are over. Those who are cast into it, including Satan and his angels, will be burned to ashes (Malachi 4:1-3; Ezekiel 28:14-19) and will never live again. After this, the saints will inherit the new earth (Revelation 21:1; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Psalm 37).

Parents Should Pray for Their Children

God has promised to give wisdom to those who ask in faith, and He will fulfill His promises. He delights in faith that trusts in His Word. Augustine's mother prayed for the conversion of her son. Although she did not see any evidence that God was working in his heart, she did not lose hope. She held

onto the Scriptures and persistently pleaded with God. Her earnest prayers, unwavering faith, and perseverance prevailed, and God answered her prayers. Even today, God is ready to listen to the prayers of His people.

Why was Daniel troubled?
Who is the terrifying beast?
Who is the Ancient of Days?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Daniel 7:24-26.

[24-26] And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Help us to understand this power that speaks against You so that we may avoid it. Give us strength and courage in the days of persecution, when the antichrist will oppress Your people. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Learn about the key text—the power that will speak against God. Read Daniel 2, 7, and 8, and you will find the sequence of kingdoms; this is how you will know which kingdoms are meant. These kingdoms perfectly match world history! Also read about these kingdoms in world history curricula.

DAY 171 (June 19)

TOPIC: The Interpretation of Daniel's Dream

Daniel was told that the four great beasts represent four kingdoms that will rise on the earth. This prophecy corresponds to the vision in Daniel 2 about the statue made of different metals. History confirms this prophecy. The kingdom of Babylon was in power when Daniel received this vision. Other kingdoms arose later. This prophecy is significant because it helps us understand the timeline of world history. In Daniel 2, we are now in the period represented by the toes of iron and clay. In Daniel 7, we are in the time of the ten horns representing the divided kingdoms of Europe.

Interpretation of the Dream:

1. The head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2) corresponds to the lion in Daniel 7, representing the Babylonian Empire (606 BC – 539 BC).

2. The chest and arms of silver correspond to the bear and represent the Medo-Persian Empire (539 BC – 331 BC). The three ribs symbolize the three kingdoms (Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt) conquered by the Medo-Persians.

3. The belly and thighs of bronze correspond to the leopard and represent the Greek Empire (331 BC – 168 BC) under Alexander the Great, who died at 32. His kingdom was divided among four generals, represented by the four heads of the leopard.

4. The legs of iron correspond to the dreadful beast and represent the Roman Empire (168 BC – 476 AD).

5. The ten toes correspond to the ten horns, symbolizing the divided kingdoms of Europe that emerged after the fall of Rome.

Among the ten horns, Daniel saw a little horn that uprooted three others. This horn persecuted the saints, changed times and laws, but its reign will eventually end. God will judge it, and the saints will receive the eternal kingdom.

Who did the lion represent?
Who did the bear represent?
Who did the leopard represent?

Who did the dreadful beast represent?
What do the horns represent?
What do the four heads of the leopard represent?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!



Key Verse: Daniel 7:13-15.

[13-15] I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

Prayer: Lord, You are the One with dominion, glory, and the kingdom. Receive our praises, our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. Help us to be with You forever in Your kingdom that can never be destroyed. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of the four great beasts and explain which kingdoms they represent, then explore further to find out the years in which these kingdoms ruled.

DAY 172 (June 20)

TOPIC: The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

(Daniel 8)

In the third year of Belshazzar's reign, the last king of Babylon, Daniel saw another vision at the citadel of Susa, near the Ulai River. As he looked up, he saw a ram standing by the river. It had two horns, and though both were long, one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up last. Daniel saw the ram charging toward the west, north, and south. No animal could stand against it, and it did as it pleased, becoming great.

As Daniel was thinking about what he was seeing, a male goat suddenly appeared from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. This goat had a large horn between its eyes. It approached the ram with the two horns, which Daniel had seen standing beside the river, and charged at it furiously. In the heat of its anger, the goat struck the ram, breaking both of its horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it, and no one could rescue the ram from the goat's power. The goat became very great, but at the height of its power, the large horn was broken off, and in its place grew four prominent horns toward the four winds of heaven.

Out of one of these horns came a small horn, which grew in power toward the south, the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens and threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

Then Daniel heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one asked, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" He was told, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be cleansed." This is the longest time prophecy in the Bible, the prophecy of 2,300 days.

Daniel sought to understand the meaning of the vision. The angel Gabriel was commanded to explain the vision to him. Gabriel said, "Understand, O



son of man, that the vision concerns the time of the end." While Gabriel was speaking, Daniel was overcome with sleep, but he was awakened. Gabriel explained that the ram with two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. This corresponds to the silver chest of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 2, the bear in Daniel 7, and now the ram in Daniel 8—all representing the Medo-Persian Empire. Gabriel further explained that the goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes represents its first king, Alexander the Great, who conquered the Medo-Persian Empire. After his death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals into four regions.

Gabriel then described a future king with a fierce face and mastery of intrigue. This king would become very powerful—not by his own power—and would cause astounding devastation. He would destroy mighty men and the holy people. He would exalt himself and stand against the Prince of princes, but he would be broken—not by human hands.

A year in prophecy represents 360 days. "A time" means one year (360 days), "times" means two years (720 days), and "half a time" means half a year (180 days), totaling 1,260 prophetic days. This prophecy parallels the 1,260 years mentioned in Revelation, which have already been fulfilled. The Roman system even changed the calendar, marking the beginning of a new day at midnight instead of sunset, as was the practice from creation.

Daniel was told that the vision was for the distant future, and he was left astonished and weak for several days. Even after resuming his duties for the king, he remained troubled by the vision, which no one understood. Today, many years have passed, and the kingdoms in the vision have all come and gone. What remains to be fulfilled is the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Prince of princes, Jesus Christ, will return to destroy earthly kingdoms and establish His eternal kingdom. Are you preparing for His return?

The 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14 represent 2,300 prophetic years (Ezekiel 4:6). This period began in 457 BC when the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was issued and ended in 1844 AD. The cleansing of the sanctuary refers to Christ's work of judgment, purification, and reconciliation, which began in 1844 in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:23-26; Revelation 11:19). When this work is completed, Christ will make a final declaration that will determine the eternal destiny of every person—either for eternal life or eternal death (Revelation 22:11-12). Then He will return to gather His faithful and destroy the wicked. The sanctuary message is vast—consider reading chapters 24 and 25 of The Great Controversy for a more comprehensive understanding.

Pray for Fellow Believers
We often forget that our fellow workers in the faith need strength, joy, and encouragement. During times of burden and anxiety, be sure to express your care and compassion. Let them know you are praying for them. Share God's message with them: "Be strong and courageous."

What kingdom did the ram represent?

Why did it have one horn longer than the other?

What kingdom did the goat represent?

Why was the horn broken?

Why did Daniel faint?

Read the Bible and explain how this chapter relates to the final judgment.

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Daniel 8:13-15.

[13-15] Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, help us to understand well the prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Forgive our sins and remind us that we are living in the last days, so that we may be ready and also help others to be ready. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: For the activity of Daniel 8, tell the youth and children to match the symbols from Daniel's vision with their meanings, such as the ram of Medo-Persia and the goat of Greece. Help the children to remember the greatness of God and His trustworthy plan of history. Review the prophecies that parallel this in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7.

DAY 173 (June 21)

TOPIC: Daniel Receives Further Revelation of Prophecy

(Daniel 9)



We will try to explain this simply so that every child can understand at least a little. In many Bible prophecies, a day represents a year. Read Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. In prophecy, the sea represents many people, while dry land represents few people. If you are eager to understand prophecy better, make an effort to study the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. The Bible interprets itself. Since we are living in the last days, we can look back at history and see how many of these prophecies have already been fulfilled. Ministries like Amazing Discoveries, Morning Star Radio, Mahubiri TV, and Amazing Facts help people study prophecy. You can search these names online to learn more.

In the first year of Darius the Mede, after Babylon's fall, Daniel understood from the Scriptures that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. The prophet Jeremiah had foretold these seventy years of Jerusalem's desolation. Upon realizing this, Daniel turned to the Lord in prayer and supplication, fasting, and wearing sackcloth and ashes. He confessed the sins of his people, saying:

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and rebelled; we have turned away from Your commands and laws. We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land."

Daniel prayed on behalf of his people, acknowledging their collective guilt. He confessed that the Lord was righteous, but the people had brought shame on themselves by disobeying Him. Daniel admitted that all Israel had transgressed the law and turned away from the Lord. Because of this, the curses written in the Law of Moses had come upon them.

Daniel pleaded for God's mercy, asking Him to turn His anger away from Jerusalem and His holy hill. "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of Your servant. For Your sake, Lord, look with favor on Your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, our God, and hear; open Your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears Your Name. We do not make requests of You because we are righteous, but because of Your great mercy. Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For Your sake, my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people bear Your Name."

While Daniel was still praying, confessing his sins and the sins of his people, the angel Gabriel appeared to him again. Gabriel told Daniel: "I have come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision."

Gabriel explained that seventy weeks had been decreed for Daniel's people and the holy city to accomplish several purposes:

1. To finish transgression

2. To put an end to sin

3. To atone for wickedness

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness

5. To seal up vision and prophecy

6. To anoint the Most Holy Place

Gabriel said: “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing.”

The angel continued: “The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven,’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

The seventy weeks are a symbolic time period in prophecy. Since a day in prophecy represents a year, seventy weeks (70 x 7 days) equals 490 prophetic days, which corresponds to 490 years. This time period began in 457 BC when the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued and extended to 34 AD when the gospel was opened to the Gentiles.

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was crucified in the middle of the final week, fulfilling the prophecy that He would be “cut off” (Daniel 9:26-27). After His death, the sacrificial system ended, as Christ’s sacrifice became the ultimate atonement.

Who are spiritual Israel?
In the New Testament, the term “Israel” is no longer limited to literal descendants of Abraham. Instead, all who believe in Christ—whether Jew or Gentile—are considered spiritual Israelites (Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Galatians 3:26-29). Through Christ’s death on the cross, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. Now, all people have equal access to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22).

We should rejoice and say, “Praise the Lord!” At the foot of the cross, all people are equal. There is no longer any need for a special time to preach the gospel to the Jews—they need to hear the gospel now, just like everyone else. The day of salvation is today (2 Corinthians 6:2). When Christ returns, He will destroy the abomination of desolation and all who align themselves

with it (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 19:11-21). May God help us always to be on His side.

The Power of Prayer
We need to pray more than we do. There is great power and blessing in praying together with our families, with our children, and also in private. Ask Christ to give you His helping hand to accomplish His purposes. Through prayer, you can receive the strength to make your service to your children more effective.

Why is it important to pray for others?

Why did Daniel say “we have sinned,” even though he personally had not?

Why is it important to study the prophecies of Daniel?

Can you also pray for understanding of the 2,300-year prophecy?

How many days are in seventy weeks?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Daniel 9:24, 25.

[24, 25] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Prayer: Thank You, Father in heaven. Create in us clean hearts. Help us to understand well the prophecy of the seventy weeks. Keep us from making up interpretations that do not come from You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Read more about the book of Daniel on the WEBSITE of Amazing Facts and the book Daniel and Revelation.
https://manna.amazingfacts.org/amazingfacts/website/medialibrary/documents/magazines/Daniel_and_Revelation.pdf

DAY 174 (June 22)

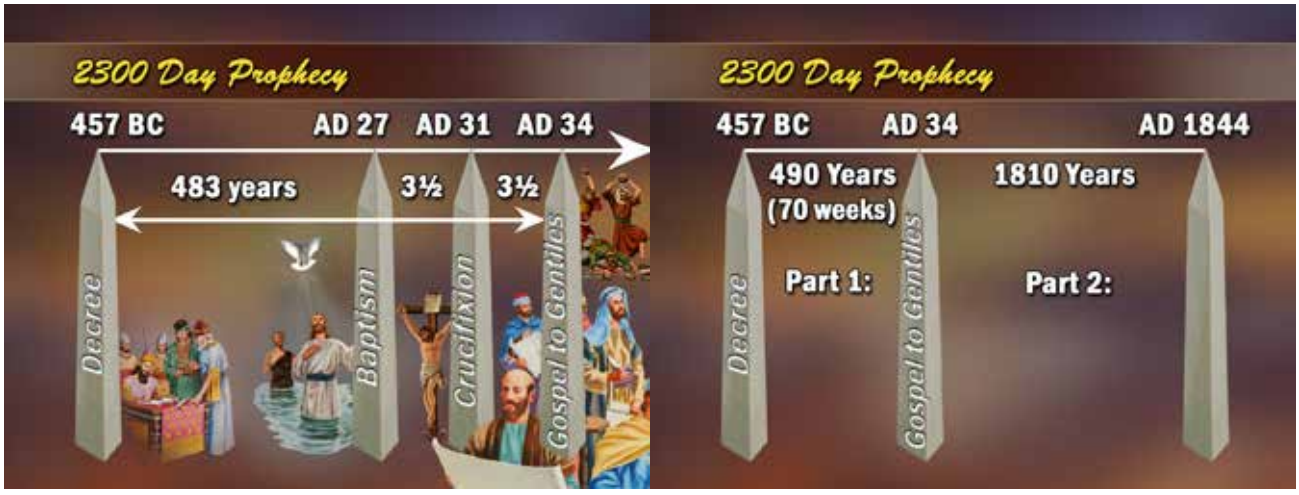
TOPIC: The Prophecy of the 2300 Days Revealed

(Daniel 9)



Three kings issued decrees to rebuild Jerusalem: Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. The final proclamation was made in 457 BC. Sixty-nine weeks equal 483 days, and in prophecy, one day represents one year. By calculating from 457 BC, this prophecy leads to 27 AD, the year Jesus was baptized—when the Messiah was anointed.

(Refer to the chart here for better understanding.)



#457 BC (-457): The beginning of the 2300 days/years and the 70 weeks, marked by the final decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:1-27).
27 AD: The end of the 69 weeks; the Messiah is anointed—Christ is baptized (Daniel 9:26).
31 AD: In the middle of the 70th week, Christ is crucified (Daniel 9:26-27).
34 AD: The end of the 70 weeks—Stephen is stoned (Acts 7:59).
457 BC + 2300 years = 1843 AD, but after further calculations involving the Passover and other factors, they arrived at the date October 22, 1844.

During this period, people in Europe and America who studied the Bible believed that Jesus would return that year because they concluded that the true sanctuary was now in heaven, not on earth. Although their calculations

were correct, the actual event occurred in heaven, where the investigative judgment began—first for those who had died, and later for the living. This would mark the closing of the door of mercy for people to repent and seek forgiveness. Hebrews chapters 8, 9, and 10 explain further about the heavenly sanctuary, emphasizing that the earthly sanctuary in Exodus 25 was a shadow or model of the heavenly one.

The door of mercy first closes for those who have had the opportunity to know God (the household of God). We plan to write a small book on prophecy to explain further what little we understand. However, it should be known that no one knows all prophecy—God reveals certain things to His people as they happen so that they may glorify Him and recognize that He is actively involved in their lives, and He is TRUTH. To know more, read the Bible, pray to God, and follow those who study prophecy, such as Ivor Myers and James Rafferty from Salvation in Symbols and Signs (search on Google).

1844 AD: Christ entered the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary and began the investigative judgment (Daniel 8:14). These events are also documented by historians from that era and later writers like Josephus.

You did not see it as a burden if a way opened for you to care for your children and protect them from the widespread evil in today's world. Your heart's burden was to see them turn to the Lord. You prayed earnestly before God for your children with strong cries and tears, desiring their conversion deeply. At times, your heart grew weary and faint, fearing that your prayers would go unanswered. But once again, you consecrated your children to God and placed them with renewed dedication upon the altar.

Why did Christ come to Daniel at that time?
There was a message for these last days. Gabriel told Daniel:
"Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people [Spiritual Israel] in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." (Daniel 10:14).

Because of Daniel's fervent prayers, he was shown what would happen to God's people in the last days. He was given the light to understand God's true words. Gabriel was prepared to reveal more from the Scriptures, saying:
"But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth." (Daniel 10:21).

God's Word is Truth; it sanctifies us if we follow it (John 17:17; 7:17; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 2:22).

Satan today convinces Christians not to read God's Word, claiming that they

are already led by the Spirit. However, there are two guiding spirits—the Holy Spirit and the spirit of error (1 John 4:1, 6). The work of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into all Truth, which is God's Word, until we understand it fully (John 16:13-15; 14:21-26). The spirit of error discourages us from reading or hearing God's Word.

John instructs us to test the spirit within us to know whether it is from God or from the spirit of deception. Anyone who says, "I am led by the Spirit," but also claims, "I don't need to read or hear God's Word," is not led by the Holy Spirit but by the spirit of deception—also called deceiving spirits or demons (1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 16:13-14).

God's Word strengthens us—no matter how fierce the storms of life, they will not bring us down (Matthew 7:24-27). Build your life on the Rock, which is God's Word or Christ (Revelation 19:13; John 1:1-3). The Word and Christ are one; you cannot accept Christ while rejecting His Word.

Do not be tossed back and forth by every wind of doctrine—pray for Bible verses to support every teaching, and you will be safe (Ephesians 4:11-15).

Strive to read the Bible—it will make you wise for true salvation built on God's Word, not on emotions and excitement (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17).

Questions:

1. According to Daniel 8:14, in what year was the sanctuary cleansed?

2. According to the prophecy in Daniel 9, in what year was Jesus baptized?

3. Is there any human being who knows all prophecy?

4. What should we do if we read prophecy and do not understand it?

5. Why is it important to understand prophecy?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Daniel 9:26-27.

[26, 27] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Prayer: Holy Father who lives in heaven, praise and glory are Yours forever. We know that even though no one understands all of Your Word, the books of Daniel and Revelation have been revealed to us who live in the last days. Help us to understand these seventy weeks. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Learn about these seventy weeks by using the chart drawn below, going step by step. Remember that the Bible interprets itself.

DAY 175 (June 23)

TOPIC: Increasing Knowledge

(Daniel 10-12)



In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, Daniel was mourning for three weeks, fasting in what is known as Daniel's 21-day fast. During this time, he did not eat any rich or luxurious foods that were abundant in the palace of the world's most powerful king. There are many types of fasts, and this is one of them. After turning 12 years old, you could try fasting by eating only once a day if you have no health problems like diabetes or stomach ulcers.

At the end of these 21 days, Daniel lifted his eyes and saw a man clothed in linen, with a belt of pure gold around His waist. His body was like polished beryl, His face like lightning, His eyes like flaming torches, His arms and legs like burnished bronze, and His voice like the sound of a great multitude. Daniel alone saw this vision, although others were present. The people with him felt a great trembling and fled in fear.

Daniel was greatly loved, as he was told several times, "O Daniel, greatly beloved, do not fear. From the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood

me for 21 days, and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." The angel told Daniel that he had come to reveal what would happen to his people in the latter days. Daniel saw these visions over 2,500 years ago.

When Daniel heard these words, he became speechless until one resembling a human touched his lips, enabling him to speak. He said, "My Lord, because of this vision, sorrows have overtaken me; the vision was heavy and terrifying."

In the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel received another vision about the kings of Persia, the king of the South, and the king of the North, and the events that would unfold until the end of time. It seems that the kings of the North and South change over time, but all of them align with the enemy—Satan. Whether it is Rome, France, Babylon, or Egypt, these northern and southern kingdoms operate under the principles of the enemy.

You can study more about these kings from researchers like Ivor Myers, James Rafferty, Doug Batchelor, and Stephen Bohr. Books like Gems from the Book of Daniel and Gems from the Book of Revelation by Patrick Jones offer excellent insights. Programs like Signs and Symbols are available online for further study. However, Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 8 are clearer because they mention specific nations, which align with world history.

Daniel was also told that Michael, the great prince who stands for God's people, will arise, and there will be a time of trouble unlike any before. But at that time, God's people will be delivered—everyone whose name is found written in the Book of Life. Michael is Jesus. God knows all our deeds, and He opens the books not for His own sake, but for us humans who are curious. Some will wonder why certain people are not in heaven, or how someone they thought was wicked made it, while others will be surprised to find themselves there.

Daniel explained that those who have died will be resurrected—some to eternal life and others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who live righteously, following God's Word, will shine like the brightness of the sky. And those who lead others to righteousness will shine like stars forever and ever.

Daniel was instructed to seal the words of the book until the time of the end. In those days, many will run to and fro, and knowledge will increase. Imagine, Daniel saw these things even before bicycles were invented—it was still the time of horse travel!

Have you ever wondered why the Israelites didn't take buses or ships to the

Promised Land? Or why David didn't kill Goliath with a gun? Or why the Wise Men didn't fly in an airplane to see baby Jesus? These things did not exist back then. But now is the time of the end—planes travel at 1,000 km/h, rockets reach the moon at 27,000 km/h. Today, the world is like a village; you can be in Australia today and China tomorrow. People are moving swiftly to share the Good News.

Phones, computers, and mass media allow communication without physical visits. Knowledge of God has also increased immensely. Compared to the past, children today understand the Scriptures better due to widespread printing and distribution of God's Word.

In 1884, the first automobile was invented in Germany. The Wright brothers flew the first airplane for 8 seconds in 1903. Humans first set foot on the moon in 1969. Many electrical appliances, machines, and even plastic materials were developed in the 1960s. Most modern technology we enjoy today is only about 150 years old.

Consider the devices in your home or school—our ancestors never saw such things. We are privileged to witness these advancements and must prepare for God's kingdom. The danger lies in knowledge increasing without wisdom. Wisdom means using knowledge wisely to live harmoniously with others and with God. Solomon asked for wisdom, not knowledge or wealth. Let us also pray for wisdom to maintain good relationships with others and with God.

According to Daniel 9, the "last days" began after the 2,300 days prophecy ended—around the 1800s. Daniel saw visions of cars, motorcycles, computers, and bicycles and was overwhelmed by these strange and fearful things. Other signs of the last days include wars, earthquakes, rebellion, disasters, and the loss of human compassion.

Dear child, pray, for God's words are simple enough for a humble child to understand. God Himself reveals His prophecies to us. The Book of Revelation explains some of Daniel's visions.

Daniel was told to seal the book until the time of the end. Many will purify themselves, while the wicked will continue doing evil. Only the wise will understand that the end is near and will prepare accordingly. Wisdom is reading God's Word, meditating on it, and applying it in life.

Without a doubt, Daniel will be in heaven. Wouldn't you like to be there too? Let us seek God earnestly so we may know Him and do His will.

The Book of Daniel directly concerns our time. Understanding future events is crucial because it determines whether we receive eternal life or eternal death. Jesus said, “When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),” (Matthew 24:15).

God’s people are weary of this world and long for rest in heaven for 1,000 years. Jesus says, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:12). Are you ready to meet the Lord?

From today, choose to enter Paradise with Christ (Luke 23:42-43; 2 Corinthians 6:2). You may never hear a call like this again—decide today!

Questions:

1. What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

2. What is the meaning of Daniel’s fast?

3. What does it mean that “many will purify themselves, but the wicked will continue doing evil”?

4. List some inventions from the past 150 years.

5. How many prophetic years are equivalent to 1,260 days?

6. Who will shine like the brightness of the sky? Do you want to shine?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Daniel 12:1-3.

[1-3] At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the

firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the warning in the prophetic words of the Book of Daniel. We are grateful that You stand by our side in times of great tribulation and deliver us because we are written in Your book. Help us to be wise and shine, and as we lead many to righteousness. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Why do people fast? Read Daniel 10 about Daniel's fast, then explain what it was about. If possible, set aside 21 days to do this fast.

DAY 176 (June 24)

TOPIC: God's Love for His People (Hosea)



This is the first book of the minor prophets, meaning those with shorter books. It was written around 755 BC for Israel, not Judah. Its main purpose is to show how Israel abandoned God, like a wife who leaves her husband and goes after other men, yet God still continued to love them. Hosea had a message for the northern kingdom of Israel, whose people oppressed the poor and worshipped other gods. Israel was the first to rebel greatly before her sister Judah. The word of the LORD came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel.

Hosea begins his book with the instructions God gave him—to marry an unfaithful woman who would go after other men, meaning a prostitute. Marriage is a covenant between a husband and wife and is symbolic of the relationship between God and His people. Hosea married a woman named Gomer and paid the bride price. She gave birth to a son, and God told him to name the child Jezreel, meaning "God will punish Israel" during the reign of Jehu. Then she bore a daughter, and God told him to name her Lo-Ruhamah, meaning "not loved" or "no mercy." Although Israel strayed far from the Lord's commands, Judah still stood firm. Later, Gomer had another son, and God told him to name him Lo-Ammi, meaning "not my people."

The concept of abandonment is discussed here—just as Hosea would leave his unfaithful wife, God would abandon Israel because of their unfaithfulness and their pursuit of other gods. Yet, He promised that one day, He would renew His covenant and take Israel back. God then instructed Hosea to seek out Gomer again, who had sold herself into slavery. Hosea paid to redeem her and brought her home as his wife once more. God said that the Israelites would live for many days without a king or a priestly function but would eventually return to seek the LORD their God with reverence in the last days. Today, we

are also called to return and seek the LORD.

Hosea's painful marriage serves as an illustration of how Israel had been unfaithful to God. Just as no man wants his wife to go after other men, God does not want us to follow other gods because He is our Father and our Creator. God urged them to ask for forgiveness and to turn from their wickedness. He said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Even today, many are lost because they do not know the Word of the Lord—either by failing to read it or by refusing to obey it. Rejecting the knowledge of God's Word is rejecting His laws.

God warned that Israel would eat but not be satisfied and would act deceitfully. Ephraim, one of the tribes, is described as easily following sin. They are compared to a half-baked loaf of bread, and foreigners consumed their strength without them realizing it. Ephraim was like a silly dove, lacking understanding—calling out to Egypt and Assyria, running away from God, which would lead to their destruction. They built a calf idol in Samaria and worshipped it, sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind by sacrificing to other gods.

This book shows us the great love of God. Since creation, humanity has shown ingratitude and sunk into sin. Yet, God has revealed His love for humankind. Would a child who receives all love, mercy, and grace still disrespect their father? Yes—just as we have done. When we reflect on this, we should see ourselves as Israel and return to the LORD. "Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces, but He will heal us; He has injured us, but He will bind up our wounds. After two days, He will revive us; on the third day, He will restore us, that we may live in His presence." God desires us to show kindness to others rather than offering sacrifices; knowing Him is better than giving offerings.

Ephraim is likened to a heifer that loves to thresh grain, thinking only of itself and its pleasures. As a loving parent, God called Ephraim out of Egypt, from slavery. Just as a parent teaches their child, God teaches us. His love heals and restores us. God does not seek revenge but disciplines us as His children. When we look in the mirror, we see ourselves—not someone else. Let us remember the goodness and love of God and fear Him alone. The book of Hosea reveals that we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But if we return to Him with repentance and confession, He will heal our backsliding and continue to show us His endless love. The ways of the LORD are right, and He has shown us the path to walk. Let us pray for wisdom to walk in His righteous way.

If you ever wonder how much God loves you, reread the book of Hosea and see His love. Did Gomer deserve her husband's love? No! Do we deserve God's love? No! But by His grace and mercy, He wants us to return to Him because He is the LORD and Savior—there is no other in heaven or on earth but Him. With sadness, He said, "How can I give you up, Ephraim?" The Lord wants to save us and does not want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance. Today, ask yourself—do you have other gods? Whether it be food, education, beauty, opinions, wealth, addictions, or anything else. If Israel had maintained a right relationship with God, heaven and earth would have responded, and the land would have yielded its produce (2:22). What a merciful God we serve!

Neuroscientists speak of a concept known as "neuroplasticity," which is quite new. It refers to the brain's ability to form new neural pathways and rewire itself. People struggling with addiction are encouraged to avoid, and sometimes completely cut off, people, places, and things that fuel their addiction. Through this recovery process, the brain can rewire itself and allow for the creation of new behavior patterns. Similarly, as God did with Israel, He sometimes removes things that hinder our spiritual growth. Although this process is painful at first, it eventually brings about spiritual renewal. In the end, Israel returned and sought the Lord (3:5). How is God removing obstacles in your life? And are you thanking Him for it? Let Him never say of us, "Ephraim is joined to idols—leave him alone" (4:17).

Idolatry weakens the heart over time. Such a person becomes deaf to the pleading voice of the Holy Spirit and blind as they walk the path to destruction, ignoring wise warnings. This is why Jesus later told the Pharisees that they should be left alone because they had gone too far (Matthew 15:14). How do we prevent this from happening to us? It starts by allowing Jesus to search our hearts and deliver us from the deception of sin. He will reveal the ways we may be clinging to idols that deaden our spiritual senses. Will you partner with Him to remove them?

Why did Israel and Judah fail to recognize God as their Creator and Sustainer? Do we remember God as our Creator, Savior, and Redeemer every day? Are our actions consistent with our confession of faith? Parents, pray fervently for your children because they cannot do it alone. With sincere, diligent prayer and living faith, great victories will be won.

Questions:

What is the purpose of the book of Hosea?

How does God show His love for Israel?

In what ways are we like Hosea's wife today?

Why is God merciful?

What does Jezreel mean?

How does God show His love for you today?

What does "minor prophet" mean?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Hosea 14:4-7.

[4-7] I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the Book of Hosea. Help us not to perish through lack of knowledge of Your Word. We are grateful that You love us freely and that we shall grow and flourish like wheat and grape blossoms. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge—Hosea 4:7. What does this mean? Look at various Bible dictionaries and explain comprehensively what the main verses above, Hosea 14:4-7, teach.

DAY 177 (June 25)

TOPIC: The Message of Joel – How Can I Leave You? How Can I Save You, O Israel?



Joel means Yahweh is God. Joel wrote his book around 835 BC to the people of Judah. The people of Judah were very prosperous, and as a result, they became complacent, indulging in celebrations and excessive drinking. There is nothing wrong with enjoying God's blessings, but we must not live in vanity. Joel's message was directed to Judah, urging them to return to the LORD.

They were told, "What the locust swarm has left, the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left, the young locusts have eaten; and what the young locusts have left, other locusts have eaten." The locusts devoured vineyards, grains, and all the trees, leaving the livestock without pasture. Joy and laughter ceased, seeds rotted in the soil, and the land became desolate. The priests had no offerings to present. Famine and hardship spread throughout the land. They were warned that the Day of the LORD was near—a day of destruction from the Almighty. Joel compared the locusts to an army that would come to punish Judah for their sins. There would be darkness and

gloom like never before, and who could endure it? People's faces would pale with fear, and soldiers would charge through windows like thieves. The earth would tremble, and the sun and moon would turn dark. All their joy would be taken away.

Joel called on the leaders and the entire nation to proclaim a national day of prayer, to examine their ways, and to repent. Joel's instructions and promises apply to us today.

The LORD commands us, saying: "Return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity." Later, Joel encouraged the people of Judah to rejoice and not be afraid because the LORD would do great things. The fields would again yield their harvest, and the animals would have pasture. Joel assured them that the LORD would send the autumn and spring rains as before. The grain would be abundant, and the vats would overflow with new wine and oil. The years the locusts had devoured—the great locusts, the young locusts, and the other locusts—would be restored. They would eat and be satisfied, praising the Name of the LORD who had worked wonders for them, and they would never be ashamed again.

The LORD declared that in the last days, He would pour out His Spirit on all people. Sons and daughters would prophesy, old men would dream dreams, and young men would see visions. The LORD promised that "Everyone who calls on the Name of the LORD will be saved."

On the day of Pentecost, during the time of the apostles, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter quoted Joel, saying: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy."

Joel concluded that in the last days, multitudes would gather in the valley of decision. The sun and moon would grow dark, and the stars would stop shining. The earth would shake, but the LORD would be a refuge for His people. Our hope should not be in our possessions or ourselves but in the LORD. Therefore, let us seek the LORD while He may be found. It is time to share the Good News of the Kingdom of God and to gather the harvest, for the fields are ripe, but the laborers are few. The call is to confess and return to the LORD, for we live in times when this prophecy is being fulfilled before

our eyes. Those who confess with true repentance and walk in His truth will never be put to shame. Let us return to God with all our hearts, with fasting, weeping, and mourning, and let us rend our hearts.

Doing God's work properly requires talent, skill, and careful patience. It requires humility and diligent prayer. Let every mother strive to fulfill her duties with dedication. Bring your little ones to Jesus through the hands of faith, expressing your greatest needs to Him, and asking for wisdom and grace.

Questions:

1. What does "Rend your hearts and not your garments" mean?

2. What is the promise regarding the rain?

3. What will happen to the old men, young men, and maidens in the last days?

4. What did the disciples receive on the day of Pentecost?

5. What does the Day of the LORD mean?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Joel 2:28-29.

[28, 29] And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for pouring out the Holy Spirit. Forgive our sins (mention them). Help us to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit as we share the good news, help people to be healed, and prepare quickly for Your coming. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The Bible lists more than 70 works that the Holy Spirit does. List these starting from John 16.

DAY 178 (June 26)

TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Amos



The prophet Amos was from a small town called Tekoa. He was a shepherd and a fig tree farmer. Though his home was in Judah (the southern kingdom), he was sent to deliver a message to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos was a prophet during the reign of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel. God wanted His people to practice justice and mercy, saying, "Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream."

The people were wealthy, living in large houses—some for summer and others for winter. But the LORD said they oppressed the poor and needy. Even today, people must be careful to show compassion toward orphans, widows, strangers, and the less fortunate. We should never undervalue anyone, as God values everyone—whether poor, widow, orphan, foreigner, or of a different background.

Amos warned the Israelites to seek the LORD and live. Israel was meant to be a light to the nations, as God had blessed them greatly. However, because of their sins, God would judge them, and they were urged to prepare to meet

their God.

The LORD asked, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” This question challenges us to reflect on our relationships. God promised He would do nothing without revealing His plan to His prophets. Even today, God continues to reveal Himself to us, so we need not walk in darkness.

The book of Amos declares God’s judgment on Israel and neighboring nations like Damascus, Gaza, Edom, and Tyre. They were called to repent and abandon false gods and self-righteousness. Amos declared that the Day of the LORD was coming—a day of reckoning.

God promised to restore David’s fallen shelter and rebuild it as in the days of old. In those days, God would plant His people in the new Jerusalem, never to be uprooted again.

The message is clear: “I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and your singing into weeping.” God warned of a famine—not for food or water, but for hearing the Word of the LORD.

Questions:

1. What was Amos’s occupation before becoming a prophet?

2. To whom did Amos deliver his message?

3. What does “Do two walk together unless they agree?” mean in our relationships?

4. What injustices were the people committing?

5. What was God’s final warning?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Amos 5:22-24.

[22-24] Though you offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, may Your name be glorified. Help us have the wisdom to act righteously toward all people, whether poor, rich, widows, or orphans. Forgive us for treating others unjustly. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Use a Bible, pen, and paper or notebook.
Learning Objective: Students will learn that God punishes sin but forgives all who turn to Him for forgiveness. Discuss what justice is, what judgment is, and list acts or judgments that are unjust which you have seen in your community, on the radio, or in newspapers.

DAY 179 (June 27)

TOPIC: The Message of Micah



This book was written by the prophet Micah, the Morasthite, around 735 B.C., during the reigns of Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These visions were directed at Samaria and Jerusalem, containing both judgment and hope. Amos and Hosea had also addressed these issues. Sometimes, judgment is a form of hope because it causes people to turn from their evil ways and be saved.

Who is like God, who pardons iniquity and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not stay angry forever but delights in showing mercy. The LORD will again have compassion on us; He will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Prophet Micah warns, saying, “Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning’s light, they carry it out because it is in their power to do so. They covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them. They defraud people of their homes and rob them of their inheritance.” Therefore, the LORD says, “I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves. You will no longer walk proudly, for it will

be a time of calamity."

God warns the people to leave because this is not a place of rest or peace. Due to their corruption, they will face total destruction. The prophets and priests were giving false prophecies for their own gain. The LORD said to them, "You who eat the flesh of My people, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot." Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. At that time, He will hide His face from them because of the evil they have done.

The LORD says concerning the prophets who lead His people astray: "If one feeds them, they proclaim 'peace'; if he does not, they prepare to wage war against him." Therefore, night will come over them, without visions; and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them. Seers will be ashamed, and diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.

Micah prophesied the coming of the Messiah for those who had lost hope in life. Micah 5:2 says, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will live securely, for then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

Micah lived during a time of leaders and wealthy people filled with violence, lies, and false measures. People carried deceitful weights in their pockets. They believed they would receive blessings because they were Israelites, forgetting the curses of Deuteronomy 28. Whoever thinks they stand firm should be careful not to fall. Those who feared God had vanished; there was no upright person. Everyone lay in wait to shed blood and hunt their brothers with nets. Judges accepted bribes and delivered unjust decisions. A good person was considered as harmful as a thorn bush. Even within families, there was conflict: sons dishonored their fathers, daughters rose against their mothers, and daughters-in-law were against their mothers-in-law. Moral decay had overtaken society. How do you see the moral state of society today?

Micah provides a solution by stating what the LORD requires from us, which is most important above all else. People complained they were tired of God's demands. The LORD reminded them of how He had brought them out of Egypt and done good for them. He asks, "With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of

rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

The answer to what God requires is clear: "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

The consequence of injustice and lack of mercy is severe punishment. "You will eat but not be satisfied; your stomach will still be empty. You will store up but save nothing because what you save I will give to the sword. You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use the oil; you will crush grapes but not drink the wine."

God gives us warnings today through the prophet Micah so that we may avoid the punishment of His wrath. Judgment is certain. The LORD will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt beneath Him, and the valleys will split apart like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope.

The solution is to accept our God. Sin destroys us, but God promises to make us complete if we obey Him. Who is a God like Him, who pardons sin? Micah holds on to the hope that, "But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light."

The LORD loves us more than we love ourselves and those we cherish. Fathers and mothers, will you not hold onto your work with strength, patience, and love? Sow seeds of value daily through sincere prayers so that God may water them with the dew of grace and give you a great harvest. The Son of God died to redeem sinful humanity. Should we avoid trouble, self-sacrifice, or any offering to save our beloved children?

Questions:

1. What three things does God require of us?

2. Why is Bethlehem of Judah not insignificant?

3. What is Micah's hope?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Micah 6:6-8.

[6-8] With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Prayer: Hallelujah, our good Father, help us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: List the prophecies of the birth of Jesus in the Bible, such as Micah 5:2, etc.

DAY 180 (June 28)

TOPIC: Jonah – The Prophet Swallowed by a Fish

After the death of Elisha, King Jehoash of Israel went to war against Ben-Hadad II, the king of Assyria, and defeated him three times as the prophet Elisha had prophesied. The Assyrians were plunderers, cruel, and oppressive. During this period, a prophet named Jonah arose, preaching to the Israelites. The word of the LORD came to Jonah, son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before Me."

However, Jonah did not want to go. Instead, he ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish to flee from the presence of the LORD. The Assyrians were enemies of Israel, and Jonah wanted to see them perish in their sins without the opportunity to repent and turn to the LORD.

Tarshish was one of the farthest known regions at the time. People believed that if you reached the edge of the world, you would fall into a bottomless pit because they did not yet understand the earth's spherical shape. Jonah went down to Joppa, found a ship bound for Tarshish, paid the fare, and boarded to flee from the LORD.

But the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and a violent storm arose that threatened to break the ship apart. The sailors were terrified, and as is often the case, people call on God in times of trouble but forget Him when all is well. Each sailor cried out to his god, and they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. However, Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.

The captain went to Jonah and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe He will take notice of us so that we will not perish." The sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." This was the key difference between the true God and false gods.



The sailors were terrified when they learned that Jonah was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so. They asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” Jonah replied, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea, and it will become calm. I know that this storm is my fault.”

The men, however, did not want to throw Jonah overboard. Instead, they rowed hard to get back to land, but they could not because the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for You, LORD, have done as You pleased.”

Finally, they had no choice but to throw Jonah into the sea. As soon as they did, the raging sea grew calm. At this, the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to Him and made vows.

The LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. When Jesus was asked to show a sign, He said that just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

After doing your duty faithfully for your children, carry them to God in prayer and ask Him to help you. Tell Him that you have fulfilled your part in interceding for them, and by faith, trust that He will do His part, which you cannot do.

Angels Record Every Sincere Prayer
We must know God now by claiming His promises. Angels record every sincere and earnest prayer. It is better to give up self-indulgence than to neglect communion with God. The greatest poverty and self-denial, along with His favor, are better than wealth, honor, an easy life, and friendship without His favor. We must always make time to pray.

Questions:

1. How does this lesson teach us that the LORD knows all our thoughts?
2. Why did Jonah run away?
3. Why did the sailors fear and worship God?
4. Who are you running from today?
5. How many days was Jonah in the belly of the fish?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Verse: Jonah 1:1-3.

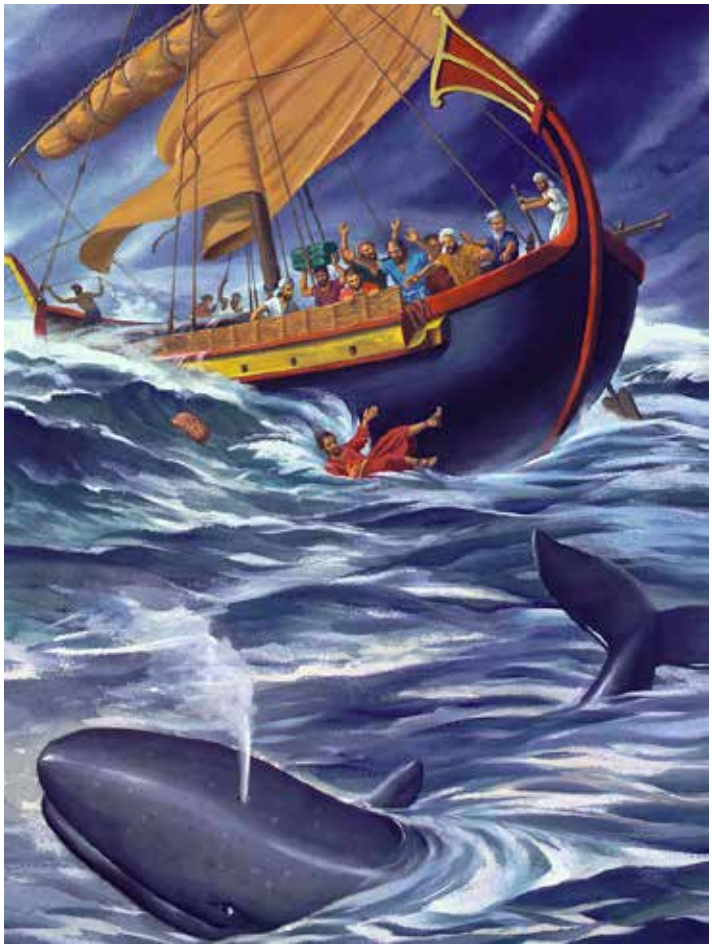
[1-3] Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, help us not to run away from You, but obey Your voice at all times. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make a fish using paper and place a small figure of a person inside it.

DAY 181 (June 29)

TOPIC: Jonah Inside the Fish



Jonah wanted to die or for the cruel Assyrians to be punished. While inside the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed to the LORD. Yet, he was not digested like food! He sang a psalm and said:

"I called out to the LORD because of my distress, and He answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your waves and billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' The waters encompassed me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD."

The LORD Almighty, who can communicate with His creatures because He is their Creator, commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto the shore of Nineveh—the very place Jonah did not want to go. So, instead of arriving by ship, the prophet reached Nineveh by the fish's transportation.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying:
"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."

This time, after the extraordinary events he had experienced, Jonah was ready to go—even to his enemies. He went to Nineveh as the LORD commanded. Nineveh was a large city that would take three days to walk through. Jonah began to enter the city, proclaiming loudly:
"In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!"

The people of Nineveh believed God, declared a fast, and wore sackcloth to show their repentance—from the greatest to the least of them. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

He issued a proclamation throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying:
"Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands."

This means even the animals fasted! This was the most powerful sermon ever preached, achieving a 100% conversion rate—120,000 people, including animals! The people cried out to God with all their might and repented from their wicked ways. The king said, "Who knows? God may turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

When God saw their actions—that they turned from their evil ways—He relented from the disaster He had threatened and did not bring it upon them. When we genuinely repent and ask for God's forgiveness, He forgives us and allows us to start a new journey.

However, Jonah was displeased and angry about this. Perhaps he feared being labeled a false prophet, or he simply did not want his enemies to receive God's mercy—he wanted it reserved only for Israel. This book reveals how limited human love is and how little compassion we often have for others. But God's love has no limits—He is full of mercy and forgiveness.

Jonah said to the LORD:
"Is this not what I said when I was still in my country? That is why I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm."

Although Jonah knew these beautiful qualities of God, he wanted them for himself and his people—not for others. Jonah asked God to take his life because he would rather die than see his enemies receive mercy and be

saved. He thought that because he did not worship idols, he was safe—but he was guilty of the sin of not loving others.

Love is the primary law of heaven—to love your enemies, your brothers and sisters, your spouse, your neighbors, animals, plants, and all of God's creation—but above all, to love your fellow human beings, who are made in the image of God.



The LORD asked Jonah:
"Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah went outside the city and built a shelter to watch what would happen to Nineveh, hoping it would still be destroyed. The LORD provided a plant to grow overnight and give Jonah shade, easing his discomfort, which made Jonah very happy. But the next morning, God sent a worm to chew the plant, and it withered. The sun blazed down on Jonah's head, making him faint and wish for death, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live."

God asked Jonah:
"Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

Jonah replied angrily, “Yes, it is right for me to be angry, even to death!”

The LORD responded:
“You have had pity on the plant, for which you did not labor nor make it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and also many animals?”

This story teaches us to share God’s message with others—no matter how wicked they may seem. Have you ever hesitated to tell people that God’s kingdom is near and judgment is coming? Read Jonah’s story again for courage.

The book of Jonah is unique—it shows God’s love beyond Israel’s borders. Even idol-worshiping Ninevites were under God’s love and care, and He was willing to hear their prayers and save them. The book emphasizes that God is the Father of all humanity—children, elders, adults, animals, the rich, the poor, the tall, the short, and people of all races. God wants everyone to be saved.

Questions:

1. What did Jonah do inside the fish?

2. Where did the fish vomit Jonah?

3. What did the king and the people of Nineveh do after hearing Jonah’s message?

4. Does God value animals?

5. How would you advise someone who mistreats harmless animals?

6. How many people were saved in Nineveh?

7. What lesson does this story teach you?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Verse: Jonah 1:15-17.

[15-17] So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for today. Help us to obey wherever You send us so that we can guide people through us, and that everyone may reach salvation. Forgive and protect us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw Jonah inside the belly of the fish.

DAY 182 (June 30)

TOPIC: Building the Temple – Haggai



The message of this book was delivered when many people had returned from exile in Babylon. The prophet Haggai was sent to encourage the Jews who had returned from exile to complete the task of rebuilding the temple, which had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar during his siege of Jerusalem. Haggai is one of the prophets whose message was heard and acted upon. When they heard it, even though they did not have many resources, it did not take long before they completed the temple, and God dwelt among His people.

Haggai and Zechariah are known as the post-exilic prophets. They wrote their books after the return of the captives of Judah from Babylon, during the reign of the Medes and Persians. This period was discouraging for God's people. When they returned, they found their homes in ruins after seventy years. The fields had been left abandoned and needed to be cleared again. Houses had to be rebuilt, and their customs and laws needed to be retaught and observed. Haggai encouraged them to remain faithful to God and rebuild

the temple, as it was the center of their worship. He reminded them to wait for the coming of the Messiah, who would establish His kingdom. He called the Messiah the "Hope of all generations." This book shows that everyone needs encouragement, and we should also encourage others.

Haggai was sent by the LORD to Zerubbabel, a descendant of the royal family, and to Joshua, the high priest. He told them, "The LORD of hosts says this: 'These people say, "The time has not come for the LORD's house to be rebuilt."'" Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai, saying, "Is it time for you to live in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins? Now, the LORD of hosts says this: Consider your ways!"

He told them that they had planted much but harvested little, they ate but were not satisfied, they drank but were still thirsty, they wore clothes but were not warm, and those who earned wages put them into a bag with holes. This happened because they had not prioritized their Creator. The LORD instructed them, "Go up to the mountains, bring wood, and build the house so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored." They had expected much, but when they brought it home, the LORD blew it away. They were under a curse, and blessings eluded them because they had neglected the temple while living in luxurious homes. The LORD said He would withhold the rain, causing the land, livestock, and everything else to suffer.

Then Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people heard and obeyed the voice of the LORD, their God, through the prophet Haggai. The LORD assured them that He was with them, and they began to rebuild the temple. When they finished, the glory of the new temple seemed less compared to the one Solomon had built, which was adorned with precious materials. But the LORD gave Haggai a message to tell them: "I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine. The glory of this latter house will be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts, and in this place, I will give peace."

This message meant that, although the temple did not look magnificent, Jesus would later be born and worship in that temple. That was a greater glory than Solomon's gold or the temple's splendor—because it meant "God with us."

The LORD also told them that unclean things cannot become clean just by touching holy things. Similarly, the temple building itself could not make a sinful person holy. Being in the temple was not a substitute for living a life of faith and holiness. Holiness comes from dedicating oneself to God and obeying His commandments.

Haggai concluded his message by telling Zerubbabel and Joshua that God had placed them in their leadership positions for a special purpose, and through them, He would bless the people. Therefore, we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added to us.

Does your church reflect the quality of the home you live in? The house of worship should be as beautiful, if not more, than the home you live in. If you worship under a tree while living in a luxurious home, it is time to reflect and change that.

Angels hear the prayers and praises of faith and present them to the One who ministers in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of His people, seeking His goodness and righteousness for them. True prayer holds on to the Almighty and gives humans victory. By kneeling in prayer, a Christian gains the strength to overcome temptation.

Questions:

1. What was Haggai's message about?
2. What happened when the people heard Haggai's message?
3. Which leaders were involved in rebuilding the temple?
4. Why is it important for the house of God to look as good as, or better than, your home?
5. What is meant by the "Hope of all generations"?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Haggai 2:7-9

[7-9] "I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come; and I will fill this house with glory," says the Lord of hosts. "Silver is Mine, and gold is Mine," declares the Lord of hosts. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former," says the Lord of hosts. "And in this place I will give peace," declares the Lord of hosts.

Prayer: Glorious Father, thank You for blessing us and for sending Him, the Hope of all generations, to come and live among us to redeem us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Read the first chapter of Haggai and observe ways to help build the church in your local area or perform a short skit.

DAY 183 (July 1)

TOPIC: The Message of the Prophet Nahum



Nahum delivered his message concerning Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian empire. The name "Nahum" means "comfort" or "consolation." It had been 150 years since Jonah went to Nineveh and warned them about the impending judgment. The people of Nineveh repented and abandoned their wicked ways. The king, the livestock, and all the people fasted and sought forgiveness. This time, the prophet Nahum was sent to warn Nineveh again that it would be destroyed by fire and would never rise again because of their cruelty and idol worship. This time, Nineveh did not listen (Nah. 1:7, 8, 11, 14).

Nahum tells us that the LORD is a jealous God who avenges; He is full of wrath against the wicked. Those who harm others will face His anger. God is all-powerful—He can rebuke the sea and dry it up, move mountains, and even the earth trembles before Him. He is our stronghold and refuge for all who

trust in Him. What a wonderful promise! We are told that sin will never rise again in heaven. Imagine a life completely free from sin—what an amazing thought! This means that our friends, family, and even ourselves will always treat each other with kindness, 24 hours a day. I consider this the greatest miracle. I have often prayed for this to happen in my heart now—that I may stop sinning and grieving God.

The people of Nineveh, who refused to listen to God, were told they would stagger like drunkards without stability. God would destroy their children and the idols of Assyria. However, the one who brings good news and proclaims peace has beautiful feet. God promised to restore the glory of Jacob from Nineveh, because Nineveh had devastated Israel. The king's palace in Nineveh would melt away, he would be taken captive, and his maidservants would mourn and beat their breasts. People would flee without looking back, leaving desolation and destruction behind. Hearts would melt with fear, knees would tremble, and everyone's face would be filled with anguish. God would cut off their prey, and the voice of His messengers would never be heard again.

The city of Nineveh was filled with bloodshed—woe to them because of their lies and plunder. Sounds of battle, whips cracking, galloping horses, flashing swords, and glittering spears were everywhere. Many people would be killed, and corpses would be scattered due to their many acts of prostitution and witchcraft. Nineveh was told they would be exposed to other nations, and their shame would be revealed to other kingdoms. God would throw filth on Nineveh, making them despicable, and people would look at them with scorn. Anyone who saw Nineveh's destruction would flee, saying, "Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for them?" No one would comfort the city.

Nineveh was warned that they had no real strength. Even though they were supported by Ammon, Egypt, Cush (Ethiopia), Put, and Libya, they would still be taken into captivity. Their children would be slaughtered, their nobles cast lots for, and their leaders bound in chains. Nineveh's fortresses would be like fig trees whose fruit falls when shaken. The remaining people would be like women at the gates. Water would flood the city, fire would consume it, the sword would cut it down, and locusts would devour it. Even if they had merchants as numerous as the stars, the locusts would strip the city and fly away. Their commanders would be like locusts resting in hedges on a cold day, but when the sun rises, they would fly away, and no one would know where they had gone.

The king of Assyria's shepherds and officials would be asleep, and their people scattered with no one to gather them. The LORD said that Assyria's wounds would be fatal and incurable, and everyone who heard about their fall would

clap their hands in celebration because there was no one whom Assyria had not oppressed. God is against those who ignore His call to abandon their wicked ways. He is against those who oppress others without mercy and those with hardened hearts. However, God is ready to receive those willing to be led by His Spirit and will restore them. Where do you stand today?

GOD does not abandon His wayward children who are weak in faith and prone to mistakes. The Lord listens to and hears their prayers and testimonies. Those who look to Jesus every day and every hour, watching and praying, draw closer to Him. Angels with outstretched wings wait to carry their prayers of repentance to GOD and record them in the books of heaven.

Discussion Questions:

1. To whom did Nahum deliver his message?

2. What is the difference between the outcomes of Jonah's and Nahum's missions?

3. What was the sin of the people of Nineveh?

May GOD Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Nahum 1:7-9

[7-9] The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who take refuge in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of His adversaries, and darkness will pursue His enemies. What do you imagine about the Lord? He will make an utter end; affliction will not rise a second time.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for being a stronghold for those who take refuge in You. You will destroy affliction, and sin will not rise a second time. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: How will life be when sin is completely removed? Take elements from Revelation 21 and 22 and discuss.

DAY 184 (July 2)

TOPIC: Obadiah – The Day of the LORD

Obadiah is another short prophetic book in the Old Testament. The name "Obadiah" means "servant of God." This book describes the relationship between Israel and Edom. Edom was the brother of Israel, as they were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. Obadiah says Edom will fall because of their pride and false sense of security. They rejoiced when Israel was captured. God declared that the Day of the LORD is coming, and the house of Jacob will be a flame while the house of Esau will be stubble, consumed without a survivor, for the LORD has spoken. Even today, God says, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." Our decisions can either bless or cost us.

Obadiah shows that God will judge Edom for being enemies of His people, Israel, and for their cruelty. When King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, Edom assisted in capturing their cities. Edom is reminded that blood is thicker than water. The book of Obadiah emphasizes that God is the supreme Judge and will punish Edom's wickedness. Even the wise and strong of Edom will be destroyed.

Today, we must be careful not to rejoice when our enemies face hardship. Instead, we should help them with their needs—whether food, clothing, or shelter. Vengeance belongs to God, not humans. The Day of the LORD is near for all nations; as you have done, it will be done to you—your deeds will return upon your own head. Let us pray that the Day of the LORD will be a day of blessed hope for us, and that we may say, "Behold, this is our God, whom we have waited for."

When the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, the Edomites took advantage of the situation. Obadiah 1:10-16 lists their offenses:

They rejoiced at Jerusalem's downfall.

They joined Babylon in attacking Jerusalem.

They captured and handed over those who tried to escape.

They mocked the Israelites in their distress.



Why did they do this? Perhaps they believed Israel's hope was gone and that God had abandoned them. But God eventually punished Edom and restored Israel (Obadiah 1:21).

Angels Wait to Answer Our Prayers: Often, in caring for the suffering, we focus on physical needs while forgetting the saving truths of the gospel. By neglecting to pray for the sick, we withhold a great blessing, for God's angels are ready to minister to these souls in response to our prayers.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the name "Obadiah" mean?

2. What was Edom's problem?

3. Why are these stories recorded for us today?

4. What does the Day of the LORD mean?

May GOD Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Obadiah 1:3-4

[3-4] "The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?' Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, I will bring you down," says the Lord.

Prayer: Our good Father, help us not to be proud, for pride will not help us when we are brought down from the blessings You have planned. Forgive our mistakes. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Overcome pride. Why does pride bring a fall? Children can blindfold themselves and walk carefully without knowing the way—ensure safety! This activity teaches pride as a hindrance. Discuss with them.

DAY 185 (July 3)

TOPIC: Habakkuk Asks God Questions



Prophet Habakkuk is believed to have lived during the final years of the kingdom of Judah, before its downfall. The main characters in this book are Habakkuk and the Chaldeans, also known as the Babylonians. Although the book of Habakkuk is brief, its purpose is to explain judgment. God declares that Judah's sin is great. This book is unique because Habakkuk speaks to God about the people, unlike other prophets who speak to the people about God's message. Habakkuk wonders how powerful nations fell, and people could not believe it, while Babylon ruled everything.

His first complaint is: "How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but You do not listen?" He cries to the Lord because of violence, injustice, strife, destruction, and conflict. The law of the Lord is paralyzed, and justice never prevails because corruption distorts judgment.

God responds: "Look among the nations and watch—be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own. They are feared and dreaded; their justice and dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swooping to devour."

Even today, we wonder about the evil people suffer and ask why God remains silent. God was also silent while His Son was on the cross to save us, even though He had all the power.

Habakkuk's second question is: "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do You tolerate the treacherous? Why are You silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?"

Habakkuk decides to stand at his watch and wait to see how the Lord will answer his complaint. The Lord answers: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the vision awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faith."

When Martin Luther, the German reformer, discovered this truth, he helped many Christians find freedom.

Habakkuk was told to be patient and trust in God, even when he did not fully understand what was happening or how things would end. He pronounces woes against those who enrich themselves dishonestly, shed innocent blood, exploit others, or cause their neighbors to stumble. Habakkuk emphasizes reverence for God by saying: "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him." He is the Almighty.

Habakkuk offers a prayer: "Lord, I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath, remember mercy."

Habakkuk realizes there is nothing better than depending on and waiting for the Lord. He concludes with hope, saying:

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights."

Habakkuk accepts that, although things may look difficult and dark, he will rely on the Lord because there is hope and deliverance in Him.

Habakkuk teaches us that we can ask God questions, but we must do so with reverence and respect. Often, we do not understand what is happening behind the scenes—whether it concerns our parents' struggles, school issues, or problems with friends. Sometimes, it may feel like the enemy is winning, but God is still in control. We must be patient, knowing that God works

everything for our good. He keeps His promises and is faithful. All authority belongs to Him, so we should rest in Him and trust Him.

The book of Habakkuk ends with a psalm or song of praise, affirming that God will save His people. Habakkuk expresses frustration with arrogance and injustice but teaches us that for every concern that troubles our hearts, we should take it to God.

As we approach the end of world history, the questions Habakkuk asked are similar to those we face today. Like this prophet, we ask God to intervene and end pain, suffering, and evil. God was not idle during Habakkuk's time, and He is not idle today. Let us trust Him. Remember that God often uses unexpected means to fulfill His purposes. Although we may not always understand His ways, we must ensure that our hearts and hands remain pure. His power is eternal, and to Him, one day is like a thousand years.

At the same time, let us heed the command: "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him." We should be grateful that we can approach Him directly and personally. Let us rejoice in His special attentiveness and be comforted by His Spirit of grace. Faith as pure and childlike as this is rare among God's children, yet here it is poured out freely.

Day by day, the battle between good and evil continues. Why do those who have received many opportunities and blessings fail to recognize the seriousness of this work? They should be thoughtful about this matter. God is the Ruler. By His great power, He governs and directs the rulers of the earth. Through His agents, He accomplishes the work He ordained before the foundation of the world.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the book of Habakkuk different from other prophets?

2. What is Habakkuk's first question?

3. What is his second question?

4. Why is it important for us to ask God what is happening?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Habakkuk 2:2-4

[2-4] And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; it speaks of the end, and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith."

Prayer: Thank You Father. Even if the vision delays, I will wait because Your Word is true. Help me to live by faith, not by sight. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Write a prayer like Habakkuk's prayer in Habakkuk 3.

DAY 186 (July 4)

TOPIC: The Message of Zephaniah



The prophet Zephaniah wrote his book around 630 BC. He was born during a time of widespread evil when the Lord seemed silent, as if He would do neither good nor harm. God raised up Zephaniah to warn the people that judgment was coming and to call them to repentance before the kingdom of Judah fell. The Lord declared that the southern kingdom of Judah was filled with wickedness. God sent Zephaniah as His messenger to raise a warning flag and urge the people to change their ways. He called them to "seek the Lord while He may be found."

Zephaniah warned that the day of the Lord was near and approaching quickly. Even the bravest warriors would cry out bitterly. It would be a day of wrath, distress, and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. On that day, wealth would be worthless—people would throw their silver and gold into the streets, but it would not save them.

Zephaniah declared: "As surely as I live," declares the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, "Moab will become like Sodom, and the Ammonites like Gomorrah—a place of weeds and salt pits, a wasteland forever. The remnant of My people will plunder them; the survivors of My nation will inherit their land." These things would happen because of their pride, for they mocked and boasted against the people of the Lord Almighty. The Lord would be terrifying to them, for He would starve all the gods of the earth, and people from every nation would bow down to Him. Even the distant Cushites would be slain by His sword. God would stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh desolate and dry like the desert.

God called the people to seek righteousness and humility while there was still time. They were warned not to delay, for waiting too long would be dangerous. The Lord would destroy false gods, and all nations would worship

Him. This is a reminder for us to repent sincerely while the door of mercy is still open. We must turn from evil, for the day of our judgment is near, and the door of mercy will soon be closed forever.

The most encouraging words in this book are found in the following promise:

"The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love, He will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing."

The love of God is so amazing that He rejoices over us with singing! Despite the judgment described at the beginning of the book, Zephaniah ends with a message of hope and victory. Even as the Lord comes to cleanse everything in judgment, Zephaniah foresees a future when the remnant of God's people will be gathered from all over the world. He mentions there will be representatives even from beyond the rivers of Cush—a reminder that Africa is included in God's plan.

For those living near Ethiopia, there is joy in knowing that their homeland is part of this prophecy. What is the purpose of these gathered remnants? To worship God! This multicultural group will come together, and God will call them "My worshipers." What an amazing day it will be to hear God Himself singing over His people!

God makes seven powerful, personal promises to His people:

1. He will remove their sorrow.

2. He will deal with those who oppress them.

3. He will save the lame.

4. He will gather the scattered.

5. He will give them praise and honor.

6. He will bring them home.

7. He will restore their blessings before their very eyes.

Which of these seven promises speaks to your current situation? Do you feel sorrow, oppression, fear, or weakness? The Lord says, "Wait for Me to come!" He is coming to fulfill these promises for us, and we will worship Him forever.

This truth should make our hearts leap with joy!

Zephaniah reminds us that God gives sinners what they do not deserve—His mercy. He promises that better days are coming when the remnant of Israel will leave captivity under the protection of the Lord. They will be truthful, without deceit, and free from fear. On that day, the Lord will remove their judgments and defeat their enemies. Those who once oppressed them will be punished, and the weak will be restored.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the main message of Zephaniah?

2. Who is our hope for deliverance from evil?

3. What role does wealth play on the day of judgment?

4. What did God tell His people to seek?

5. Why is it important to seek righteousness and humility?

6. Can you write a verse of the song God might sing over us?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Zephaniah 3:14-17

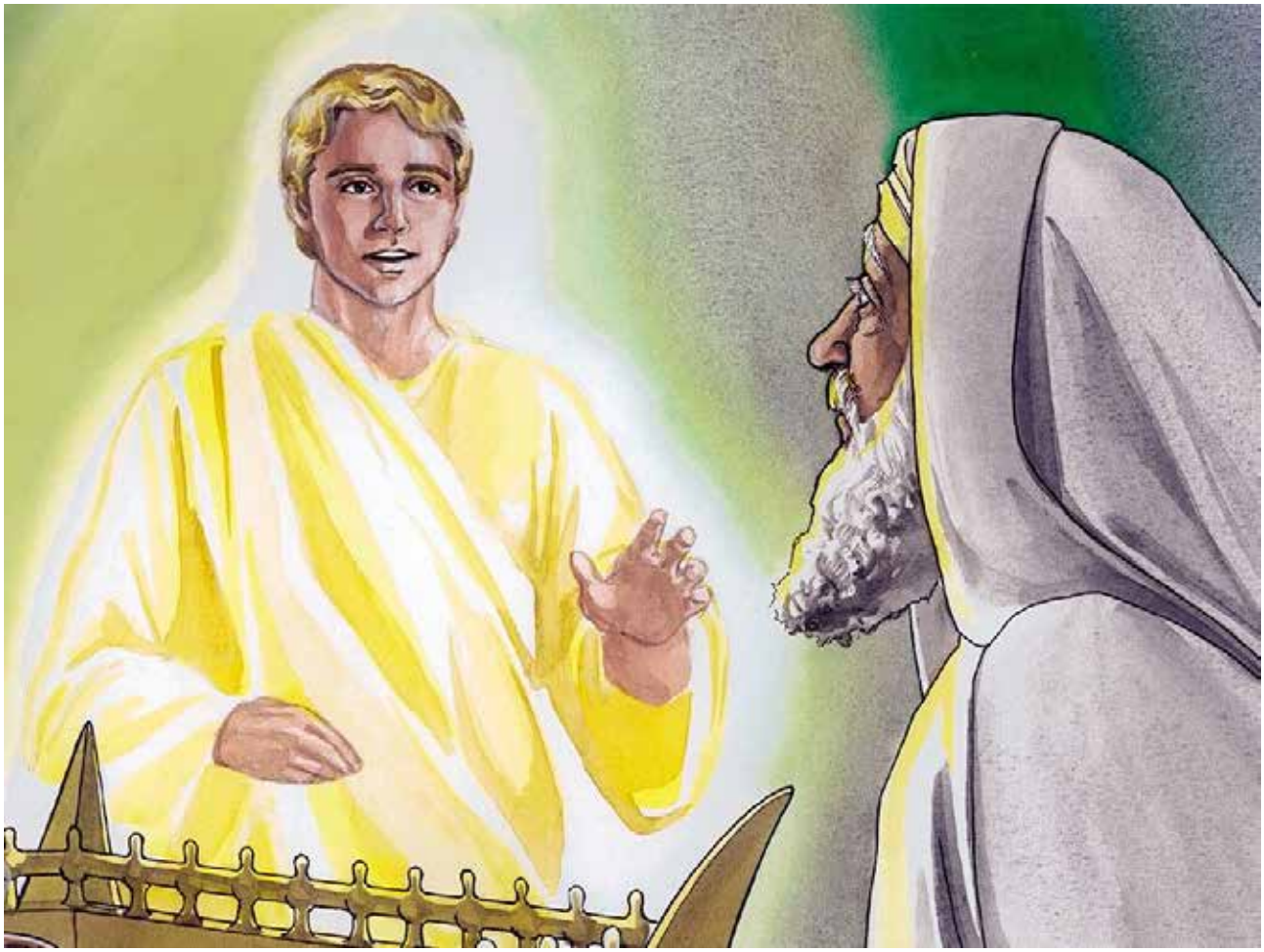
[14-17] "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and be glad with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy; the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall not fear evil anymore. In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: 'Fear not, O Zion; let your hands be strong.' The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty One who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you by His love, He will exult over you with singing."

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven for Your love. We rejoice and are glad that You have cast out the enemy. Thank You for rejoicing over us with great joy. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make a loudspeaker and demonstrate how the Lord will rejoice over us and sing for us.

DAY 187 (July 5)

LESSON: Zechariah – A Message to the Returnees from Exile in 520 B.C.



The Lord called Zechariah to join Haggai in awakening the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity. Sixteen years had passed since Zerubbabel had led them back to their promised land. The Feast of Tabernacles had been celebrated, and the foundation of the Temple had been laid. Then opposition arose from the surrounding people, and the work was halted. The prophet Haggai urged them to renew their efforts to complete the mission God had for them—the building of the Temple. This lesson is for us today. Our safety is in God. We must trust His Word.

The message of the man riding a red horse, stating that the world was at peace, referred to the certainty that the conflict over the Persian kingdom had ended. Darius, the new king, favored the Jews more. The Lord said,

“I am returning to Jerusalem; My house will be built.” His people were to complete the mission for which He had brought them back.

The four horns are described as the powers that worked against God’s people. The four craftsmen refer to Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. From the two olive trees, golden oil was poured through golden pipes into the bowl of the lampstand, and from there into the golden lamps that gave light to the Holy Place. In the same way, from the saints who stand in God’s presence, His Spirit is imparted to human vessels consecrated for His service. The work of these two anointed ones is to deliver light and power to God’s people. It is a blessing for us that they stand in God’s presence.

The name Zechariah means “The Lord remembers.” Zechariah’s message tells us that as long as we have breath, we should not lose hope because we still have the opportunity to choose the LORD and live forever. Although they were punished for their sins, it was a time to return to God and be faithful. Zechariah, Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Haggai lived during the same period. God told the people to serve Him now, not tomorrow. The LORD says, “Return to Me, and I will return to you.”

The people rejoiced when they returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity. However, they were anxious about their safety, fearing that their enemies might attack them. They wondered if God had forgotten their past sins or if they would continue to be punished for what led them into captivity. God told them that although the Israelites had sinned, He was not pleased with how the other nations treated them cruelly. Even though He had compassion on His people, they had to listen to the prophets.

Zechariah shows that God protects Jerusalem and that Zerubbabel will complete the building of the Temple—not by his power but by the Spirit of God. Even when Tattenai came to stop the work, Zerubbabel told him that they were servants of the God of heaven and earth, building His house. When they reported this to Darius, the king ordered a search of the records, where it was confirmed that Cyrus had permitted them to rebuild the Temple. Darius then sent a decree to Tattenai, instructing him not to interfere with the construction of God’s house. The king also commanded that the Jews be provided with raw materials, food, and support to complete the work.

Joshua, the high priest, stood before the LORD while Satan sought to accuse him. But the LORD defended Joshua and commanded that his filthy garments be removed and replaced with clean clothes. The LORD rebuked Satan, saying, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” Jerusalem is like

a stick rescued from the fire, saved from destruction. God said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.” Joshua was told that if he walked in the LORD’s ways, he would be given authority to govern God’s house.



Zechariah had a vision of a lampstand with seven lamps and two olive trees, and he told Zerubbabel that the work would be completed not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of God.

The prophet emphasizes doing good to orphans, widows, and strangers, but our religion should not only focus on helping those in need, like social welfare. It should also focus on loving God with all our heart, strength, soul, and mind—and loving our neighbor as ourselves. The LORD declares that although Judah was once a curse, it will now become a blessing.

The prophecy of the Messiah appears several times, for example—the king riding on a donkey, being sold for thirty pieces of silver, and being pierced. The LORD will raise up the Branch, His Servant. Even the crucifixion of Jesus is foretold—”What are these wounds in your hands?” He will answer, “The wounds I received in the house of my friends.” Jesus was wounded by His friends. The prophecy also speaks of the last days—on that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which will split in two.

Zechariah's prophecy includes the first coming of Jesus, when He was born, and His second coming, when He will return to take us to heaven. Do you plan to be in the New Jerusalem? Close your eyes and ask God to prepare you to be there on that day. If only we could all realize how close heaven is to earth! Children born on earth do not know that they have angels of light as their guardians. Heavenly messengers are sent to minister to those who will inherit salvation. A divine witness watches over every living soul, seeking to win them to Christ. Angels never abandon those who are tempted and at risk of being destroyed by the enemy unless people reject the Holy Spirit to their eternal ruin. As long as there is hope, heavenly guardians protect humanity.

Discussion Questions:

1. What call did God give to His people?

2. Who were Zerubbabel and Joshua?

3. What happened when Joshua the high priest stood before the LORD?

4. Why is it important to know that God's work is not done by our might or power, but by His Spirit?

Key Text: Zechariah 4:6

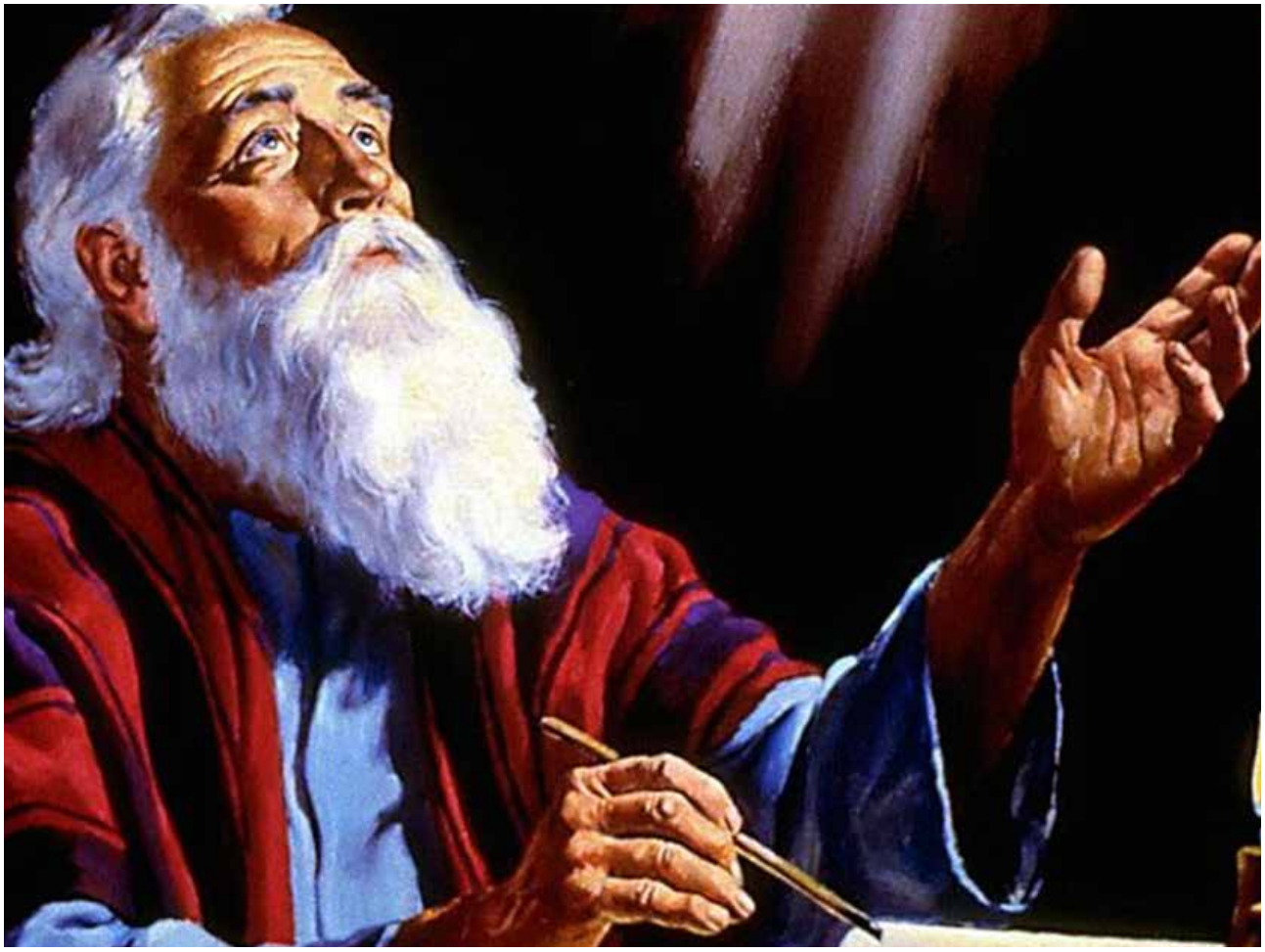
[6] Then he answered and said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts.

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven that it is not by our strength or ability but by Your Spirit that we can prevail, live, and exist. Forgive our sins. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Skit—Joshua with dirty clothes in chapter three, or a burning coal taken from fire to show the meaning of these symbols.

DAY 188 (July 6)

TOPIC: Malachi – The Message of Restoration, The Lord Will Open Windows and Not Doors!



The book of Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament. There was a period of 400 years between the Old and the New Testament. The name "Malachi" means "Messenger of God." God reminds His people that their duties are important. These people act as if they are accusing the LORD of falsely charging them with things they did not do. They ask God questions.

God tells them, "I have loved you," but they respond, "How have You loved us?"
God says, "You have dishonored My Name," and they ask, "How have we dishonored Your Name?"
The LORD says, "Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, but the people ask, "How shall we return?"
"Will a man rob God?" God asks, and they reply, "How have we robbed You?"

God says, “You have wearied the LORD with your words,” and they respond, “How have we wearied Him?”

The LORD of hosts asks the priests, “You who despise My Name,” and they ask, “How have we despised Your Name?”
“You offer defiled food on My altar,” He says, and they respond, “How have we defiled You?” By saying, “The LORD’s table is contemptible.”

God says they have defiled the temple, and He declares, “I am not pleased with you. It would be better if someone shut the doors, so you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain by offering sacrifices that do not honor Me.”

From the rising of the sun to its setting, God’s Name is great among the nations. God says, “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. If I am your Father, where is My honor?” The LORD says the priests bring sacrifices of blind, lame, and sick animals.

It is important for us to bring perfect offerings to our God. We honor our parents and our bosses—why should we bring God leftovers or things that do not please Him? Even today, we should not bring the LORD things that are meaningless. This behavior brings curses upon us, and God will rebuke our fields so that our crops will not bear fruit.

The LORD says that the lips of His servants should preserve knowledge. They should not turn away from the path or cause ordinary believers to stumble by committing sins. If we do things that are displeasing to the LORD, we will become people who are despised before Him.

The Jews were told they had forgotten the covenant, which is why their prayers were not answered. Husbands and wives were being unfaithful to each other. God says He hates divorce because it is a betrayal of a sacred promise. Husbands and wives should stay together in joy or sorrow without separating. Marriage should be a little heaven on earth.

The LORD promises to send His messenger, who will prepare His way. But who can endure the day of His coming? For He will be like a refiner’s fire and a launderer’s soap. God says He will be a witness against those who do evil—sorcerers, adulterers, liars, those who oppress widows and orphans, and those who deprive foreigners of justice. Because God does not change, His people have not been destroyed.

God spoke to them about tithes and offerings, which they were not giving faithfully. A tithe is one-tenth of what we earn. For example, if we earn

ten shillings, we give one, or if we receive twenty oranges, we give two. Offerings are what we give beyond the tithe. Tithes and offerings are used for the LORD's work in spreading the gospel. Let us learn to give without complaining. We cannot love without giving.

God promises that He will open the windows of heaven for those who are faithful, pouring out blessings until there is no room to store them. He will also protect their fields from being destroyed by pests. God Himself will ensure that they are not lacking or oppressed.

I realized that the house we live in has 26 windows and only three doors—perhaps that's why the Bible says God will open the windows of heaven and not the doors, meaning the blessings will be more abundant!

WHY SHOULD WE GIVE TITHES?

1. Because God commanded it.

2. Tithes belong to God and are holy (Leviticus 27:30).

3. To support gospel workers (Numbers 18:21 and 1 Corinthians 9:13).

4. It removes greed and selfishness (2 Corinthians 9:7).

5. It helps us trust and depend on God.

6. It brings God's promised blessings (Malachi 3:10).

7. It shows whom we serve—God or money (Luke 16:13).

In Malachi's time, some people said that serving God was useless, and that the wicked and the proud were the ones who prospered. But those who feared the LORD spoke to each other, and God listened and wrote their names in a book of remembrance.

The Bible tells us that God keeps books where He records everything we do. Surely everyone rejoices at the thought of God opening the windows of heaven because the blessings will overflow.

Would you like to have your name written in the Book of Life? Being in this book is worth more than anything else. This is wonderful news because God has extraordinary rewards for those whose names are written there.

Christ will come to cleanse the temple. He also promises that the Sun of Righteousness will rise for those who love Him—this Sun of Righteousness is Christ. The book of Malachi ends with the message that the LORD will send the prophet Elijah, who will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, He will strike the land with a curse.

Let us remember that if we aim for heaven, we will receive both heaven and the good things of earth. But if we only aim for earth, we will miss both. The LORD's Name will always be great among the nations—from the rising of the sun to its setting.

If you do not feel any spiritual danger, and if you are not praying for strength to resist temptation, you will surely be lost. Your neglect of duty will be recorded in God's book in heaven, and you will be found lacking on the dreadful day of judgment.

Discussion Questions:

What problems did the priests have?

What is a tithe? Why is it important to give tithes?

Why is divorce wrong?

Why is it wrong to bring imperfect offerings to God, the King of the world?

What would happen if they brought defective offerings to a ruler?

What was the purpose of the prophet Elijah?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Malachi 3:8-11

[9-11] "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this, says the Lord of hosts, and see if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; nor shall your vine cast its fruit before its time," says the Lord of hosts.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for blessing us with wealth and health. We pray that we may test You by being faithful in giving tithes and offerings so that curses may not come upon us, but blessings! We thank You for the promise of John the Baptist, and we ask that we may also have the character of John the Baptist, preparing people to meet You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Practice Tithe and Offering faithfully.

NEW TESTAMENT

AFTER THE BIRTH OF JESUS OR MESSIAH IS A SON OF MARY



The Old Testament is the first section of the Bible, called the Tanakh by the Israelites. It consists of:
a) Torah – meaning “Teachings” (the Law)
b) Nevi’im – meaning “Prophets”
c) Ketuvim – meaning “Writings”

Language:
The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, though some sections, such as parts of Daniel and Ezra, were written in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.

The books of the Bible are not arranged in chronological order. Events in the New Testament occurred after those of the Old Testament. The Old Testament makes up two-thirds of the Bible, while the New Testament comprises one-third. The Old Testament has 929 chapters, and the New Testament has 260

chapters. The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament—both complement each other! The Bible is a love letter from God to us, containing His Word and promises.

The Old Testament focuses on animal sacrifices, while the New Testament is centered on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Seven Major Covenants in the Bible

The Bible mentions seven key covenants between God and humanity:

1. The Covenant with Adam (Genesis 1-3)
2. The Covenant with Noah (Genesis 6-9)
3. The Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3)
4. The Covenant with Moses and Israel (Sinai Covenant – Exodus 19-24)
5. The Covenant with Phinehas (Numbers 25:10-13)
6. The Covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:5-16)
7. The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

What Does “Everlasting Covenant” Mean?

Read these scriptures and reflect on their meaning:

Genesis 9:16 (God’s covenant with Noah)

Genesis 17:7 (God’s covenant with Abraham)

Isaiah 55:3 (The everlasting covenant of David)

Hebrews 13:20 (The eternal covenant through Christ’s blood)

The Bible is both a message and a tool from God to help us know Him better and strengthen our faith. It reveals God’s love and His eternal promises to us. Through Scripture, we also gain insights into the lives, cultures, and histories of people who lived in different eras.

Even today, there are deep mysteries that are yet to be revealed to us. As we study the Word of God, our faith grows stronger, and our relationship with Him deepens. Let us continue to seek these spiritual truths and hold fast to God’s Word.

Prayer Is Not Evidence of True Conversion If Your Life Has Not Changed

Satan deceives people into believing that having emotional experiences means they are converted. However, if their actions remain unchanged, and their lives bear no spiritual fruit, they are still deceived. Some people pray often and at length, referring to past emotional experiences, but their daily lives do not reflect true transformation.

These individuals are building their faith on shaky ground, and when trials arise, their foundation crumbles. True conversion is revealed by a changed life—where old habits are left behind, and new, godly behaviors take root.

Jesus Christ changed the course of world history. Events are divided into two main periods:

Before Christ (B.C.)

Anno Domini (A.D.) – The Year of Our Lord

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are the central points of human history and the fulfillment of God's New Covenant.

May we continue to grow in faith and live lives that reflect true conversion, always looking to Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

DAY 189 (July 7)

TOPIC: Has God Forgotten Us? People Asked Themselves



After creation and the entrance of sin, people multiplied and spread far from their families or clans. Some were not faithful in telling their children about the Almighty God of heaven, and thus God's Word was lost, and even the understanding, knowledge, and awareness of the true God who created heaven and earth faded away. People began to worship other gods—things of the earth, the heavens, or the seas. Children born during this time began to ask questions like: Who created the earth? Who made the trees, fruits, animals, and flowers? Or who created me?

God reveals Himself to everyone as He is, for He is neither selfish nor unjust. Many people have asked God to reveal Himself to them, and He has done so. This is a request God cannot fail to answer. If you pray, "Lord, I want to know You, follow You, and obey You," He will surely respond. People have discovered that there is a God who created everything. Even those without the Bible know this. God has revealed Himself through nature— the sun, the moon, the stars, animals, fish, birds, and more. God has also revealed Himself through His Word, the Bible, and, most importantly, through Jesus Christ, who left heaven and came to this world. Since His clearest revelation

is through the Bible, and it is available in many religious bookstores, it is good for everyone to make an effort to obtain this special book.

A woman from Kateshi, Tanzania, shared an amazing story. She greatly desired to know the Word of God, and God showed her the way. Whenever she sought someone to teach her, people would give excuses that they were too busy. One morning, as she was going to the fields, she took the Bible and opened to the book of Matthew—the Sermon on the Mount. When she arrived at her destination, she opened the Bible and was able to read it without anyone teaching her. This was a gift from heaven. From that day on, she could read the Word of God without difficulty.

The Almighty God is all-powerful, the giver of all good things, and He answers the prayers of people, especially children! Try Him today—tell Him that you want to know and serve Him, and He will answer beyond your expectations. Not a single one of His 3,500+ promises has failed—He has fulfilled them all and even surpassed them. God has the power to awaken a lazy, weak, or sleepy child to read His Word. He has given you the choice to read His Word; He does not force you. If you have time to eat food, then you have time to "eat" His Word! If you feel you don't have time, say, "I won't eat food until I read the Word," and you will see your prayer answered immediately!

When people began to worship other gods, God revealed Himself to Noah, then to Abraham, instructing him to move to Canaan. He told Abraham that his descendants would become a special people. During a great famine, Abraham's descendants went to Egypt and lived there for 430 years. They eventually became slaves, and God delivered them through a child named Moses. God loved the Israelites, and through them, He wanted to show His power, love, justice, and mercy to the entire world. Moses obeyed, and the Israelites repeatedly saw God's greatness and help. Despite being fed, clothed, protected, and experiencing many miracles, they forgot about God again.

When God sent prophets to them repeatedly, they refused to listen. As a result, they were taken captive by the Babylonians and lived in Babylon for 70 years. Eventually, they returned to their land, and priests and scribes helped them reconnect with the Holy Scriptures and understand God's true nature. His laws are for our benefit—they are full of love, not meant to make us unhappy. Would you want to have a neighbor who disregards laws and does evil? Probably not, because you would be at risk of harm. The summary of God's law is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, strength, and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Many people think it is better to trust themselves rather than trust God. They believe they know what is right and wrong better than God does. But God is the Creator—He knows what brings us true joy better than we do. He loves us more than we love ourselves and loves those we care about even more than we do. Sin brings sorrow. Although God created Adam and Eve to live forever, their disobedience brought much grief—even to the point of witnessing their firstborn kill their second-born.

All human beings have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. God did not want His children to be lost forever, so He planned our salvation through His Son, Jesus. Jesus came to earth, lived a sinless life, and died so we could see the true character of God. In the Old Testament, His death was symbolized by the sacrifices of lambs or other animals. These animals died in place of the sinner, representing how Jesus would take away our sins. Jesus chose to die for our sins so that we would not die eternally.

Through Jesus' sacrifice, we are no longer separated from God. This was God's plan for the salvation of all humanity. Animal sacrifices pointed to Jesus. Today, because we no longer offer animal sacrifices, we might lose sight of the seriousness of sin and the cost of salvation. Yet, if we allow Him, God will give us a clearer understanding—Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Sadly, over time, the priests and the people forgot that these sacrifices were merely symbols of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. They created many laws, thinking that obeying them would earn them eternal life. Some even turned the sacrificial system into a business for profit. They forgot that salvation is a gift from God's grace, not something we can earn through works. What matters today is believing that Jesus came, lived among us, died for our sins, rose again, and ascended to heaven.

Even today, many misunderstand God's love. They imagine God as a harsh judge watching for mistakes to punish. This is a lie planted by the devil. God is love—He wants us to experience true joy. He sent His Son to show us His love and to save us from the sorrow caused by sin. Look for a book called Steps to Christ and read the first chapter about God's love for humanity.

The world awaited the Messiah—the true Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world—and at the right time, He came. God always keeps His promises.

Questions:

1. Have you asked God to reveal Himself to you?

2. How many promises are in the Bible?

3. How much of the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah has been fulfilled?

4. What was the meaning of the sacrifices people offered before Jesus came?

5. Why is reading important for someone who loves God?

6. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Jeremiah 31:3

[3] "The Lord appeared to me from afar, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with My lovingkindness."

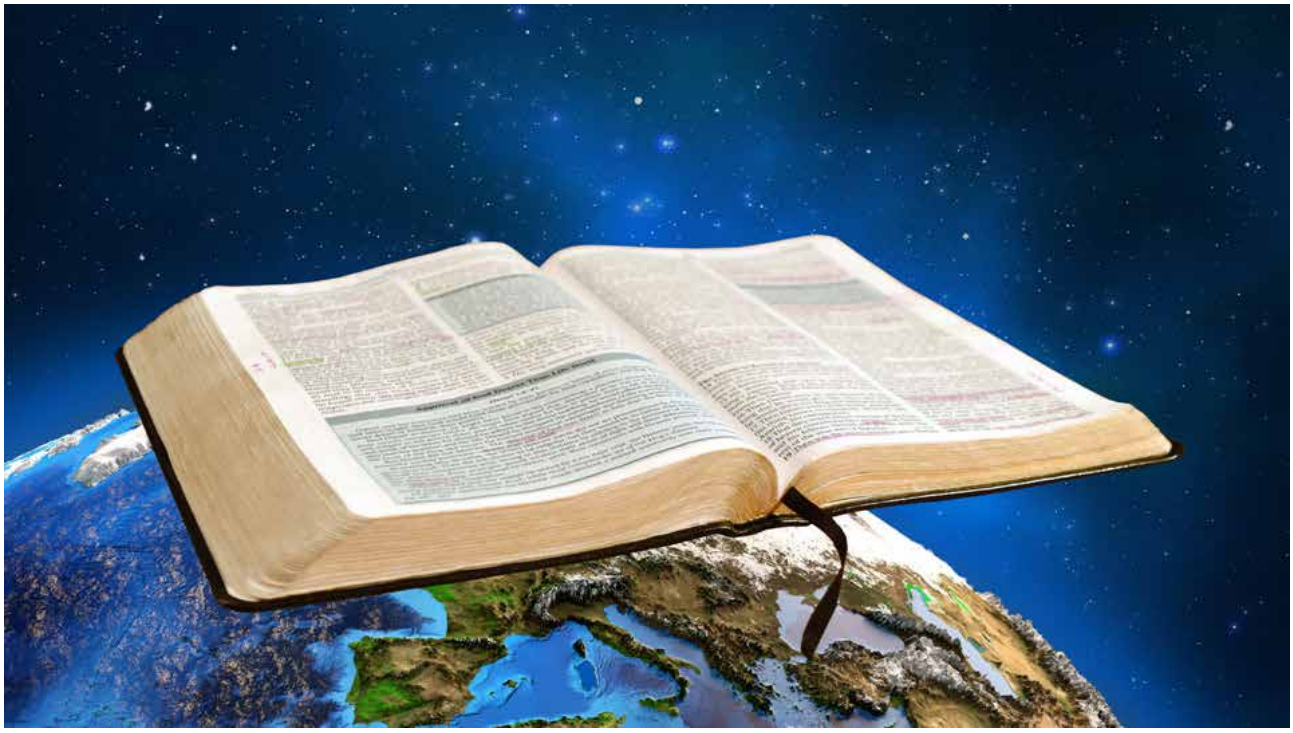
Prayer: Father, Thank You because we do not need to fear the future, since You love us so much. Your wisdom is unsearchable, even when we see silence, we pray that we may not lose heart. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: There are over 8,100 promises of God. Divide the class into three groups: one group take Psalm 37, another Leviticus 26, and the other Deuteronomy 28. Let them write down all the promises they can count.

DAY 190 (July 8)

TOPIC: The Harmony of the Gospel Books

(The Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)



The four books describe the life of Jesus—His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. These books are called the Gospels. Matthew is the first Gospel in the New Testament, but Mark was the earliest written. They cover events that occurred between 4 B.C. and 30 A.D. These books give us a complete picture of Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection. Interestingly, Paul's letters, such as Galatians and Thessalonians, were written before the Gospels.

Matthew was an apostle, one of Jesus' disciples, and his other name was Levi. Before following Jesus, he worked as a tax collector. He wrote to explain the good news of Jesus, who came at the appointed time. The Messiah was neither early nor late in being born. Matthew wanted to assure all readers, especially the Jews, that Jesus is the promised Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.

The Gospel is the good news about Jesus' birth, His life, His teachings, His death, and His resurrection. This story reveals the plan of salvation for humanity. Matthew included many teachings of Jesus, emphasizing that the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled—mentioning them

over 27 times. The Gospel of Matthew is the most read and quoted Gospel, which may explain why it was placed first in the New Testament.

The name "Matthew" means "gift of God." He begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus Christ, tracing it from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Solomon, Zerubbabel, Joseph (Mary's husband), and finally to Jesus. Matthew notes that there were 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David to the exile in Babylon, and 14 generations from the exile to the birth of Christ—a total of 42 generations.

Luke, on the other hand, traces Jesus' lineage backward to Adam: Jesus was thought to be the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Adam, who was the son of God. The genealogy of Jesus shows that God has faithful followers in every generation, nation, and family. While Jews tried to keep others out of their faith, Jesus invited people from all nations to follow Him.

Mark, also known as John Mark, wrote the first Gospel. His Gospel is brief, clear, and action-packed. He begins with Jesus' ministry as an adult, focusing on urging people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man, so they may receive salvation. The title "Son of Man" appears 93 times in the New Testament. Interestingly, the prophet Ezekiel was also called "Son of Man" 93 times, as he represented God to the people in Babylon.

Mark learned about Jesus from Peter, who was one of Jesus' apostles. Mark worked under Peter's guidance and is referred to as his "son in Christ" (1 Peter 5:13). The term "Christ" comes from the Greek word meaning "Anointed One" or "Messiah." Mark was the son of Mary and a cousin of Barnabas—the "Son of Encouragement"—who was a preacher from Antioch in Syria.

Mark wrote primarily for Gentile believers, especially Romans. His Gospel emphasizes Jesus' mighty works more than His teachings, portraying Him as the Servant of God who would suffer and become a sacrifice for humanity. This is why Mark highlights 27 miracles.

The beloved physician, Luke, wrote the third Gospel for a Roman official named Theophilus. Luke was a Gentile (not a Jew) and a Greek. As a scientist, he thoroughly investigated and interviewed people who knew and served Jesus. Luke focuses on Jesus' parables—19 of the 29 recorded parables are in his Gospel. These parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings that teach spiritual truths. Famous examples include the Prodigal Son, the Sower, and the Good Samaritan.

Luke accompanied Paul on his three missionary journeys and also wrote the Book of Acts. On their final journey, they were shipwrecked while traveling to Rome, but all 276 passengers survived. Paul testified about Jesus in the cities they visited, including Rome itself.

Luke emphasizes Jesus as the Son of Man, using the term 80 times. He wanted readers to know the truth about Jesus' life as the Savior of the world, the Healer, and the Comforter. As a physician, Luke had compassion and highlighted Jesus' ministry of healing the sick, helping the poor, and caring for the outcast. Biblical scholars, including those who believe and those who do not, regard Luke's Gospel as the most historically reliable. Researchers verified 34 places mentioned by Luke during their investigations.

The beloved disciple John wrote his Gospel with a unique approach compared to the others. He focuses more on Jesus' spiritual teachings rather than historical events. Chapters like John 1, 8, and 13-17 are rich in spiritual depth.

John starts with Jesus' existence in eternity, before creation. He describes Jesus as the eternal Word who became flesh and dwelled among us. John was the youngest disciple and lived past age 90. He also wrote three epistles (1, 2, and 3 John) and the Book of Revelation. He is often called the "apostle of love" because he emphasized love in his writings—such as the famous verse, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son."

John wrote to the Jews to convince them that Jesus is the Son of God who takes away the sin of the world, leading to salvation. Instead of starting with Jesus' genealogy, John emphasizes Jesus' divine nature:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through Him, all things were made; without Him, nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."

Being a Christian means believing that Jesus is God. This is our core faith. The angel said He would be called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us."

The mystery of God's divine nature is beyond human comprehension. Even the angels marveled that their Creator chose to be born on a small, dark, and sinful planet to walk among humans and suffer for their sake. This is a cause for great joy—God chose our world for His redemptive mission!

Let us rejoice today in our salvation. Among all the major religions, no other

leader claimed to be God or the Son of God—only Jesus did. Furthermore, even non-Christian religious texts, such as those of Islam and Judaism, acknowledge Jesus.

The reliability of the Bible is proven by the preservation of 5,664 manuscripts in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, with approximately 30,000 copies of the New Testament in other languages. This abundance of consistent manuscripts confirms the truth of the Bible.

Prayer Is Not a Waste of Time
Every morning, begin your day with prayer. This is time that will echo through eternity. Prayer brings spiritual success and victory. Your body will feel the touch of the Master's hand. Seek God's blessings—no work is done well without first seeking divine guidance.

Questions:

1. What does "Gospel" mean?

2. Who are the four authors of the Gospels?

3. Can you describe the differences between their writings?

4. Who were the Gospels written for, and what were their purposes?

5. What were Matthew, Luke, and John's professions before writing?

6. How do we know that Jesus is Lord or God?

7. If someone asks why you believe in Jesus, can you explain convincingly beyond your Bible? If not, start researching now—do not be a mere imitator!

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

[16, 17] All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness,
so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the Gospel writers who give us the beauty of Scripture in different ways. Help us to reflect on Your life here on

earth and to remain close to You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Decorate a box, and let every student write a favorite Scripture and place it inside the box.

DAY 191 (July 9)

TOPIC: JESUS HAS ALWAYS EXISTED, AND HE LIVES FOREVER.



When we began writing the children's Bible, especially this section of the New Testament, I felt we were very inadequate. How could we tell this precious story to the poor, given that human words are insufficient, and our understanding is so limited? When writing about the life of Jesus, we struggle with where to begin. We could start in Bethlehem, but that would only cover His 33 years on earth, leaving out the eternal reality of His existence. The life of Jesus has no beginning and no end—He comes from eternity past and continues into eternity future! His story here begins with His incarnation, His ministry on earth, and His ascension to heaven to continue His eternal reign.

I use these words because the Swahili language has not yet borrowed from the ancient languages. English has borrowed a lot. In Luke 2:10-11, the angel tells the shepherds not to be afraid because he brings good news of great joy: "Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord." As we have already seen, the most amazing thing here is that this newborn baby is called Christ the Lord. The term Lord is the word the Greeks used in place of Yahweh, the name of God used in the Old Testament. Thus, the angel clearly declared that this child was God.

The title Messiah also signifies the divinity of Jesus. The angel's good news continued, stating that He would be the Redeemer of the whole world. Let you and me rejoice and shout for joy with the angels for our salvation. I know we cannot do full justice to describing His life, but we will try, even though it is impossible for humans to fully comprehend this story because it surpasses our knowledge and human understanding.

Every father is naturally protective of his child, fearing to leave them in the hands of wicked or dangerous people. Yet God sent His only Son into a dangerous world, risking His life so that our children might one day have eternal safety.

John tells us clearly at the beginning of John 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This echoes Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The apostle John takes us to the very beginning of Jesus' story, while the apostle Paul concludes in Colossians 1:16: "For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him."

Jesus did not begin to exist when creation started—He has existed for all eternity. Because human understanding is confined by time, matter, and space, it is difficult for us to grasp this profound mystery.

We might wish that God could be fully explained or that His ways would align with our human needs. Yet everything was created through Him, and without Him, nothing was made that has been made. Isaiah adds in Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The increase of His government and peace will have no end, from now and forevermore.

Try to find Jesus in the Old Testament—He is everywhere! He is the "I AM."

The Jews were shocked when Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I tell you, before Abraham was born, I AM" (John 8:58). They could not understand how a man under 50 years old could claim to have seen Abraham thousands of years earlier—unless He was God. So, they wanted to stone Him because they recognized that "I AM" was the divine name God revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

The apostle Paul and many others have declared that they are determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). Let this be our desire as well—to know nothing else but Jesus, the One who was

crucified.

The prophets, apostles, and founders of all religions are dead and await the resurrection. But Jesus is alive, seated at the right hand of Almighty God in heaven. Five hundred people witnessed Him ascend into heaven without the aid of any flying machine, after spending 40 days with them following His resurrection!

A hymn says:

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace."

Jesus never fades or changes. In the New Testament, we will focus on Jesus because He is the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. What matters most is that God wants to be our friend—every one of us. He desires us to talk to Him about everything—our joys, sorrows, and everyday concerns. He loves us and wants to give us joy. This is why He sent His Son. Everything else passes away, but He is eternal, and He wants us to be with Him forever. Let us invite Him into our hearts.

The Israelites waited a long time for the Messiah. However, some forgot that their sacrifices symbolized the coming Messiah who would die for them. The sacrificial system became a mere tradition used for economic gain. Yet Jesus chose to die so that we would never be separated from God again. Eternal life is a gift. All we must do is believe—not relying on our own wisdom or strength but trusting in Him alone.

We must believe that He came to earth and died so we might have eternal life. We should confess Him with our mouths, thoughts, and hearts and then live in relationship with Him—that is eternal life. He will help us to become good people—not just to do good things. There is a significant difference between being good and doing good.

We are encouraged to have the same humble attitude as Jesus, who, though He was God, did not consider equality with God something to cling to. Instead, He made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant and being made in human likeness (Philippians 2:6-7).

It is good for us to spend time each day meditating deeply on the life of Jesus Christ. As we carefully follow the events of His life, especially the conclusion,

we will grow in understanding.

Victory Through Daily Prayer
Through daily prayer to God, you will receive wisdom and grace to handle life's challenges and emerge victorious. Integrity and peace of mind are preserved through vigilance and prayer.

Questions:

1. How old is Jesus today?

2. Why did Jesus choose to die?

3. Whose name is "I AM"?

4. What does eternity mean?

5. What does it mean to fix our eyes on Jesus?

6. Why should we always turn our eyes toward Jesus?

7. If someone asks you for proof that Jesus came and lived on earth, what human reasons would you give?

8. Why did the angels not appear to people with high-ranking jobs?

9. What is the difference between being good and doing good?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 1:1-3.

[1-3] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for coming to dwell with us human beings. You, our Creator, help us to grow in grace and to tell others about You.

Activity: Explain about Jesus being in heaven and that all things were created through Him. Then explain His coming to earth to dwell with us as Emmanuel. Explain the plan of salvation……..Use pictures of Exodus 25 Pattern of the Sanctuary -three compartments

DAY 192 (July 10)

TOPIC: The Prophecy of the Birth of Jesus the Messiah and Our Lord.

(Luke 1)



Many people desire to have a child born in their home. They wait eagerly and with great excitement. Jesus had been awaited for thousands of years before being born as a human. God's promises said He would be a special child. Prophecies such as that of Daniel 9 revealed the approximate time of His birth—69 weeks or (483 years) from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. However, many had not read or understood these prophecies. Some young women hoped that perhaps they would be chosen to give birth to this child. This child was promised from the Garden of Eden after the first sin entered the world. God promised that one day a male child would be born who would crush the head of the serpent, Satan. Eve thought she might give birth to this child, but when Cain was born, he was not the Redeemer—he became a murderer. This hope continued with every parent, as they passed on the promise while waiting for its fulfillment. Centuries passed. Even Moses told his people, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among you." Balaam was also told of this promise, and he said, "A star will come out of Jacob." Isaiah, Micah, Haggai, Zechariah, and others also prophesied about Him.

As the time approached, there was excitement in heaven because God the Son, whom the angels loved and worshiped, was about to leave heaven and its glory to live on the small planet He had created—to show His love for His creatures, even though they had rebelled against Him. He was going to take on human form and live among people. We do not know if the angels fully understood this mystery, but it was a great testimony to them that God is love. The angels eagerly prepared a heavenly choir to sing on earth when He was born. Jesus was neither late nor early. When the time came, He was born.

Why Mary was chosen, we do not know, but God's eyes search everywhere and see those who are upright before Him. Even you, who are reading this today—whether you are a child or an adult—God's eyes are watching you. Mary was a young girl, just past childhood. She must have been an extraordinary girl—God knew her heart was pure and that she could be entrusted with the honor of bearing His only Son.

God knew the street, the house, and even the room where Mary lived. He sent the angel Gabriel to Mary's home in the town of Nazareth, to a virgin pledged to be married to Joseph, a descendant of David. The angel entered Mary's house and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled by his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end."

Mary asked the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

Mary responded humbly, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Mary knew that childbirth was natural, but giving birth without a husband was unheard of. Instead of waiting to be served, she traveled over 100 kilometers to the hill country of Judea to help her relative Elizabeth. Despite the difference in their ages—Elizabeth could have been old enough to be her grandmother—Mary shared everything with her. Upon entering Zechariah's

home, Mary greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In a loud voice, Elizabeth exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!"

Mary responded with a song of praise to God, which in Latin is known as the Magnificat. Many say these words resemble those of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and Miriam, the sister of Moses.

"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as He promised our ancestors."

Mary was a young girl who did not understand everything, but she was humble and tried to remain cheerful despite the thoughts and challenges surrounding her. A mother's joy is important for her child.

We Must Set Aside Time to Pray

We should now learn and practice knowing God by affirming His promises. Angels keep a record of every sincere prayer. It is better to give up our personal desires than to neglect communion with God. Deep humility and self-denial, when combined with His favor, are better than wealth, honor, easy living, and friends without His blessing. We must take time to pray.

Questions:

1. What did the angel tell Mary?

2. How did Mary respond?

3. How did Mary praise the Lord while visiting Elizabeth?

4. What does this lesson teach us?

5. Why do you think Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 1:37-38.

[37, 38] For with God nothing will be impossible. And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. Then the angel departed from her.

Prayer: Thank You Father for the lives of Mary and Elizabeth. Forgive us our sins and fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we may live godly lives. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of Mary and Elizabeth meeting. Then discuss the things they talked about.

DAY 193 (July 11)

TOPIC: The Birth of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah

(Luke 1)

During the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. They were righteous before God, obeying all the Lord's commandments and decrees blamelessly. However, they had no child because Elizabeth was barren, and both were very old. While Zechariah was serving as a priest before God, it was his turn, by lot, to burn incense in the sanctuary, and the whole assembly was outside praying.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah, and he was startled and overcome with fear. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

He will not drink wine or any fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. He will turn many of the people of Israel back to the Lord their God. He will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." The angel said, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. And now, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."

Meanwhile, the people outside were waiting for Zechariah, wondering why he was delayed in the temple. When he finally came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained mute. When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After these days, his wife Elizabeth conceived and remained in seclusion for five months, saying, "The Lord has done this for me. He has looked upon me to take away my disgrace among the people." In those days,

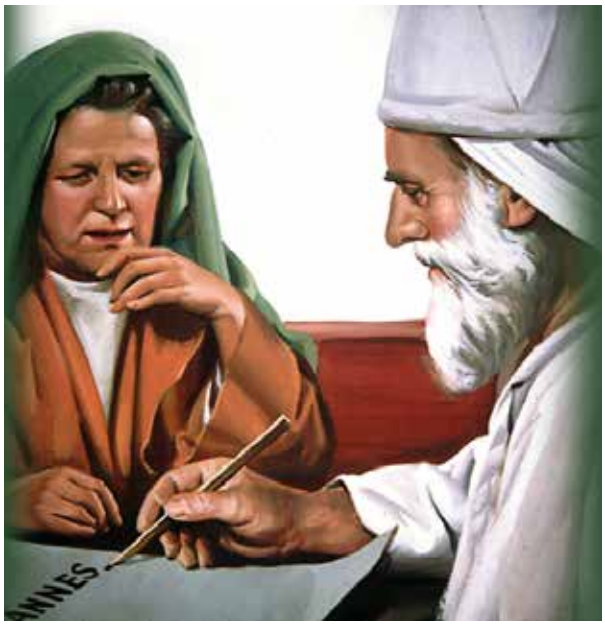


it was considered a shame for a woman to be barren.

Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth. On the way, she might have wondered if everything the angel told her was true. Elizabeth was a godly and trustworthy friend who comforted her during difficult times. When you receive amazing and good news, who do you share it with? Find someone who will encourage you in the right way.

When Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth, the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months before returning to her home in Nazareth because they did not live close to each other. When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she was overjoyed to have her cousin Mary with her. They shared their joys together because Zechariah was still mute and could only communicate through writing and gestures. Everyone enjoys speaking more than writing because you don't need a pen, paper, or any tools—just your mouth.

Elizabeth gave birth to a son, and when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child and wanted to name him Zechariah after his father. But Elizabeth said, "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." So they made signs to his father to find out what he wanted to name the child.



Zechariah asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." They were all amazed, and immediately his mouth was opened, and he began to speak, praising God. Awe came upon all their neighbors, and throughout the hill country of Judea, people talked about all these things. Everyone who heard about it pondered it in their hearts, saying, "What will this child become?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to His people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He said through His holy prophets of long ago—to save us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember His holy covenant, the

oath He swore to our father Abraham."

He said that his child John would be called a prophet of the Most High, for he would go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God. By this mercy, the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

John grew and became strong in spirit, and he lived in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

When we read about the birth of John, we are reminded that God has a plan for every child and adult, just as He had for John. The greatest thing in our lives should be to understand God's plan for us and live to fulfill that special purpose. Spend more time in prayer and seeking God's Word closely. Let everyone receive the true reality of faith in their hearts by believing that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them because they have a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness. Let there be more prayer, more faith, more receiving, and more working together with God.

Questions:

1. What did the angel say to Zechariah?

2. What excuse did Zechariah give?

3. What happened when Elizabeth saw Mary?

4. How did people know the child would be named John?

5. What does "prophet of the Most High" mean?

6. What does the name Jesus or Yeshua mean?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 1:76-79.

[76-79] And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the ministry of John the Baptist, and for the ministry of intercession for us today and the forgiveness of sins. Thank You because the light has reached us who dwell in darkness. We are grateful because Your light will guide our fe et into the way of peace. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 194 (July 12)

TOPIC: The Birth of Jesus the Messiah and the Son of God.

(Luke 2 and Matthew 2)



In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus of Rome, who ruled the entire world at that time, that a census should be taken of all the people in the world so that each ruler would know how many citizens were under them. This was the first census recorded at that time. The census was conducted to collect taxes or to identify people of the age eligible for military service. Everyone went to register according to their town or family of origin.

Joseph, from the lineage of King David, left Galilee from the town of Nazareth to go to Bethlehem in Judea, over 120 kilometers away, the city where King David was born, because he belonged to the house of David. He went to be registered with Mary, whom he was engaged to, and she was expecting a child. Joseph married Mary after receiving a dream from God. This journey, traveling on a donkey through valleys and hills with a pregnant woman about

to give birth, was not easy.

One thing to learn here is that Jesus' parents were people who lived peacefully and obeyed the laws of the land that did not contradict their faith. Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together as husband and wife, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, and because he loved Mary, he decided to divorce her quietly.

Perhaps when Mary told him, he did not believe her, as such a thing had never happened before and seemed impossible. That is why the angel told Mary when she asked, "How will this be since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "With God, all things are possible." Joseph knew Mary was a faithful girl, so he wondered what had happened—was there another man who loved her more than he did? Mary was between 14 and 17 years old.

Joseph could have taken her to court because, in those days, engagement was equivalent to marriage under their law, and legally, she could have been stoned to death according to the Law of Moses. However, he did not want to harm Mary, and at the same time, he did not want to take a girl who had been with another man. He considered giving her a quiet divorce or simply leaving her secretly.

Here, we learn wisdom—when people wrong us, there is no need to embarrass them or make a scene! While Joseph was still thinking about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "Behold, a virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel," which means "God with us." When Joseph woke up from sleep, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary as his wife, but he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to the child.

It has been over 2,000 years since Mary was told these things, but these words still hold great meaning today. Jesus was born to save all humanity from sin—whether short or tall, rich or poor, African, White, or Indian. That is when Joseph married and took Mary home.

Perhaps these parents sometimes thought that Jesus would become a king

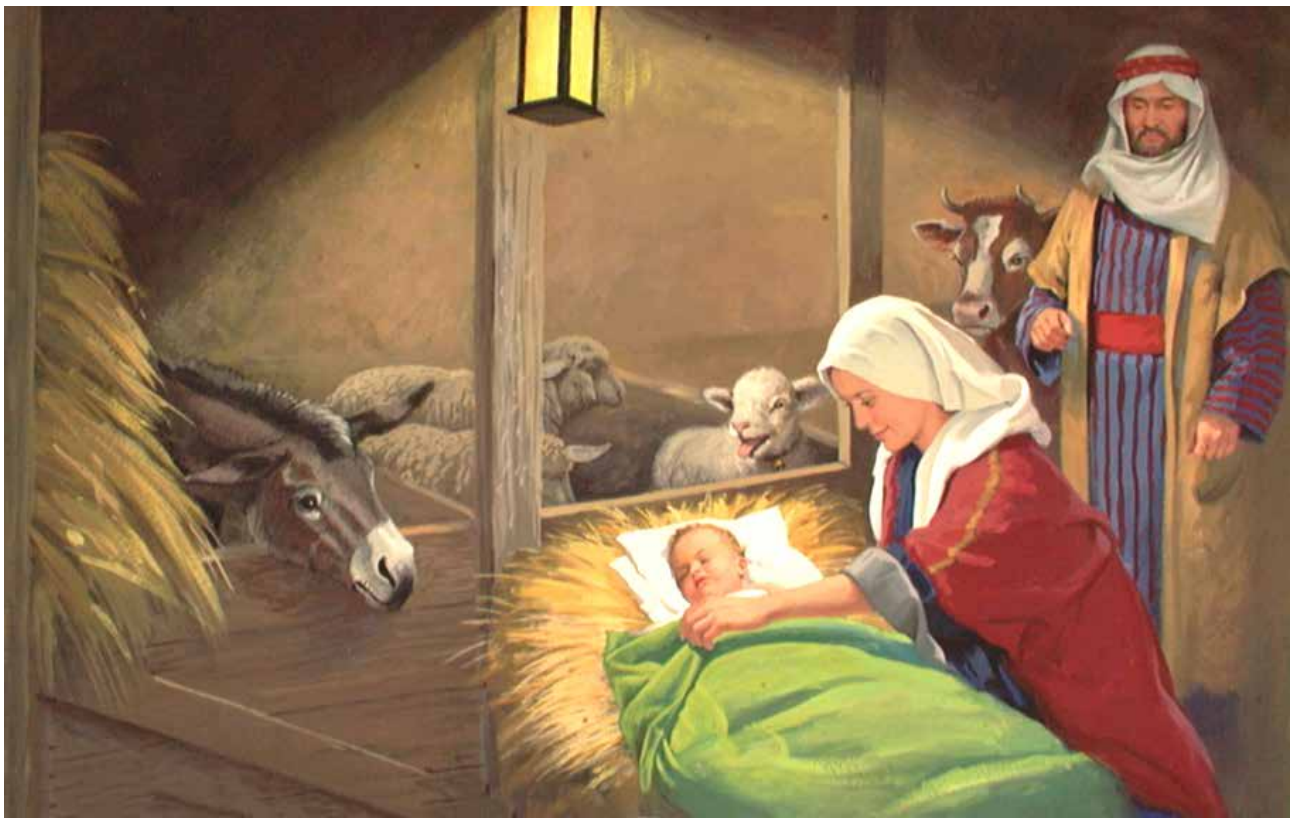
and help deliver them from Roman oppression or poverty! They took on a heavy responsibility—to carry God, raise Him, and do everything that parents do for a child: feeding Him, putting Him to bed, clothing Him, and so on.

When we try to comprehend these things with our limited minds, we are left speechless by God's love. A small example to help understand: imagine you love ants so much that you choose to become an ant, live like an ant, die for the ants, and remain in ant form forever.

When Joseph and Mary realized they had been chosen and entrusted by God with the most precious thing on earth and in heaven—His Son—and that all of heaven was poured into their home, they rejoiced. Although the task was difficult and they did not fully understand it, they no longer cared about the difficulty or people's gossip.

Even today, do you worry about what people say when they mock you for loving God and obeying His commands? Joseph is not often mentioned, but as a father, he had a huge responsibility to protect and care for Mary, raise Jesus, teach Him a trade so He could work, and do all the other things our fathers do for us—it takes both parents to raise a child.

During their journey to Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth. Because of the census, the town was crowded, and all the inns were full. Since they could not find a place to stay, a kind person offered them a stable. Traditional midwives or Mary's friends from Nazareth were not present.



Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son, wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger—a feeding trough for animals, possibly made of metal or rough wooden planks. The Lamb of God was born among the animals. This shows that God values animals more than we may think!



The animals were ready to welcome Him into their home, but humans had no room for Him. Most children today are born in hospitals, but Jesus was born in a stable.

Perhaps His earthly parents wondered, "Why is this happening? Why did God choose us, poor as we are, to raise the One who owns everything?" Even poor mothers today are given better care during childbirth. Tetanus infections for newborns and mothers are serious risks! Yet God gave His all and continues to give to this day.

Joseph was a carpenter—couldn't he have made a crib for the baby? But Jesus came in humility, as described in Philippians 2. So, even those who are very poor can find comfort in this story.

When we think of all that Jesus left behind for us, we should ask ourselves: What will I give up for Him? Do you have room in your heart for Jesus today? Let's not be like Bethlehem, which had no room for the King of kings that night.

In that same region, there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks at night. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people: Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly, a great company of heavenly hosts appeared with the angel, praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to those on whom His favor rests."

Questions:

1. Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem?

2. What did the angel tell the shepherds?

3. Do angels like those in Bethlehem still visit us today?

4. What song did the angelic host sing?

5. What kind of music displeases God?

6. Why did God choose poor shepherds instead of the wealthy?

7. What does the manger symbolize?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 2:9-12.

[9-12] An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Prayer: Dear Father, we praise You for removing fear from us and bringing us good news. Thank You for the hope of the Savior who came to live, die, and rise again for us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw the manger and sheepfold (Nativity). Find a map and look at the journey to Bethlehem to pay taxes, by the decree of Caesar Augustus.

DAY 195 (July 13th)

TOPIC: The Wise Men from the East Visit Jesus

(Matthew 2)



When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, behold, wise men—people of wisdom, status, noble character, and knowledge of astronomy, science, and medicine—came to see Him from the East. They observed the star and arrived in Jerusalem asking, "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." These wise men had studied the prophecy of Balaam from the book of Numbers, along with other prophets, and had knowledge of the stars.

The Spirit of God called them from their homeland, and they traveled by camel or horse, journeying only at night, to find Jesus. Upon seeing the star, they followed it to Jerusalem. They assumed that if they, as foreigners, had discovered the birth of the Savior, the Israelites would surely know much about it. However, many of the Israelites were spiritually backslidden and unaware of what was happening. God can bypass someone who appears

religious and instead reach a humble person willing to listen, even if they seem irreligious. Nevertheless, God gave those who were asked a chance to reflect and investigate the truth of the matter.

The wise men found the news of the Savior's birth to be incredibly joyful and were surprised that it caused fear among the Jews. Their king, Herod—an elderly ruler—was disturbed when he heard of a king greater than himself who might dethrone him. Even before Jesus could walk, He was already sought after as a suspect. This shows that Jesus' life was far more difficult than ours.

Herod gathered all the chief priests and scribes and inquired where Christ was to be born. They told him, based on Scripture, that it was in Bethlehem of Judea. The prophet Micah had written: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel." The prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 clearly stated the year He would be born, be baptized, and die.

The Jews had driven out the Spirit of God from advising them, making them blind to this great event. Although Bethlehem was only 12 km (about 7 miles) from Jerusalem, they neither went nor investigated the wise men's claims, continuing instead to show clear indifference. They were not ignorant of Scripture and knew the prophecies of the Messiah. A little research with an open heart would have revealed the truth to them, but the Holy Spirit was absent from their lives. Even today, we must be cautious—if the Spirit of God departs from a church, no one may notice. Church activities such as preaching, social services, or singing may continue as usual without His presence.

Thousands of angels sang in Bethlehem; it is likely that many heard those sweet songs that night. It is hard to believe the angels' singing was a secret; they must have been singing to people, not just to heaven. The Jews studied the Scriptures, but their learning led to destruction because they sought to appear righteous while their intentions and thoughts were evil.

Herod secretly called the wise men to inquire when exactly they had seen the star. They told him, and he calculated the time. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report to me so that I too may go and worship Him." This was a lie—his real intention was to kill Jesus, fearing that He would overthrow him.

Poor Herod did not realize that Jesus was the King of kings who humbled Himself to be born as a human to save him and all of us from our sins forever. Jesus was not a political ruler or a human government leader. While Herod thought about his small kingdom, Jesus' reign extended over billions of stars



and planets. Herod was known for his cruelty, even killing his own children out of jealousy. It is said that Emperor Augustus once remarked that it was safer to be Herod's pig than his son.

After hearing the king, the wise men continued their journey, and the star they had seen in the East went before them until it stopped over the place where the child was. Upon seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. When they entered the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. The King of kings had no guards, soldiers, or attendants. Mary and Joseph were amazed. The wise men opened their treasures and presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—valuable items in those days. Although the Bible does not specify their number, it mentions three types of gifts.

The wise men had traveled for a long time, yet they still had gifts. They feared God and prayed to see the Messiah, likely having studied the prophecy of Daniel 9. After being warned by the Holy Spirit in a dream, they did not return to Herod but went home by another route. Even today, wise people still seek Jesus and offer Him gifts. This child was the promised Messiah—Moses called Him "I AM," David called Him the "Morning Star," and other prophets called Him the "Hope of All Generations." Jesus is the hope of all humanity, regardless of denomination, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We all need a Savior.

Often, we focus on the history of Jesus and forget to speak about His mission to serve the poor, the suffering, and the afflicted. Jesus was willing to help the needy, and today, we have the same responsibility. Love is the prevailing theme of God's kingdom. The mystery of God's love in saving humanity will be discussed by angels for eternity, and we will sing about it forever as we continue learning about His life and the salvation He provided. In Jesus, we see that God's greatest joy and glory is in giving.

After the wise men departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, instructing him to take the child and His mother and flee to Egypt, staying there until further notice because Herod sought to kill the child. Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus traveled to Egypt—a journey of about 300 km (186 miles) by donkey. The royal gifts from the wise men likely provided financial support during their time in Egypt, where historians suggest they stayed for about three years.

When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the wise men, he became furious and ordered the massacre of all male children under two years old in Bethlehem and its surrounding areas, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah: "A

voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

After Herod's death, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again, instructing him to return to Israel. Hearing that Herod's son Archelaus was ruling in Judea, Joseph feared going there. Warned again in a dream, he traveled to Galilee and settled in Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. Despite Satan's attempts to destroy Him, Jesus triumphed.

The story of the wise men teaches us how to respond to Jesus. There are three ways to treat Him: reject Him, worship Him, or show indifference. Being a church member is good, but it does not guarantee a right relationship with God. We each have the freedom to choose how we treat the King of the Jews, whom we now know as the King of kings, Jesus the Messiah.

Pray Always – "Pray without ceasing;" this means maintaining a spirit of prayer at all times, preparing for the return of your Lord.

Questions:

1. Who visited the child Jesus with gifts?

2. Why was Herod afraid of Jesus' birth?

3. Where did Herod seek information about the Messiah's birth?

4. What did Herod tell the wise men?

5. Why is it difficult to leave a kingdom and be born in a stable?

6. How were the wise men's gifts used?

7. If angels sang to announce the good news, should we not also sing in church when instructed?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 2:1-2.

[1, 2] Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the East and have come to worship Him.

Prayer: Be exalted, O King, in our lives today. Help us to be like the wise men, people of wisdom who worship You, for You are worthy, our Creator and Redeemer. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the journey of the wise men and how they met the people of Jerusalem. Then sing a song with the message of the angels.

Song of Praise Night (Silent Night)

1. Night of praise, of peace and light,
When was born the holy and good Son,
The Son is God, the Son is God.

2. Night of praise, shepherds in the valley,
Light terrified them, angels sang,
A Son is born, a Son is born.

3. Night of praise, grace and peace,
Love and redemption have reached all,
Through Messiah Jesus, through Messiah Jesus.

DAY 196 (July 14)

TOPIC: Jesus Blessed in the Temple at 40 Days Old

(Luke 2)



Jesus' parents took Him to the temple when He was eight days old. His blessing occurred before the visit of the Wise Men because His parents would not have returned to Jerusalem to present themselves before Herod and risk being killed. The shepherds who went to see baby Jesus spread the word about what had been told to them concerning the child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds said, but Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, which was just as they had been told.

When eight days were completed, Jesus was circumcised, and He was given the name Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before He was conceived. After the days of their purification according to the Law of Moses were fulfilled—40 days for a male child—they went to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. As it is written in the Law of the Lord, every firstborn male shall be called holy to the Lord. Being poor, they offered a pair of doves as a sacrifice, as prescribed by the Law. Those who were wealthier would have offered a lamb. The priest performed his duty without realizing who this child was—he likely thought the Messiah could not come from such humble parents.

People expected the Messiah to be wealthy and powerful, capable of removing all their hardships. The tradition of offering a thanksgiving sacrifice for a child's birth or birthday remains meaningful today. Modern practices imported

from Western culture—such as extravagant spending or indulging in selfish celebrations—are not spiritually uplifting for those who fear God.

In Jerusalem, there was a man named Simeon, who was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him, and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Led by the Spirit, Simeon entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the Law, Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before the face of all peoples:
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

Joseph and Mary marveled at what was said about Jesus. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, His mother:

"Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,
and for a sign that will be spoken against—
so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
And a sword will pierce your own soul also."

This prophecy meant that many would accept the Messiah while others would reject Him. Their rejection would reveal their spiritual condition, leading to their downfall. It was not God who condemned them, but their own response to Jesus determined their fate. This prophecy came true, as many religious leaders like the Pharisees rejected Jesus, while others accepted Him and rose spiritually.

When Mary heard Simeon's words about a sword piercing her soul, she did not fully understand. But as she reflected on his message over the years, she found comfort. She witnessed the fulfillment of this prophecy throughout Jesus' life—hearing people speak against Him, wondering, and even doubting at times, especially when she saw Him on the cross. Simeon's message prepared her heart for the sorrow she would face. Many in those days did not understand that the Messiah would suffer and live a life of sorrow for humanity's sake.

From birth to death on the cross, Jesus' life was selfless. Mary heard many hurtful things said about her Son. Some said, "Your child prays all night and

teaches people without even eating," while others claimed, "Your Son has a demon." Even the Pharisees, who should have known better, caused her deep sorrow with their accusations. Today, we must also be careful with our words—harsh speech can deeply wound others and lead to rejection.

The hurtful words did not come from religious leaders alone—they also came from Jesus' relatives, friends, and even family members. This pain was especially sharp when those closest to Him rejected Him. Mary may have been tempted to align herself with the religious leaders to ease the pressure on herself and her Son.

Sometimes, family can become a source of pain rather than support. To relieve His mother's sorrow, Jesus often spent time with others, like Lazarus and his sisters, where He could pray freely. Even today, some children face rejection and hostility because of their faith. They can find comfort in Jesus, who is closer to us than any earthly relative. We may never fully comprehend His love, but we know it is real, and we can share that love with others.

While some in the temple thought it was just another ordinary day and continued their routines, those who opened their hearts—like Simeon and Anna—recognized the miracle before them. This still happens today. Mere knowledge of the Scriptures is not enough; we must live out the Word of God.

Also in the temple was a prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher. She was 84 years old. After seven years of marriage, her husband had died, and she had lived as a widow for many years. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. At that very moment, she came forward and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

After completing everything required by the Law of the Lord, Joseph and Mary returned to Galilee, to their hometown of Nazareth.

Two humble and faithful elders recognized the Messiah, while the religious leaders of Israel remained blind to the miracle unfolding before them. Today, many religious leaders speak of the historical Jesus while neglecting His call to serve the poor and suffering. True followers of Christ must live selflessly and care for those in need, reflecting His mission to uplift the spiritually and physically impoverished.

Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. This indicates His growth mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. During this time, He fled to Egypt to escape Herod's threats,

becoming a refugee. Nazareth, the town where He grew up, was despised—Nathaniel even asked, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

Many people blame their bad behavior on their upbringing, but Jesus never did. He knew that His heavenly Father had a purpose for Him, and He lived to fulfill that purpose. The 30 years He spent with His parents shaped the fragrance of His ministry to God.

Today, do not despise your life at home—it forms the foundation of your character. We should not envy others’ wealth or status, thinking life would be better if we had been born into a different family.

The Need for Persistent Prayer
Now more than ever, there is a need for constant prayer. Christ commands us, “Pray without ceasing.” Keep your mind fixed on God, the source of all strength and success.

Questions:

1. Why did the priest who blessed Jesus not recognize Him as the Messiah?

2. Why was Jesus taken to Egypt?

3. What did Simeon say to Mary?

4. Who was the prophetess Anna?

5. What reputation did Nazareth have?

6. In what areas did Jesus grow?

7. Why did Simeon call Jesus a light for the Gentiles and not just for Israel?

8. Why did Simeon say Jesus was the consolation of Israel?

9. What does the name “Jesus” mean?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 2:29-33.

[29-33] Now, Lord, You let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. And His father and mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your love for all humankind. We see Your love in Simeon and Anna, in giving them the joy of seeing the Messiah with their own eyes. We also pray that we may see You in our lives. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play about the Blessing of Jesus on the 40th day. Important points:
- Obedience of Mary and Joseph: Bringing the infant Jesus into the Temple to fulfill the Law of Moses, which required the firstborn male child to be consecrated and the mother to be purified.

- Sacrifice: Because they were poor, they offered two doves or two young pigeons, as prescribed for those who could not afford a lamb.

- Prophecy of Simeon: An elderly, devout man, guided by the Holy Spirit into the Temple. He recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, thanked God for allowing him to see the Savior, and prophesied that Jesus would be a light for the Gentiles and cause the fall and rising of many in Israel.

- Testimony of Anna: A prophetess who constantly worshiped in the Temple. She saw Jesus, gave thanks to God, and told others about Him.

DAY 197 (July 15)

TOPIC: Jesus in the Temple at Age 12

(Luke 2)

The Bible does not say much about the childhood of Jesus, or Isa son of Mary, for reasons we do not know. God chose to tell us only a little about Jesus' childhood. However, He returned from Egypt when He was under five years old and lived at home until He was thirty. Perhaps He spoke Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek, or Latin! His father was a carpenter, so He likely helped with household work. It is likely that His mother and father taught Him to read at home and about the prophecies, and He became aware that He was the promised Messiah. Both Mary and Joseph came from royal lineage, and if it were not for the Babylonian captivity, they would have been in the kingdom, but circumstances changed, and they became ordinary people.

In those days, most people did not have a Bible, but they attended the synagogue twice a week. It must have been a remarkable life—Mary and Joseph raising the Son of God. We would love to know the children He played with and the games they played. In those days, boys memorized the entire Old Testament, which included the Torah (the books of Moses), the Prophets, and the Psalms. The Scriptures were written on long scrolls, like rolled mats, which were unrolled and rolled back again.

Every year, Jesus' parents would go to Jerusalem, as all Jews did, to celebrate the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, and Pentecost at the Temple on Mount Moriah, which was a few days' walk on foot. When Jesus turned twelve—the age that marked the transition from childhood to young adulthood in their culture—He also went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, as was customary. They traveled in groups for safety against robbers. As they walked, they discussed the meaning of the feast and how their ancestors were freed from Egypt by putting the blood of a lamb on their doorposts—a symbol pointing to the Messiah, the true Passover Lamb. Psalms 120 to 134 were sung as they ascended the hills toward Jerusalem. You should read and sing them too!

Jesus began to understand that He was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. He started to realize His mission more deeply. After the festival, Mary and Joseph returned home, thinking that Jesus was with the group. But Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. They likely assumed He was among His peers—perhaps relatives or friends—as it was normal in their



community for twelve-year-olds to walk and talk with others in the caravan.

If it were today, when people travel together on buses, it would be easier to know who is missing. The busy activities of packing luggage, feeding animals, saying goodbye, and chatting with friends prevented them from realizing Jesus was not among them. Mary and Joseph forgot Him and continued their journey home. When they realized He was missing, they spent a whole day searching for Him among their relatives and friends. Not finding Him, they decided to return to Jerusalem, searching for Him along the way. They feared He might be in danger or kidnapped by someone with bad intentions, as happens today. It was a long journey back to their camp, and they likely rested along the way. It took them three days to find Jesus.

His parents were anxious—they had lost the child entrusted to them from heaven. They may have worried that King Herod, who had once sought to kill Jesus as a baby, had succeeded through his agents.

Many parents today can relate to the distress Mary and Joseph felt when they lost their child. However, some parents abandon their children, leaving them to fend for themselves. Such parents should be cautious because children are a gift from God, and one day, God will ask, “Where is the child I gave you?” Even when parents are doing God’s work, their first missionary responsibility is to their own children.



Even today, many parents neglect their children due to being too busy, causing their children to be raised by neighbors, television, iPods, technology, or domestic workers. Worse still, people lose Jesus through bad friends, worldly distractions, gossip, social media, fashion, materialism, or other earthly worries. Parents, let us pray for one another!

Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the doctors of theology, the great religious teachers or rabbis, listening to them and asking questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and the answers He

gave. They were astonished because they knew He had not attended any prestigious schools. You too may not attend the nation's most famous schools, but if you put Jesus first, you are already in the world's best schools.

When asked questions about the Law, the Messiah, and other topics, He answered clearly and wisely. They had never seen a child like Him—and truly, there had never been one like Him!

Some Jews attended these festivals as mere tradition, without reflecting on their deeper meaning. But for Jesus, these feasts had great significance—they pointed directly to Him. As He witnessed the daily sacrifices, He gradually understood the mission ahead: to save humanity.

He answered the questions humbly, quoting the Scriptures and giving insights that amazed the teachers. They may have asked where He was born, and when He answered "Bethlehem," they might have discussed whether there was a prophecy about the Messiah being born there. Their conversations were so engaging that they may have lost track of time, spending three days with Him—perhaps sharing meals and caring for Him. We do not know if they even slept during those three days! If these religious leaders had taken His words seriously, they would have recognized Him as their Savior when He began His ministry.

When Mary and Joseph found Jesus, they were amazed to see Him surrounded by people. Mary approached Him and said, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." Jesus answered, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house to learn what He wants me to do?" His parents did not understand His response. Perhaps they wondered if He would soon leave them to be with His Father in heaven. After His resurrection, they finally understood His words, although they still sometimes struggled with doubt.

Even today, the church is the house of the Lord. Jesus loved being in the temple. We should not avoid going to church or delay our arrival, and when we are there, we should be respectful and not play around. If children can learn complex subjects in school, they can also understand God's Word in church.

Some people think they can learn the Word of God better at home, but this is not true. Iron sharpens iron, and staying home often leads to spiritual laziness. Sometimes, people visit us on Sabbath, distracting us from attending church. This can lead to neglecting prayer and eventually falling into worldly habits.

A child of God should love being in the Lord's house. Studying God's Word is the most important work of our heavenly Father. Jesus' parents did not fully understand what He meant when He spoke of His Father's house. But despite being God, Jesus returned to Nazareth with His parents and obeyed them. Mary treasured all these things in her heart.
Prayer is needed to stand firm in unpopular convictions—it takes moral courage, determination, perseverance, and much prayer to stay on the right path. We thank God that we can come to Christ, just as the poor and needy did when they sought Him in the temple.

Questions:

1. What did Simeon say?

2. Who was Anna?

3. Why didn't others recognize the birth of the Messiah?

4. What did Mary say to Jesus when she found Him after three days?

5. How did Jesus respond?

6. Why did Jesus obey His parents?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 2:49-51.

[49-51] When they saw Him, they were amazed, and His mother said to Him, Son, why have You treated us this way? Look, Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You. He said to them, Why were you searching for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house? But they did not understand what He said to them.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Help us to be in Your house. Thank You for our daily needs. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Teach about the Bible story of Jesus in the Temple or the concept of God's dwelling place. Loving to be in His house, and things to keep in mind.

DAY 198 (July 16)

TOPIC: The Childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist

(Luke 3, Matthew 3, and Mark 1)



The Bible is silent about the childhood of Jesus. If someone could find five pages and at least one picture of Jesus' childhood, they would sell it for millions of dollars today! In His wisdom, God decided that the details of Jesus' childhood should not be written. Many have added their own words, but the Bible remains silent. However, we are told that He obeyed His parents, helping His father with carpentry work and His mother with household chores. Like many children of that time, He inherited His father Joseph's carpentry work, and after Joseph's death, He helped His mother by providing for the family. Mary taught Jesus the Scriptures daily. They studied the prophecies about the Messiah and the work He would do. This mother took time to show her child the plants, flowers, and animals He Himself had created thousands of years before. He must have been a child that brought much joy to His parents because He was obedient and never sinned. He did not argue when His parents sent Him on errands or asked Him to do something. He was an agreeable child.

He grew spiritually, physically, socially, and intellectually, thinking of others rather than being self-centered. He was gentle and compassionate. He lived to bless others, though He faced fierce struggles against the powers of darkness, as Satan sought to trap and destroy Him.

He lived a simple, hardworking life and was never idle, which helped protect Him from the devil's temptations because an idle mind is the devil's workshop. He did not use His divine power to make life easier for Himself. He

did not come down from the cross to escape suffering—no! This teaches us, as children, to be diligent workers. You do not need extraordinary talent to do good work; a child needs the discipline to love hard work.

Jesus lived among poor people all His life, and He Himself was poor, yet He cared for both the rich and the poor. A simple, quiet life is important. The noise and chaos of city life can make a child restless, fearful, anxious, or develop bad habits. Many people are amazed by the three and a half years of Jesus' public ministry, but the foundation was laid during the thirty years He spent at home. It was His childhood that shaped Him into the man He became.

He learned patience. He did not separate Himself from people or live in seclusion in a monastery. He was always ready to serve others, which annoyed many because His behavior exposed their faults. However, many people loved to be near Him because He did not fight for His rights or quarrel with others.

Jesus continued to learn about Himself both as a human and as God—a mystery beyond human understanding. He communicated with His Heavenly Father about His thoughts, knowledge, and feelings. His goal was to fulfill the work God had given Him. He avoided all forms of evil—such as drinking alcohol, laziness, lying, and the sinful behaviors mentioned in Galatians 5. He planned His time carefully—when to do carpentry work and when to begin preaching—and He did everything with excellence and joy. Work helps to shape the character of both children and adults in preparation for heaven.

Mary often reflected on His birth and everything she had witnessed, wondering in her heart whether it was a dream or reality.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, while Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests, the word of God came to John in the wilderness. He went throughout the Jordan region, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As the prophet Malachi had foretold, he was "a voice crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth; and all humanity will see the salvation of God." This is how he came to be known as John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was born for a special purpose—to prepare the way for the Messiah, calling people to repent of their sins and surrender their hearts to God to receive the salvation Jesus offered.



John lived a life of self-denial and discipline. He did not eat just anything; he was a Nazirite dedicated to God. He did not drink alcohol or any intoxicating beverages. His food was natural, unlike the processed foods people consume today. Even today, we should live simple, self-denying lives from childhood, like John the Baptist. We should avoid over-processing our food, which diminishes its value. The simple lifestyle of John the Baptist prepared him to serve people as he did.

His baptism was one of repentance, preparing people's hearts so they would be ready to receive the Messiah when He came. Even today, children and adults alike must prepare people to meet Jesus in the clouds at His second coming. John the Baptist is our example as we wait for Jesus and seek to prepare others. We must deny ourselves and live simple lives to effectively share the message with others.

Although John's father was a priest, and John could have followed the same path, the religious education of that time would not have prepared him for the work God called him to do. God took him to the wilderness to learn directly from Him. In the quietness of nature, John studied the Scriptures and learned from God's creation. City life often robs children of the quiet needed for spiritual growth and good character development.

Self-denial and temperance are essential if we want to be true followers of the Lord. God ensured that the lives of these two cousins—Jesus and John—did not intersect until the right time.

According to the prophecy of Daniel 9, the fifteenth year of Emperor Tiberius' reign marked the time for the Messiah to be anointed. This prophecy was given more than 600 years earlier—how amazing is God's plan! Check Daniel 9 to review this prophecy.

John's mother, Elizabeth, was a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus. However, these two young men had never met because they lived far apart. John was taken to the wilderness to develop the character required for his great mission. When he arrived at the Jordan River to begin his ministry, he preached boldly and clearly, saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

John the Baptist was the prophet foretold by Malachi, likened to Elijah, who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Perhaps Mary and Jesus talked about their relationship with John and the message he was preaching to prepare the way for Jesus. They likely discussed baptism and how people were flocking to the Jordan River.

Prayers Needed to Enter Heaven
There is no such thing as entering the gates of heaven through self-indulgence, entertainment, foolishness, or selfishness. It requires constant vigilance and unceasing prayer. Spiritual watchfulness is the price of safety. Do not give Satan even a small foothold, or he will seize the opportunity to trap and destroy you.

Questions:

1. What does the Bible say about Jesus' childhood?

2. What work did Jesus do to support His family?

3. Why is work important for every child?

4. Why did John the Baptist live in the wilderness and eat simple foods?

5. What was the central message of John the Baptist's preaching?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 3:2-6.

[2-6] … The word of God came to John… He went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths

straight. Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth; and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for all good things. We know that even today You say to us, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Thank You for loving us to the very end. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.
Activity: One student preaches the words of John the Baptist, and the others respond to the call. Refer to Luke 3:6-18.

DAY 199 – (July 17)

TOPIC: Jesus is Anointed through Baptism in the Jordan River

(John 3, Mark 1, Luke 3)



One day, Jesus said goodbye to His family; they embraced each other as they parted ways, including His mother. Being a good Son, Jesus must have made arrangements to leave His mother well cared for, as it appears that Joseph had already passed away. The time had come—the time foretold since the foundation of the world. Would He abandon the mission that brought Him and avoid the cross? No! Jesus moved forward without turning back or deviating from that plan.

John was 30 years old when he began his ministry, and Jesus was also 30 years old—though John was six months older. They were cousins but had never met. During those days, people were spreading the news that a prophet had arisen and was preaching, delivering the word of God. It had been 400 years of silence without a prophet since the last prophet of the Old Testament had spoken, so people flocked to hear John. They were amazed because he did not merely read the Scriptures—he told them what God was directly revealing to him.

He warned them not to be proud of their good deeds or religious status because God had the power to raise up faithful believers from the stones and did not need Abraham's descendants. True repentance means being sorrowful for sins, confessing them to God, and making amends with those we have wronged. The people did not become angry when he spoke these truths—not even Herod.

The greatest battle is to deny oneself, stop thinking only of oneself, and prioritize others and God. To completely surrender to God and abandon evil ways or selfish desires is the secret to becoming a person of God. We should not think that others are worse sinners than we are, but rather examine and repent of our own faults.

John, the son of Zechariah, did not dress like ordinary people. Instead, he wore garments made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the regions around the Jordan went to him, confessing their sins and being baptized in the Jordan River. John preferred a place with plenty of water so he could fully immerse those he baptized—the word "baptism" comes from the Greek word meaning "to immerse."

John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized. These were two religious and political groups with differing beliefs. The Pharisees believed in angels, resurrection, and the entire Scriptures, while the Sadducees did not believe in angels or the resurrection. To be a Sadducee was essentially to lack belief in the heavenly God because, without the resurrection, there is no hope or faith in the risen Jesus.

The Pharisees knew the Scriptures better than anyone but did not practice what they preached. Instead, they added burdensome rules, making the worship of God a heavy burden. When John saw these two groups, he said, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." In other words, they needed to confess their sins and do good works—not rely on their ancestry as descendants of Abraham. John warned them that God could raise children for Abraham from the stones if He wished.

Today, we might say that no one should boast about belonging to a particular denomination because God can raise faithful believers from anywhere. The famous preacher, who was on everyone's lips, declared, "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." This means that those who continue in sin and wickedness will face judgment and punishment rather than eternal life.

Some wondered if John himself might be the Messiah because his preaching was so powerful and compelling. But John told them, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but after me comes One who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." He explained that the Messiah would come with authority to gather the righteous into His kingdom while destroying the wicked like chaff

burned in an unquenchable fire.

At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. Although they had never met, Jesus had known John from the beginning—after all, Jesus was in heaven when the angel announced John's birth to his father, Zechariah. When John saw Jesus approaching, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that this was the Messiah. Shocked, John tried to prevent Jesus, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?"

But Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus did not need baptism for repentance because He was sinless. However, He was baptized to give us an example to follow. So, John agreed and baptized Him.

Today, many people are baptized around the age of ten, which can be appropriate if they have been taught and understand salvation. Jesus affirmed that as long as people learn and understand, they should be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus came up out of the water, He knelt and prayed. At that moment, the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and rested on Him. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him, I am well pleased."

Jesus' baptism was His anointing to begin His ministry as the Messiah. Even today, when we are baptized, it is important to pray for the Holy Spirit. Baptism symbolizes leaving behind an old life and beginning a new life in Christ. It is a public declaration that we belong to God.

In the past, Jews observed circumcision as a sign of covenant, but now we have water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This signifies leaving our sinful ways behind and allowing our hearts and minds to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who enables us to walk and live in fellowship with God. The Bible says that baptism represents dying to our old selves and rising to a new life in Christ.

The Lord is One, baptism is one, and the faith is one. Jesus' baptism was a public declaration that the Messiah had arrived and that His ministry had begun. Although He had no sin, He was baptized to fulfill the Scriptures and to set an example for us. He started His ministry among sinners being baptized in the Jordan River and finished it between two criminals on the cross.

John's message applies to us today—whether our sins are pride, disobedience,

or breaking the law, we all need to repent, be baptized, and start a new life. Merely feeling sorry for our sins is not enough—we must repent and build a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus did not need baptism for His own sake, but He did it to fulfill the Scriptures and give us a model to follow. Prayer helps us remain faithful. Without constant prayer and vigilance, we risk becoming careless, indifferent, and straying from the right path. The enemy is always trying to block or hinder our access to the throne of grace, preventing us from receiving the mercy and strength we need to resist temptation.

Questions:

1. What happened when Jesus was baptized?
2. What did John eat and wear?
3. How many types of baptism are there?
4. What does baptism mean?
5. When should someone be baptized?
6. How did John know that Jesus was the Messiah?
7. Why did John hesitate to baptize Jesus?
8. What did the voice from heaven say?
9. Why is it important to know that God does not tempt us, but Satan does?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 1:14-15.

[14,15] … Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News of God, saying, The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News!

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for the good news to us. Help us to share this news with others, for Your kingdom is near. We repent of our sins and believe the Good News. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Emphasize to the children that even today God says to each one of them, “You are My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” And that He loves us. Teach from those verses, and you may also do a drama activity.

DAY 200 (July 18)

TOPIC: Jesus is Tempted by Satan in the Wilderness

(Luke 4, Matthew 4)

People were being baptized, intending to change and follow God's ways. They understood what was happening, and the message being preached touched their hearts. They asked John the Baptist, "What should we do then?" He answered them to be compassionate; "Anyone who has two tunics should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

Even the tax collectors came and asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He told them, "Don't collect more than you are authorized to." Soldiers also came and asked, "What about us, what should we do?" He told them, "Do not extort money, do not accuse people falsely, and be content with your wages."

Even today, we await the second coming of Jesus on the clouds. We cannot remain silent. We must tell people to prepare for eternal life by helping those in need and avoiding the love of money, for the root of all evil is the love of money. Complaining when God has blessed us or being envious because someone has more than us is also a sin. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

John preached to people with many other warnings. He rebuked King Herod, who was from his lineage, for taking his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. This angered Herod, who decided to imprison John the Baptist.

After Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on Him, He returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days. This was a place without people or shops, and He fasted without eating anything, day and night. He spent this time reflecting and planning the work of saving humanity.

Fasting is important, starting from a certain age and if you do not have health issues like diabetes or stomach ulcers. You can skip one or two meals a day. Many people feel very hungry when they skip even one day without eating. Children around 12 years old should not fast for more than a day but can reduce their meals.

Adults are the ones who should fast for 40 days while drinking fruit juices, vegetable juices, and water. Water is essential during fasting because it helps cleanse the body. It is recommended that people avoid eating at night while fasting because it harms the body when one sleeps with a full stomach.

Others who were empowered by the Spirit of God to fast for 40 days include Elijah, Paul, and Moses. At the end of Jesus' fasting, when He was weak and hungry, the devil appeared to tempt Him, commanding Him—just as he does to us through our thoughts every day. The difference here was that Satan appeared to Jesus physically.

Indeed, God is Love, for He allowed His Son to face the same fierce struggles that every human being encounters daily. Jesus faced the risk of failure and losing eternal life just like us if He had forgotten where He came from, His mission, and His identity. We also risk losing eternal life when we forget that we are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God, called to declare His praises. If we forget these truths, we return to darkness and lose eternal life.

Jesus knew this being—originally created as Lucifer or the morning star—who had lived with Him in heaven for many years. Satan is actually beautiful in appearance, contrary to the common depiction of him with horns and a terrifying face. He was created with extraordinary beauty, and many would not follow him if he looked as frightening as the pictures we see today.

Satan opened his mouth and said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread."

This is not a temptation for us because even if we sat on a pile of stones all day, we couldn't turn them into bread. But Jesus could easily do it without anyone knowing how. However, Jesus knew that His divine power was not for His personal benefit but for helping others. We later see Him feeding more than 5,000 people.

Moreover, Jesus was already God and did not need to prove it to anyone, especially Satan. Jesus responded, "It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then Satan took Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem, and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. He said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"



Satan knows the Scriptures and can quote them better than any human, with over 6,000 years of experience. Here, he quoted Psalm 91 but twisted its meaning to suit his agenda. Every time Jesus quoted Scripture, Satan followed with his own deceptive interpretation.

It is important to remember that knowing the Scriptures is not enough if our hearts do not change to obey Jesus. Jesus knew that what Satan wanted was not God's will. There is no need to put oneself in danger without a valid reason. Jesus came to save people through love, not through magic or stunts. Jesus responded, "It is written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Finally, Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain—possibly higher than Mount Kilimanjaro—and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, such as Tanzania, Kenya, the United States, Japan, and Australia, along with their splendor. He said, "All this I will give you if you bow down and worship me."

Jesus replied, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."

We learn that if we fully commit to God, we can also drive Satan away. Satan is stronger than us if we rely on our own strength, so we are advised to stand behind Jesus.

After the third temptation, Satan left Jesus temporarily, but he continued to follow Him throughout His life. Jesus remained victorious.

Pray for the Holy Spirit – If we want to know Christ better, we must pray for the Holy Spirit, just as the apostles did when the Spirit was poured out on them. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit because we are not safe for even a single hour without obeying God's Word.

Questions:

1. Who asked John the Baptist questions?

2. How was Jesus different from other humans?

3. What were the three temptations Jesus faced?

4. How did Jesus respond to the devil's temptations?

5. What does this lesson teach you?

6. What should you do when tempted?

7. How did the Holy Spirit appear at Jesus' baptism?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 4:3-4.

[3,4] The tempter came to Him and said, If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread. But He answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

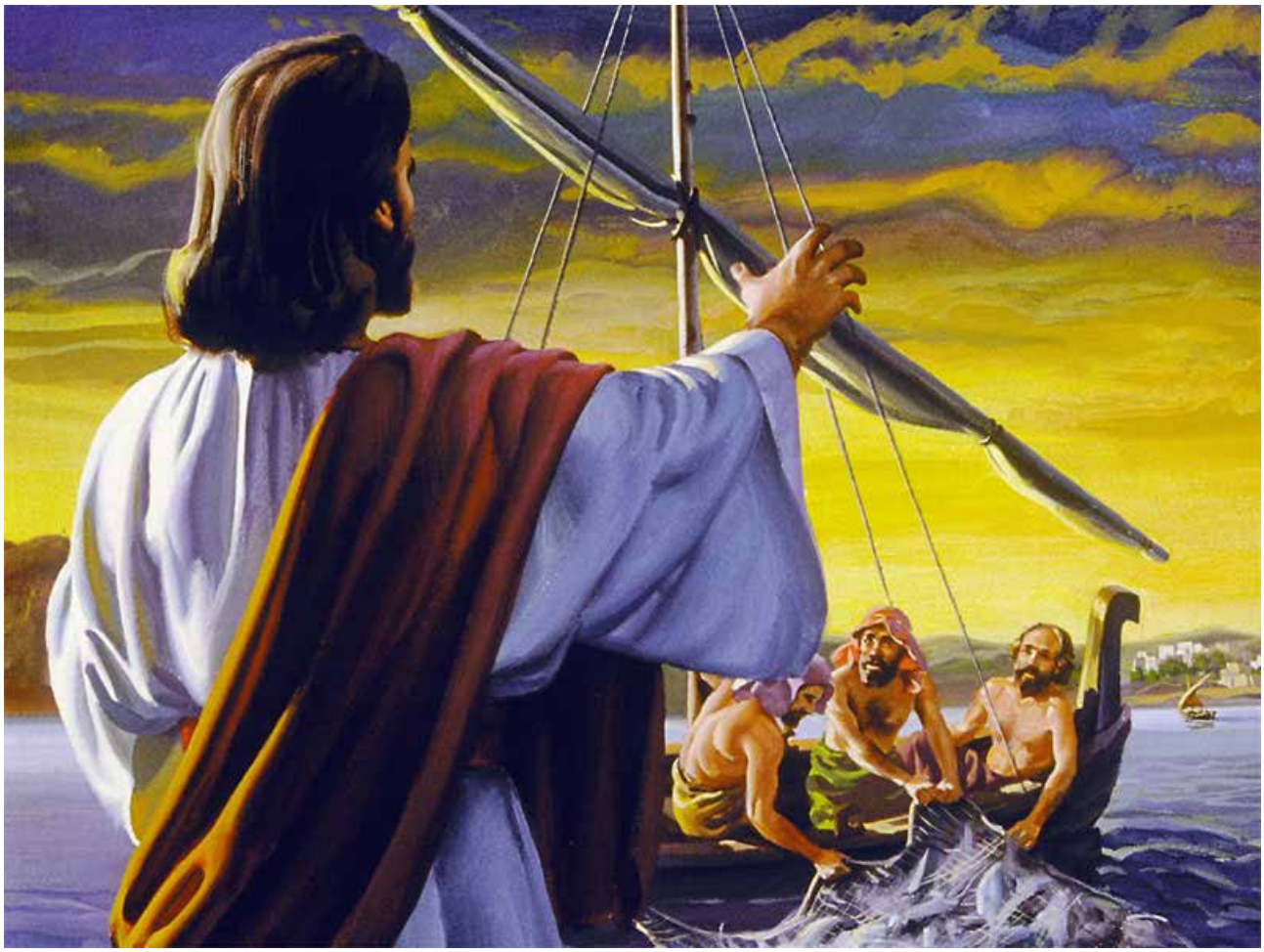
Prayer: Thank You because You are the Bread of Life. Help us to live by every Word that comes from Your mouth. Help us to be generous to those without food and not to be greedy.

Activity: Teach children not to be greedy about food. Show good manners by sharing your food with others and eating moderately. Create a consistent meal routine. Teach your children about nutrition, generosity, etc.

DAY 201 (July 19)

TOPIC: The Calling of the First Disciples

(1 John 1)



After fasting for 40 days and overcoming the devil's temptations, Jesus returned to His cousin, John the Baptist, at the Jordan River. He mingled with the people and did not perform any miracles at the Jordan. John was a prophet of God sent to testify about the Light—that is, to bear witness to Jesus so that all might believe in Him, for the world at that time did not recognize Him. Jesus came to His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet, to all who received Him then and even today, He gave the right to become children of God. Isn't that a great blessing? By believing in His Name, we are born again—not by blood or flesh but as children of God. God sent Jesus to become flesh and dwell among us so that we could behold His glory—the glory of the One and Only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus walked around telling people that the Kingdom of God was near. He often withdrew from the crowds to pray, seeking quiet places for solitude and communication with God. He loved to pray on mountains, in gardens, and in other quiet places. He even prayed all night before choosing His disciples. The following day, as Jesus stood on the riverbank, John pointed at Him and declared loudly, “This is the One I spoke about when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.’” From His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the One and Only Son, who is Himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known.

John continued to testify when people were sent to ask him, “Who are you? Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah?” He answered that he was “the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” People must have looked at Jesus repeatedly, moving closer to observe Him. The following day, John saw Jesus passing by again and said, “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” He told the people, “This is the One I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.’ I myself did not know Him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that He might be revealed to Israel.”

John testified that he saw the Spirit of God come down from heaven like a dove and remain on Jesus. He explained that the One who sent him to baptize with water told him, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” These were powerful words. The Jews understood them better than we might, as they were accustomed to offering lambs as sacrifices daily on the altar. They would slaughter the lambs, draining their blood, and then burn the lambs as offerings. This practice symbolized the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Without Jesus dying for our sins, we would still be lost in them. We thank God for the Lamb, for the wages of sin is death.

The next day, John was again with two of his disciples when he saw Jesus walking by. He said again, “Look, the Lamb of God!” Some people only saw a young man with a kind smile and a gentle nature, but they did not perceive anything beyond that. They wondered, “How can this young man take away the sins of the world?” However, John’s disciples were spiritually prepared because they had dedicated themselves to fearing and worshiping God. Today, when we hear these words, we understand how precious and life-saving they are. Upon hearing John’s words, two of his disciples left him and followed Jesus to speak with Him privately.

When Jesus turned and saw them following Him, He wanted to test whether they understood what they were doing or if they were simply following the crowd. He asked them, "What do you seek?" The disciples replied, "Rabbi, where are You staying?" ("Rabbi" means teacher.) Jesus said to them, "Come, and you will see." They went with Him and stayed with Him that day—it was around four in the afternoon. They heard extraordinary teachings—sweet, true, and life-giving words.

Andrew and John, two fishermen, had received John's baptism and were eager to learn more. That one day with Jesus was enough to open their eyes. Although Andrew is the first disciple mentioned and the first to follow Jesus, he seems to have been a quiet man. He is often described as Simon Peter's brother, even though he was the one who introduced Peter to Jesus. Everyone has unique gifts in the Lord's kingdom, and Andrew's gift was bringing people to Jesus. Have you ever asked yourself what your spiritual gifts are? There are questions you can answer to help you discover your gifts as you continue to seek the Lord! By the way, how many people fasted for 40 days in the Bible?

Jesus chose these fishermen—ordinary men by society's standards—but when they sat at Jesus' feet, they were no longer ordinary. Spending time with Jesus grants the greatest knowledge, transforming even the most humble people. Worldly knowledge, power, and authority have led many to abandon God or oppress others. The apostles entered a life of many challenges, and they often questioned whether the One they followed was truly God. They wondered why they endured hardships and lived in poverty while following Him. They even saw that their Master had no place to lay His head. But once they truly understood who He was, their doubts disappeared. After Jesus' resurrection, they did not return to school, seminaries, or business but devoted themselves fully to the mission He entrusted to them.

Education is valuable—hold on to it tightly. However, God knows that worldly education rarely leads people to salvation or obedience to Him. Higher education often fosters pride, causing many to misuse their talents and believe they are self-sufficient. Today, if you are in school, remember that the most important lesson is to know and obey Scripture. That is the foundation for elementary, secondary, and higher education.

Jesus came to accomplish the ultimate task—dying for our sins. From Adam's sin to the last sin ever committed, Jesus took it all upon Himself. He removes the sins of everyone in the world—every boy or girl who believes in Him. Beyond that, He breaks the power of sin, giving us the strength to resist temptation. Soon, sin will be defeated forever. Jesus did not hesitate, whether it was leaving His heavenly glory or continuing with the plan of salvation. Step by

step, He moved forward until the day He was crucified. He did not come down from the cross because He wanted you and me to be saved.

Even today, many people have chosen to become disciples of Jesus and spread His message. Some have left good jobs, family, and friends to preach the gospel far away. Others have faced persecution at school or suffered loss because they follow Jesus. Yet, Jesus continues to call people today. He is seeking boys and girls who will become "fishers of men." God hears the prayers of all who seek Him in truth. He provides the strength we all need and fills our hearts with love, joy, peace, and holiness.

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus not need to prove to Satan that He was the Son of God?

2. What did Jesus tell His disciples about who He was?

3. Who takes away the sins of the world?

4. What answer did Jesus give when the disciples asked, "Rabbi, where are You staying?"

5. Describe the work of John the Baptist.

6. Do you know that even today, Jesus is calling you to be His disciple?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 1:14-15.

[14,15] The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me, for He was before me.

Prayer: Thank You our Father for becoming flesh, Emmanuel, God with us. We ask that Your example of prayer before doing anything may come into our daily lives. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: What is prayer? How do we pray? What does it mean to pray all night? Then let everyone pray. Let each one learn how to pray!

DAY 202 (July 20)

TOPIC: Calling the First Disciples

(John 1)



Andrew, the first disciple of Jesus, went to call his brother Simon Peter after hearing from his teacher, John, about Jesus. With excitement and joy, he told Simon, "We have found the Messiah." The Messiah means "The Anointed One" in Hebrew, which also refers to the King. In Greek, the Messiah is called Christ. Andrew brought Simon Peter to Jesus. Even today, we should bring our brothers, friends, and even our parents to Jesus. Let us not keep such joyful and life-changing news to ourselves.

When Jesus looked at Simon, He said, "You are Simon, son of John; you shall be called Cephas," which means Peter, or Rock. These two brothers, Andrew and Simon, were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, using nets. When Jesus called them to follow Him, He said He would make them fishers of men. As

they followed Jesus, they saw the sons of Zebedee—John and James—repairing their fishing nets in their father's boat. Jesus also called them, and they left their father and the boat to follow Him. Are you ready to follow Jesus today?

These disciples were very different in character, yet they were ordinary people. They did not hold university degrees or come from influential families. Jesus chose common people who were willing to learn at His feet. Even today, we should be humble and willing to learn so that we can be like our Teacher, Jesus.

We learn from the apostles that people do not need to be alike or agree on everything to work together. History shows that accepting Jesus and His Word has transformed more lives and hearts than anything else on earth or in heaven.

The next day, Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, and the prophets also wrote about—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael, surprised and without deceit, said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" This question makes us wonder about the kind of place Nazareth was! Philip simply told him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said, "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" This is a wonderful quality we should all desire! Nathanael, astonished, asked, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." At that moment, Nathanael realized who Jesus was and declared, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!"

Jesus responded, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these!" Then He added, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

This hopeful promise of blessing will soon be fulfilled in the clouds of glory, as we are living at the edge of history.

Later, Jesus called Matthew, also known as Levi, who was at his tax-collecting booth, and others. In total, He gathered twelve disciples who became known as apostles. Their names were Andrew, John, Simon Peter, James (son of

Zebedee), Matthew, Nathanael (also called Bartholomew), Philip, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus (or Judas, son of James), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. It seems Judas Iscariot may have come on his own, possibly seeking fame, but there is no record of Jesus directly calling him.

These disciples came to Jesus to learn, and then they were sent out as apostles to teach others. However, they continued to learn throughout their ministry. The disciples were very different in personality. You do not have to be identical or agree on everything to do God's work. Interestingly, Jesus nicknamed James and John "Sons of Thunder." Have you ever wondered what it meant to be called a "Son of Thunder" by Jesus Himself? The Bible will reveal more as we continue learning.

Jesus changed the names of some disciples when they came to Him, symbolizing a change in their character. Even today, Jesus wants us to have new names or transformed characters.

The disciples of Jesus came from all walks of life. Later, He appointed seventy others and sent them out two by two to preach. These seventy returned with great joy. Going in pairs was helpful because they could encourage and support each other. The 120 followers who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were also His disciples. Many people testified about the great things Jesus had done for them—things too many and too wonderful to fully describe!

In Revelation 12:11, we are told they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. Those who were healed were instructed to tell others about how Jesus had delivered them.

A disciple is someone who fully surrenders to Jesus and grows in their relationship with Him every day. A disciple strives to become like their teacher in all areas—spiritual, physical, economic, and social. With the help of the Holy Spirit, a disciple puts Jesus first in every aspect of life—at home, at work, at school, and in worship.

While a convert accepts a teacher's message, a disciple not only accepts it but also teaches others to become both converts and disciples. Being a disciple requires self-denial and a willingness to carry one's cross and follow Jesus completely.

Some people wanted to follow Jesus but were unwilling to give up everything, like the rich young ruler, the man who wanted to bury his father first, and the one who wanted to bid farewell to his family. However, others, like

Nicodemus, later changed and became true disciples.

Jesus also had female disciples, such as Mary, Susanna, Martha, and Joanna, who followed and supported His ministry. Some non-Jews, like the Samaritan woman at the well and the Roman centurion, also became His followers.

Jesus traveled throughout Galilee with His disciples, teaching in synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. Some villages were left without any sick people because everyone had been healed.

Jesus came to give people eternal life. Although those He healed or raised eventually died again, He introduced them to the gift of everlasting life. Eternal life is not just living forever—it is knowing Jesus. As He said, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

Jesus welcomed everyone—rich or poor, young or old, male or female—offering them love, kindness, and hope.

Questions:

1. Who was the first disciple of Jesus?

2. Who else were among the first disciples of Jesus?

3. What did Nathanael say when Jesus spoke to him?

4. Which towns did Jesus visit to preach?

5. How many disciples did Jesus choose?

6. What is the opposite of eternal life?

7. Are you a convert or a disciple of Jesus?

May God bless you, child and young person of Jesus!

Key Text: John 1:1-3.

[1-3] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Prayer: Thank You our Creator for making us Your disciples. Help us also to be light and life to our fellow human beings according to Your will. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama about the calling of the first disciples, starting with Andrew calling his friends, etc. You may include those who wanted to be disciples but could not, or those told to witness in their villages.

DAY 203 (July 21)

TOPIC: Jesus Performs His First Miracle at the Wedding in Cana

(John 2)

After calling His disciples, Jesus attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee as an ordinary person, a neighbor, a friend, or a relative. He began His ministry by mingling with people in their joy. He wanted to break down the barriers that separated people in society so that they could understand that all human beings are one family under God. It had been 400 years without a prophet, and now people saw John the Baptist and then Jesus, both of whom were transforming their lives. These two appeared to live simple and humble lives, lacking material wealth.

Even in our modern society, which values wealth, prestige, and self-promotion, Jesus' example of humility and simplicity remains an essential model for us to follow. If Jesus had come as a King, how would He have taught us humility and the service of others with love and compassion? Furthermore, if Jesus had come as God in all His glory, what human being could have withstood the majesty and splendor of heaven without being consumed? Truly, our most powerful sermon is not what we say but how we live and act.

It was Jesus' custom to introduce His disciples to various friends, and He accompanied them to different places, including the wedding at Cana. In those days, people celebrated weddings with their neighbors over several days. Young people of His age began to hear that He had become a remarkable preacher. They started discussing how John the Baptist had identified Him as the Messiah. These conversations continued as people enjoyed the wedding festivities.

At that wedding, children and youth were not excluded as they often are today. Instead, they were part of the celebration. It is wrong to exclude children from weddings, as these are sacred events from which they should learn. Perhaps invitation cards did not exist in those days. Excluding children from weddings is inappropriate. The excuse of shielding adults to engage in inappropriate behaviors such as drinking alcohol or the claim of saving on food expenses holds no merit before God.



When the grape juice or wine ran out, His mother became concerned, fearing that the joyful celebration would turn into embarrassment. She approached Jesus and said, “They have no wine.” Even today, if you host a celebration, you would not want the food or drinks to run out midway, but instead, you would want to provide abundantly so that people would later say the event was excellent. However, be moderate and save for starting your life!

Mary knew her Son had some power to meet this need. Jesus replied, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come,” referring to God’s divine plan. Despite this, Jesus loved His mother, though He prioritized obedience to God. Mary, trusting in Jesus, told the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” The workers obeyed her instructions.

There were six large stone water jars used for ceremonial washing, each holding about 100 liters—totaling approximately 600 liters. Jesus instructed them to fill the jars with water, and they filled them to the brim. Then He told them to draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet (the Master of Ceremony, or MC).

The servants must have wondered whether following Jesus’ instructions would really solve the issue of providing a new drink. However, when the water was transformed into fine wine, the master of the banquet tasted it—without knowing where it had come from—and remarked, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

What greater gift could the bride and groom have received than this? They were blessed to have the Lord Himself attend their wedding and provide them with a wonderful drink. Jesus always gives the best, bringing joy and peace to our hearts. For Jesus, we—humanity or the Christian church—are His bride, and He desires that we experience joy. He delights in us as His bride and aims to take all who accept Him to His Father’s house, where we will live with Him forever.

Considering that 40% of people who start drinking alcohol become chronic alcoholics and that the Bible states drunkards will not enter heaven (as mentioned in the book of Revelation), we do not believe that Jesus turned all that water into alcoholic wine. Instead, He made it into a pure and refreshing grape drink. The Bible says, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whoever is deceived by it is not wise.”

About 50% of all road accidents are linked to alcohol consumption. Domestic violence and other evils, as people often say, are fueled by alcohol abuse.

Many people consider alcohol to be a form of evil or even the devil itself. Heavenly wisdom instructs us not to consume even a single drop of alcohol for pleasure.

The term “wine” used in this story had two meanings: either fermented wine (alcoholic) or unfermented grape juice. Wine also symbolizes His blood, which saves us from our sins. Since Jesus Himself was a Nazarite, it would be highly inappropriate for His saving blood to be associated with an intoxicating substance that destroys lives.

This was the first miracle Jesus performed, revealing His glory, and His disciples believed in Him, reducing their doubts. People shared this story repeatedly.

Remember, the success of a rebuke depends largely on the spirit in which it is given. Do not underestimate the power of sincere prayer. Pray to have a humble and meek spirit so that the angels of God may go before you, work on the hearts you are trying to reach, and soften them with heavenly impressions so that your efforts may be fruitful.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of a miracle?
2. Is drinking alcohol a sin? Can you explain using Bible verses?
3. How should a wedding celebration be conducted?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 2:7-9.

[7-9] Jesus said to them, Fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. Then He said to them, Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. So they did. When the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine (not knowing where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called the bridegroom,

Prayer: Father, thank You for blessing marriage at the wedding in Cana and even in the Garden of Eden. Help us to honor Your house and marriage as You tell us. Bless today’s marriages, and when the time comes, help us to choose partners who will support us in this life. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A drama play. Place six jars or containers and fill them with water. Let students taste before and after thanksgiving, then show the miracle, etc.

DAY 204 (July 22)

TOPIC: Jesus Overturns the Temple Tables and Cleanses the Temple.

(John 2)

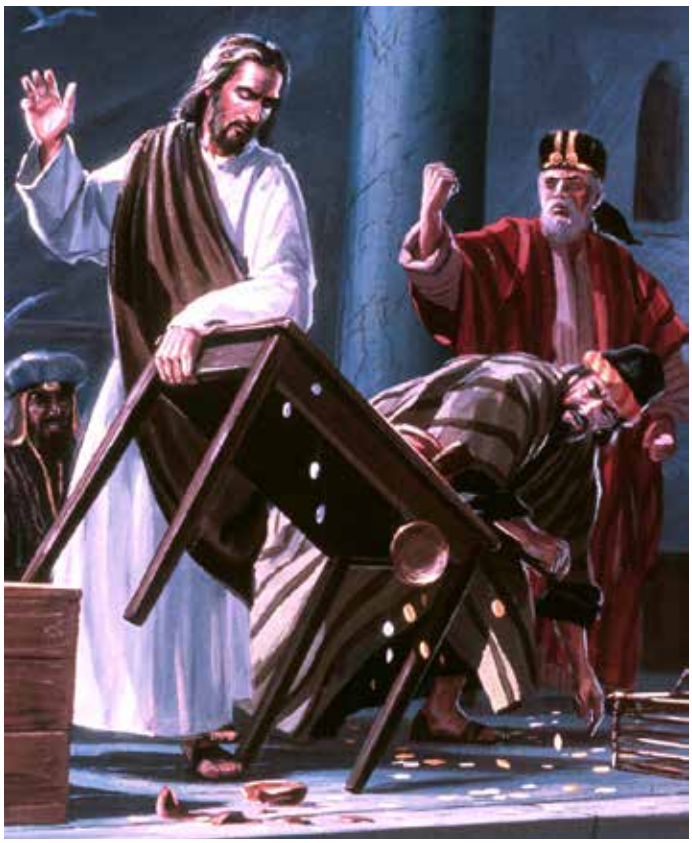
Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding, showing that marriage is important and affirming that getting married is a priority. The best marriage is the one with three corners: God first, then the husband and wife. No one should live with a man or woman without getting married. A recognized marriage is one conducted in a place of worship, in a government office, or through traditional rites.

Another lesson we learn is that for a celebration to be honorable, it must be conducted with decency. Many children today are not invited to weddings because people have introduced much wickedness into these events. They feel ashamed to do these things during the day, so they do them in the middle of the night. Late-night parties also exhaust children because they get sleepy.

When we hold weddings, we must be mindful of our conduct during the celebrations. We must remain Christians during the celebrations, just as we are during the wedding service. We should ask ourselves: If Jesus were to come where I am now, would He be pleased or saddened by the way we are conducting this important event? Do our clothes, our words, the food we eat, and our actions reflect purity?

The masters of ceremonies should be cautious and avoid saying things that do not glorify God, even if they are humorous or entertaining. They should not just be called “MCs” (Masters of Ceremony), but should be people who speak words that bless others.
We live in times that require us to be careful with how we spend our money and to avoid hosting extravagant celebrations. The resources spent on lavish parties could help those in need by paying school fees, providing food, clothing, better housing, or supporting the gospel.

When the wedding ended, Jesus left Cana of Galilee and went to Capernaum with His mother and brothers. This was the city where Jesus performed many miracles. His first disciples, including Andrew, came from here, and they were the ones who invited Him to their home. Jesus is pleased when we invite Him. He visited this city repeatedly, performing many miracles.



Later, during the Passover feast, Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem. There, He found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices. The noise from these animals and the traders turned the temple into a place of chaos and commotion. Others were exchanging money to obtain the temple shekel, known as the drachma, to pay the temple tax. The bargaining and negotiations made it difficult for worshippers to hear the temple proceedings. There was a kind of exploitation involved in obtaining this temple currency.

The priests knew there was corruption but did not care. They accepted bribes from the traders and partnered with them in this dishonesty and theft. Those who traveled long distances without animals for sacrifice had to buy them at the temple, where prices were inflated.

Jesus made a whip of cords and drove everyone out of the temple along with the animals. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told them, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of trade.” He declared that His house would be called a house of prayer, not a den of thieves.

When people saw His face and the glory on Him, they fled and did not dare argue with Him. The priests had lost their relationship with God to the point that they forgot the sacrifices represented the coming Messiah—Jesus. Even today, we cannot remove sin from our hearts by ourselves, but only Jesus can help us do so. However, the traders and priests did not want to lose their power or their financial gains, so they grew more resentful of Jesus’ actions.

His disciples remembered the prophecy, “Zeal for Your house will consume Me.” The Jews demanded a sign from Him to justify His actions. Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” They were astonished because the temple had taken 46 years to build and was still incomplete—how could He rebuild it in three days? They failed to understand that He was speaking about His body.

His disciples only understood this after He rose from the dead on the third day. However, the Lord could rebuild even a physical temple in a moment if He wished. Jesus wanted to teach us that we should not turn God's house into a place for personal profit or entertainment.

Do we whisper while in church? Do we play games, or use our phones or tablets in ways that distract us during worship? Do we wander around while the service is ongoing? Do we understand the purpose of attending worship, or do we go just because our parents bring us, or because it is a family tradition?

The devil can accompany people to church if their intention is not to worship God but to fulfill their own desires. God's house is a house of prayer—not a place for business or personal activities. It was a strange sight to see people fleeing from the temple into the streets of Jerusalem. The news spread everywhere, and people remembered John the Baptist's words: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Many people believed in Jesus during this Passover festival because of the signs He performed. However, Jesus did not entrust Himself to them because He knew their hearts—how easily people can change and be insincere. He did not need anyone to tell Him about human thoughts because He already knew their innermost thoughts.

When people approached Him with hidden motives, trying to test Him, He knew their intentions even before they arrived. Yet, instead of exposing them, He sought ways to help them find salvation.

The same problems present in those days—pride, hypocrisy, spiritual blindness, lack of compassion, and wickedness—still exist today. Let us pray for God to change us. It is best to stay centered on the gospel: on one side is hypocrisy, on the other is worldliness, but the middle is the cross—being in Christ. Let us pray for His help!

Jesus did not perform His first miracle at the prestigious Sanhedrin council in Jerusalem but in a humble village, to bring joy to both children and adults. This reveals His deep desire to bring happiness to people's lives.

If a few people gather with one purpose, burdened for lost souls, and offer sincere, earnest prayers, the results will be remarkable.

Questions:

1. What does the phrase “Whatever He tells you, do it” mean to us today?

2. What did the master of the feast say about the wine?

3. Why do you think Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding?

4. Why should children be invited to weddings?

5. Why should the Master of Ceremony (MC) be careful with his words instead of speaking nonsense?

6. Why is marriage important?

7. Where did the institution of marriage originate?

8. Discuss how to conduct yourself in church using Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, Chapter 55. If you do not have it, write to us, and we will send you a copy.

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 2:14-16.

[14-16] And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting. And when He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise.”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You. Help us to respect Your house as You command us. Bless our churches today, and help us to do Your work. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Role-play of the whip of cords. And discussions on conduct in the house of the Lord. (See the book Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, Chapter 54)

DAY 205 (July 23)

TOPIC: Nicodemus, a Disciple of Jesus Who Came at Night

(John 3)

After Jesus overturned the tables and people scattered in fear, they later returned and resumed their business as usual, without concern. They were urged to reflect and stop the noise in the Lord's house. Some were bewildered by the fear that had gripped them, causing them to flee. Others were embarrassed because they had been mocked for running away, while some harbored resentment against Jesus in their hearts. The priests did not like what had happened because they had personal financial gains from the temple trade. They felt their income and status were being undermined. The temple generated more revenue than any other business. The entire economy of Israel was centered on the offering of sacrifices. Sacrificial animals were expensive, which led to the loud cries of those selling them. This noise diminished the glory of the Lamb of God, who came to be the ultimate sacrifice.

To them, the temple was a place to make money, not to meditate on salvation. However, some people began to believe in Him or ponder His works. One of these individuals was Nicodemus, a Pharisee leader and a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin. When Israel was independent, the Sanhedrin was the highest court of the land. This council enacted and enforced religious and civil laws. However, under Roman rule, its power was somewhat limited, requiring Roman approval for major decisions like capital punishment. The Sanhedrin comprised priests, scribes, and elders, with the high priest typically serving as its leader among the 71 members. The Pharisees, who numbered about 6,000, were known as religious authorities. Other religious leaders included the Scribes and the Priests.

Nicodemus, having heard about Jesus at the temple, wanted to learn more about Him. Fearing public scrutiny, he sought Jesus at night. After inquiring about His whereabouts, he found that Jesus would retreat to certain places at night to rest and pray. Remember, it is better to seek Jesus secretly than not to seek Him at all! Nicodemus showed some courage compared to his fellow Pharisees. When he found Jesus, he began by addressing Him with respect, saying, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Nicodemus

wanted to engage Jesus in a deep conversation, but Jesus, who knows people's hearts, did not need anyone to tell Him about others because He already knew them fully.



To become a Christian, we do not need to engage in debates or arguments; instead, we need a transformed heart and mind to have the true love of Jesus. Jesus told Nicodemus that miracles alone were not enough to enter the kingdom of God. He said, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." Nicodemus did not need vast knowledge to understand this; rather, he needed a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit. Without being born again from above, we cannot comprehend the kingdom of heaven. Nicodemus, confused, asked how a person could be born again when they were old—how could someone enter their mother's womb a second time? Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit."

Jesus compared the work of the Spirit to the wind: although unseen, its effects are clearly visible. Similarly, the work of the Spirit in a born-again person is evident through their good works and transformed life. Many today believe that God is the Father of everyone and think there is no need to belong to a particular fellowship. While it is true that God loves everyone, being born of water and the Spirit makes us His children in a special way, initiating a new life. This new birth compels believers to join a community of faith where they grow spiritually by following God's commands as outlined in the Bible. It is difficult to be a Christian without being part of a fellowship—how can others see our love if we do not gather together?

Some people are baptized by water and become church members, but they have not truly accepted Jesus as their Savior. This is also wrong. Nicodemus was puzzled, asking how these things could be. Jesus, amazed that a teacher of Israel did not understand such matters, said, “If I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” Jesus referenced the story of Moses lifting the bronze serpent in the wilderness, saying, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him.”

Jesus then spoke the most profound words ever recorded: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” We can personalize this verse by inserting our names—whether David, Daniel, Paul, or Neema—affirming that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God’s love is not limited to any one nation; He loves the whole world, including you and me. By believing in Jesus, we receive eternal life immediately while awaiting immortality at His second coming. Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save it. Those who believe in Him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are already condemned.

Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand that the Holy Spirit works in a heart open to Him, transforming thoughts and desires. This miraculous work is invisible but evident through the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Nicodemus, like many others, thought external religious acts were enough for salvation. However, he realized that true righteousness comes from God.

Nicodemus secretly followed Jesus and even defended Him in the Sanhedrin. After Jesus’ death, he publicly brought spices for His burial, alongside Joseph of Arimathea. From that moment, we believe he emerged from secrecy to become a bold disciple of Jesus.

Jesus and His disciples continued their ministry in Judea, baptizing many people—more than John the Baptist’s disciples. John reminded his followers that his mission was to prepare the way for Jesus, not to seek his own glory. He said, “He must increase, and I must decrease.”

Praying for Others Draws Us Closer to God
When we carry the burden of others’ souls in our prayers, our Christian lives become more sincere, fervent, and prayerful.

Questions:

1. Why is it wrong to make noise in church?

2. Who was Nicodemus?

3. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus he must do to enter the kingdom of God?

4. Do you believe in Jesus?

5. Have you confessed Jesus with your mouth?

6. Have you accepted Jesus and asked for the strength to obey Him?

7. Why was there competition between John's disciples and Jesus' disciples?

8. How did John respond to his disciples?

9. How was Jesus baptized according to the Scriptures, and why should we be baptized as He was?

Take time to reflect on the meaning of being born again!

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 3:16, 17.

[16,17] For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father that You did not send Your Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Forgive our sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Help the children make a poster of John 3:15,16. Choose two students as Jesus and Nicodemus and let them have the conversation of John 3.

DAY 206 (July 24)

TOPIC: The Samaritan Woman of Sychar at the Well

(John 4)



Jesus knew that the Pharisees were envious after hearing that He had more disciples than John the Baptist. So, He left Judea and went to a city in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land Jacob had given to his son, where Jacob's well was located. The Jews considered themselves superior to the Samaritans, even though they had once been one people. They viewed befriending the Samaritans as a betrayal of their nation and harbored hatred against them for over 400 years.

Jesus, tired and thirsty, sat by the well at about noon, while His disciples went to town to buy food—perhaps cooked food from local eateries. This shows us that Jesus was human—He felt hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

A Samaritan woman came to the well, and Jesus intended for her to receive the gospel. Jesus had planned this journey specifically to meet her and offer her the words of salvation. He asked her for a drink of water. The woman was surprised because, from His clothing, she recognized Him as a Jew. She wondered how a Jew, their enemy, could ask a Samaritan woman for water. Jews and Samaritans avoided each other as much as possible.

Although giving water to someone—even an enemy—was a basic duty, the woman was still amazed by His request. The Samaritans only accepted the first five books of Moses and did not recognize other prophets. They had their temples but worshiped differently from the Jews.

Remember, the city of Samaria was established by Ahab and his wife Jezebel. They abandoned the worship of the true God and led the nation astray. The Samaritan woman saw Jesus as an ordinary Jewish traveler—dusty and thirsty like anyone else.

Jesus replied to the woman, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman was puzzled—how could Jesus get water from a well over 100 feet deep without a vessel? She asked, "Where do you get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?"

To her, Jacob was a great patriarch, and the well had served them for over a thousand years. She could not imagine anyone being greater than Jacob. Yet, something about Jesus' face—His love and compassion—must have touched her heart, preventing her from running away despite the social norms.

In those days, gender and ethnic barriers were strong—women did not converse with men in public. Are we the kind of people who build bridges with others, regardless of their tribe or background, or do we promote divisions based on our differences?

Jesus told her, "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The Jews were familiar with this prophecy from Isaiah 49:10, which described God as the fountain of living water.

The woman's curiosity grew. She gazed at Jesus, realizing He was no ordinary man. The Holy Spirit worked in her heart, and she became willing to believe and follow the Scriptures. She eagerly asked for the living water so that she would not have to keep returning to the well.

She said, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus did not waste time in debates or arguments with the Samaritan woman. Instead, He focused on the message of salvation. He told her to call her husband, and when she replied that she had no husband, Jesus revealed her life: she had five husbands, and the man she was living with was not her husband. Shocked, she acknowledged, "Sir, I see that You are a prophet!"

The woman tried to change the subject by discussing religious differences. She said, "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Which is correct?"

Jesus patiently gave her a simple Bible study. He told her that a time was coming when true worship would not be about location but about worshiping the Father in Spirit and truth. He explained that the Jews understood what they worshiped, but what mattered was having Jesus in their hearts, not where they worshiped.

The woman mentioned that she knew the Messiah would come and explain everything. Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am He!”

At that moment, the disciples returned from town and were surprised to find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman with a questionable moral reputation. However, they did not question Him. They offered Jesus the food they had bought, but He responded, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” The disciples wondered if someone had brought Him food, but Jesus explained, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.”

Jesus knew it was time to harvest the soul of the Samaritan woman. He reminded His disciples that the harvest was ready, but the laborers were few. Even today, many people are ready to receive the gospel, but there are few willing to share it.



Both sowers—those who teach the Word—and reapers—those who lead people to accept Christ—will rejoice together. Jesus stressed the importance of reaching those who had never heard the gospel, not just nurturing those already within the church.

The woman, overwhelmed by her encounter, left her water jar behind and ran back to town. She told everyone, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” Many Samaritans believed in Jesus because of her testimony.

Jesus stayed with them for two days, and many more

believed, declaring, “We no longer believe just because of what you said. We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man truly is the Savior of the world.”

Jesus’ willingness to spend time with the Samaritans broke the cultural norms of the Jews, who avoided such interactions. Even today, every human being needs the good news of salvation.

Despite walking a long distance, Jesus made the journey to reach one humble Samaritan woman, who then became a missionary to her entire village.

Jesus calls each of us today—whether young or old—to be His followers and share His love with others. We should not limit our outreach to people like ourselves, but extend it to everyone. The disciples later returned to Samaria, following Jesus’ example, and preached the gospel again.

When selfishness dies in our hearts, a strong desire to save others will grow. This desire will lead to persistent prayer and sincere efforts to reach those who are lost.

Questions:

1. Jesus went to Samaria to reach one person. What does this teach you?

2. Where was Sychar?

3. What questions did the Samaritan woman ask Jesus?

4. “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few”—what does this mean?

5. What does “Jesus is the living water” mean to you today?

6. How did Jesus break down ethnic barriers?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 4:24-26.

[24-26] God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to

her, “I who speak to you am He.”

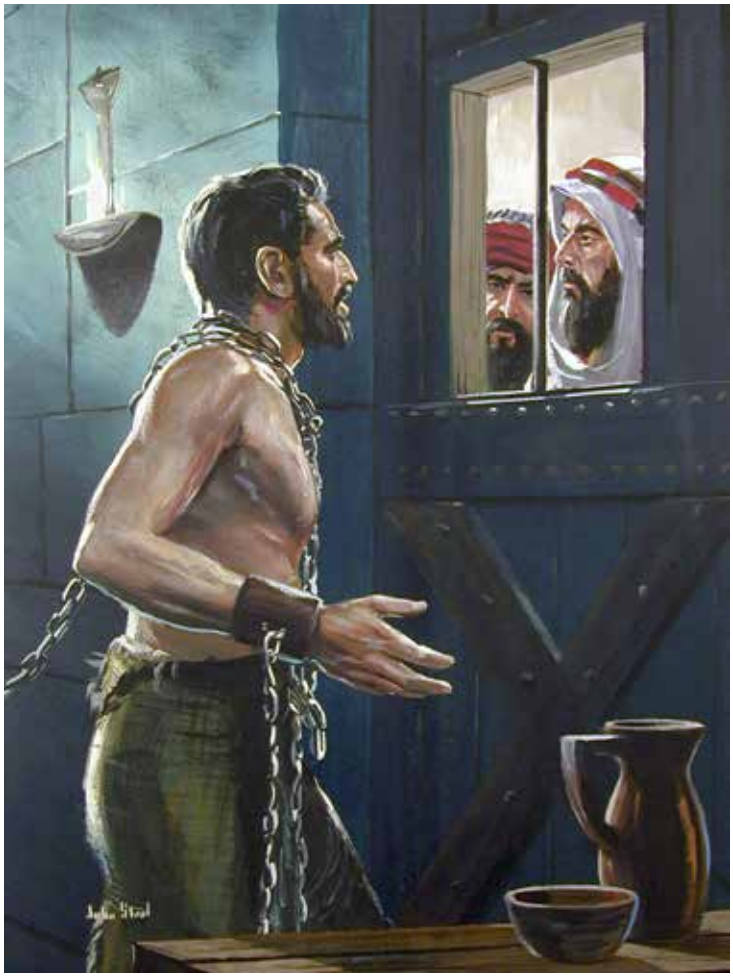
Prayer: Thank You Lord for the living water that springs up within us forever. Help us to worship You in spirit and truth. Help us to tell others about the One who is the Living Water. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: John 4 is about Jesus giving “living water” to the Samaritan woman at the well, spiritual fulfillment, and God’s love for all people. Prepare a craft activity with “cups of living water” made from paper, where people write things that bring joy, and then discuss questions about joy and fulfillment in this story. Whoever drinks this water will never need other water!

DAY 207 (July 25)

TOPIC: John is Imprisoned and Killed

(John 3, Luke 3, and John 4)



John continued to preach repentance and instructed people on the true repentance they should practice. He did not refrain from telling Herod the truth. Herod Antipas, the king of Galilee, imprisoned John the Baptist because John had told him that it was unlawful to take his brother's wife, Herodias. Although Herod wanted to kill him, he feared the people because they respected and recognized John as a prophet.

John led a life of self-denial, while many people of that time lived indulgently and did not seek the kingdom of God. Herod's wife hated John and wanted to kill him, but Herod respected John as a servant of God. However, like King Ahab, Herod had the weakness of failing to uphold justice and of listening to his wife rather than God. By imprisoning John, Herod aimed to silence him and remove him to a remote prison in the mountains near the Dead Sea to appease his illegitimate wife—whom he was not lawfully married to but instead lived with as a concubine.

John the Baptist represents people who love God and will carry the message of preparation for the second coming of Jesus. These people must live a simple life of self-denial and obedience to God. For people to be saved, they must speak the truth plainly and without fear. Being great in the kingdom of heaven is not about fame, popularity, or wealth but about purity of heart and submission to God.

John the Baptist had the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Jesus to save humanity. Anyone who follows Jesus will experience suffering. John's example has comforted many who have faced trials. God provided a way of escape for Enoch and Elijah, who were taken to heaven without experiencing death. They were not better than others who suffered, but God, in His wisdom, chose to do so. Let us strive to reach heaven so that we may understand the reasons behind these differences. In all things, we must trust Him.

When Jesus heard that John was imprisoned, He went to Samaria. Poor John did not understand why this had happened while he was serving Jesus with all his heart. Doubts crept into his mind, and he questioned whether Jesus was truly the Messiah. Remember, John was also Jesus' cousin. So, he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are You the Messiah, or should we wait for another?"

Jesus told those sent to Him to return to John and report what they saw and heard: "The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." John's disciples left joyfully to deliver the hopeful message.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowd about John's role in God's work. He asked them what they had gone out to see—John was more than a prophet because he was the messenger foretold to prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus declared that among those born of women, no one was greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven had been advancing forcefully.

John was famous, and even high-ranking people sought him out. Fame can easily lead to pride, but not John. He was willing to testify about Jesus in all circumstances—whether in poverty or death. Some people tried to stir jealousy in him, asking why Jesus became more famous than he was and why Jesus did not help him out of prison. But John replied that Jesus must increase while he must decrease.

John compared himself to a friend of the bridegroom who rejoices to see the bridegroom succeed. Jesus is the Bridegroom, and John is His friend who takes joy in seeing everything go well for Him. These words continued to comfort John while in prison.

Herod left John in prison for some time, hoping it would spiritually strengthen him. Although John faced discouragement, he remained faithful to God until the end. One day, during Herod's birthday feast, after much drinking,

Herodias' daughter danced before the guests and pleased Herod. He rashly promised her anything she asked, even up to half his kingdom. Making such impulsive vows is dangerous because they can lead to evil consequences.

The young girl consulted her mother, who told her to request the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod was deeply troubled but, because of his oath and the fear of losing face before his guests, he ordered John's execution. If the guests had protested, the act would not have occurred. However, their cowardice and intoxication prevented them from taking a stand.

The gruesome request was fulfilled, and the girl presented John's head to her mother. A wise and mature person would have chosen half the kingdom over a man's head dripping with blood. Sin can lead us to horrifying acts when we stray from God's ways.

When John's disciples heard of his death, they took his body and buried it, then reported the news to Jesus. We do not fully understand why bad things happen to God's servants or why He allows them, but one day, God will reveal the reasons. For now, we trust that He is always righteous and just. Due to the cosmic conflict with Satan, God must operate within the laws of love and free will. Satan and his angels will not be destroyed until the day of judgment when humanity will judge the angels (1 Corinthians 4:9).

Although John performed no miracles, everything he said about Jesus was true. Today, whether we are children or adults, we may not have miraculous powers like Peter or Paul, but we can tell others the truth about Jesus so they can have eternal life.

After John's death, Herod lived in fear, believing that John had been resurrected when he heard of Jesus' miracles. Herod's guilty conscience robbed him of peace.

Later, Jesus traveled to Cana, where He had previously turned water into wine. A royal official whose son was seriously ill sought Jesus' help. Jesus told him, "Go, your son will live," and the man believed and went home. On his way, his servants met him and reported that his son had recovered at the exact hour Jesus spoke the words.

This miracle confirmed the royal official's faith, and he and his entire household believed in Jesus. Jesus desires us to seek a relationship with Him beyond just asking for miracles in times of trouble. He welcomes us without prejudice and wants us to trust in His promises.

John's death brought comfort to many faithful believers who suffered persecution for Jesus' name. Satan sought to discourage Jesus by killing John, but despite the sorrow, Jesus continued His mission.

Eternal life is for those who choose Jesus despite trials. Let us pray and ask God to break down the strongholds where Satan rules and to bring His truth to those who are being deceived and destroyed.

Questions:

1. What problem did the royal official have?

2. Why was John imprisoned and killed?

3. If you were a 14-year-old boy or girl, what gift would you ask for?

4. Is a 14-year-old mature enough to distinguish between their mother's wishes and God's will?

5. Why should we trust God even when we do not see signs and wonders?

6. What lessons do we learn from the life of John the Baptist?

"God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus"

Key Text: Matthew 14:12-14.

[12-14] Then John's disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out, He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for grieving with us and for having compassion on us. Heal our sorrows, for You knew the sorrow of losing Your close relative, John the Baptist.

Activity: John was ready to witness for Jesus in everything, in poverty and even in death. Discuss everything you know about this servant, and write it down.

DAY 208 (July 26)

TOPIC: Jesus Begins His Ministry in His Hometown of Nazareth

(Luke 4, Matthew 4)



Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned, so He went to Galilee, to the village of Nazareth, and then to Capernaum, a town by the sea near Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned."

From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus made it clear that His kingdom was not of this world or of war. He said His kingdom was one of love, and anyone could join it. He told the people not to worry about the Romans who ruled over them, for that was not humanity's greatest problem—sin was. If they repented and followed Him, they would secure for themselves a beautiful, eternal life. The matter of Roman rule was temporary, so He told them to love even their oppressors, and all would be well.

He said if they were asked to carry a burden for one mile, they should go two. If ordered to give their coat, they should also offer their shirt. Anyone with a hardened heart would be softened by seeing such love.

Jesus told them that one day, the kingdoms of this world would pass away, and God's kingdom of love would reign forever. The lost Garden of Eden would

be restored as paradise. Hatred would be removed because everyone would love one another sincerely. These teachings were new to them, but they spread like wildfire. The people realized no preacher had ever risen like Him. The power of the Holy Spirit drew them to Him, and they recognized that He was the Lord. They listened to Him, asked questions, and some followed Him wherever He went, finding unparalleled joy.

Although little is said about the women and children who followed Him—because not everything was recorded—many women and children accompanied and served Him, grateful for the many wonders He performed for them. Some of their husbands worked in Herod's offices. They marveled at the wisdom and solutions He provided for every problem. There was nothing He could not resolve.

They were amazed by His profound knowledge, even though He had never attended rabbinical schools. What they loved most was His care for everyone. It did not matter who approached Him—a man, a child, an elder, or a woman—He mingled with the people, showed them love and compassion, helped them, and then invited them to follow Him.

Even today, we should follow this example—not just tell people to follow Jesus while being unwilling to help them with their needs. We should not only care for our loved ones but extend our care to everyone.

Jesus held John the Baptist in high regard as God's prophet, living in a troubled world. God hands over the torch to those working in His vineyard. When one person finishes their race, others carry the light forward. Since the days of Paul or John are gone, the responsibility is now ours.

Let us avoid envy when we see that God's workers or friends seem to live more comfortable lives than ours. Being in a prominent position now does not guarantee a higher position in the kingdom of heaven. Let us have the humility of John the Baptist, who decreased so that God's work might advance. Even the apostles did their work and passed the baton to others. Today, the torch is in your hands and mine. Let us run the race with patience and faith. If we fall asleep in death, let us ensure we pass the light to others so that one day, we may inherit the eternal hope that never fades.

Jesus reflected on the responsibilities before Him, continually learning and speaking with His Father every day, even before the roosters crowed. He wanted to give hope of eternal life to the brokenhearted, help those in trouble, and heal the sick. Above all, He wanted to show the whole world the immense love of God.

He wanted to call everyone to come to God for help and forgiveness. Even today, He will give you a new life if you believe in Him. Jesus continued to proclaim the good news, telling people that the kingdom of heaven had come.

In many places He visited, John the Baptist had already prepared the way for Him. Many who heard His voice and felt His compassion found hope, peace, and joy in their hearts. He frequently quoted the prophets, showing that the Scriptures were the final authority and the voice of the living God.

Jesus knew the bitter death on the cross awaited Him. He also knew that the very people He sought to save and bless would reject and deny His love. He knew that in the end, they would crucify Him. Despite all this, He was determined to do His Father's will and fulfill all that He had been commanded.

He continually spoke to His Father and prayed for strength and courage to accomplish His mission. Even today, God wants to live with us and give us true joy, but He will not force us to trust Him. That choice is ours. God is true, He is present, and if we want to be saved, we must choose His way. He wants to save every one of us, but He respects your choice—He will not force you to love Him.

Throughout Jesus' life and during His trials, Satan tried to make Him abandon the Father's will and disrupt the plan of salvation. Jesus refused to use His divine power for personal gain. Satan even misquoted the Scriptures and tried to tempt Jesus to destroy Himself or to gain followers through miracles.

Jesus prioritized the plan of salvation over pleasing the enemy's demands. He did not want people to follow Him just because of the miracles He performed but because they had faith that He could save them from their sins and that they wanted a relationship with Him.

When Jesus began His ministry, He preached in synagogues, and many people followed Him to listen because they had never heard such powerful preaching before. He spoke as someone with authority, wisdom, and power. Even today, if you have troubles or doubts in your heart, learn to trust Him. That way, you will always know what to do—whether in good times or bad.

Trusting in Jesus gives us peace and security that no human being can provide. People will be amazed that even as a young person without advanced education, your life is peaceful, joyful, and you can speak words of comfort to others.

Some who did not like Him wanted to create problems between Him and the

Roman government. They devised many false accusations and sought to stop His ministry.

Everyone Can Pray for Souls
Not everyone is called to work personally in foreign lands, but everyone can do something—whether through their prayers or their gifts—to support the work of missions.

During the days of preparation, the disciples searched their hearts deeply. They felt their spiritual need and cried out to the Lord for the Holy Spirit to empower them to save souls. They did not ask for blessings only for themselves. They were burdened with the need to bring others to salvation.

God wants young people who are self-controlled, respectful, humble, calm, intelligent, balanced in their principles, and who can both pray and speak. Such youth will honor their elders and treat them with respect.

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus speak as someone with authority and power?
2. How does trusting in Jesus help us?
3. In which towns did Jesus begin His ministry?
4. Why were people amazed by His teachings?

“God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus”

Key Text: Luke 4:18-21.

[18-21] “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

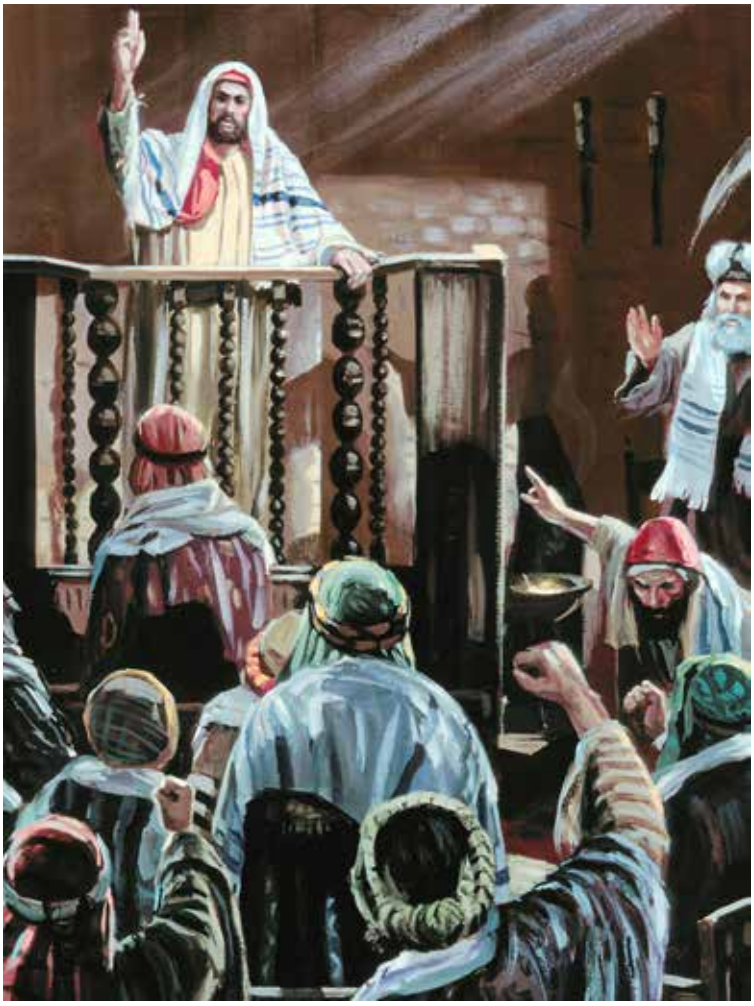
Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for proclaiming our freedom, for setting us free when we are oppressed, and for declaring the acceptable year of the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss how John’s life can give comfort to people who go through suffering, and how Jesus loved John.

DAY 209 (July 27)

TOPIC: Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

(Luke 4)



When Jesus went to Nazareth after overcoming temptations and attending the wedding at Cana, He returned to Nazareth, where He was brought up. As was His custom, He went to the synagogue to worship. The people there knew Him; He had returned home, and many had heard about the miracles He had performed elsewhere. However, people often despise what is familiar to them. A Swahili proverb says, "One who knows you does not value you."

They handed Jesus the Scriptures to read, giving Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. When He opened it, He found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus closed the scroll, returned it to the synagogue attendant, and all the people in the synagogue fixed their eyes on Him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." They marveled at His words, wondering what they meant.

Satan filled their hearts with doubt and pride concerning Jesus' life, despite

His life of righteousness convicting them. They asked, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” and questioned how the great words of the prophet Isaiah could apply to Him.
Jesus told them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to Me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will ask Me to do here in My hometown what I did in Capernaum. But truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown.”

He reminded them that during the famine of three and a half years, there were many widows in Israel, but Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. He also mentioned that although there were many lepers in Israel, only Naaman the Syrian was cleansed.

When the people heard this, they were filled with rage. They did not allow the Spirit of God to convict them to follow the way of the Lord. They became angry when Jesus mentioned Gentiles like Naaman and the widow. They rose up, drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the edge of the hill to throw Him off the cliff. However, Jesus miraculously passed through the crowd and went on His way because His time had not yet come.

Even today, many people want to hear only what pleases them. Though they may not seek to kill preachers like the Jews did, they criticize and despise them.

Let us remember that angels protect children and adults from being destroyed by the devil. One day, heaven will reveal how we were saved from Satan’s schemes to destroy us. Jesus was ready to help them, but Satan had blinded their hearts to reject Him, and Jesus could not force them to accept Him. With sadness, He left the synagogue of His hometown and went His way.

We should remember that pride and traditions without revelation are dangerous. Our knowledge and education cannot save us—only God Himself, through His plan of salvation in the Messiah, is our hope.

From Nazareth, Jesus went down to Capernaum and taught on the Sabbath. The people were amazed at His teaching. In the synagogue, there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit who cried out in a loud voice, “What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

Through the man’s voice, Satan’s agent confessed the truth about Jesus. Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, “Be quiet! Come out of him!” The demon threw the man down but came out without harming him. The people were amazed, saying, “With authority and power, He commands unclean spirits,

and they come out!" News about Jesus spread everywhere.

Even today, millions of people worldwide are possessed by demons, but in the name of Jesus, demons are cast out. Those afflicted by demons should be brought to people of faith to be prayed for, and through the name of Jesus, the demons will be expelled.

Demons often enter people's lives through their own actions or their parents' involvement in evil practices. These spirits take control, causing distress and destruction. To be free, a person must accept Jesus into their life and turn away from their former ways. If not, the demons will return and cause even greater harm.

Jesus explained this truth by comparing it to a man who sweeps his house clean without filling it with God's presence—evil spirits return with greater force. Removing bad habits by human effort alone is insufficient without allowing Jesus to dwell in our hearts.

After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Simon Peter's house. Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to heal her. He rebuked the fever, and it left her immediately. She got up at once and began to serve them, showing her gratitude and willingness to help others.

Even today, if you recover from illness, start helping with small tasks instead of remaining idle or seeking special treatment.

At sunset, many people with various diseases came to Jesus. They waited until the Sabbath ended to avoid being judged by the Pharisees. Jesus laid His hands on each one and healed them.

Demons also came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" but Jesus rebuked them and did not allow them to speak.

Satan knows God very well, having been created by Him and having lived in heaven. However, unlike believers, Satan has no faith and continually does evil.

It was easier for Jesus to heal those possessed by demons than to reach the proud and hypocritical Pharisees who believed they needed nothing. The Pharisees twisted the Scriptures into burdens for the people. They constantly followed Jesus, trying to trap Him. Their pride and jealousy blinded them to their need for salvation.
One person said that the sins of the ignorant and openly sinful are easier to

heal than the hidden sins of the educated or the hypocrites.

Jesus left to go to a solitary place, but the crowds sought Him and tried to keep Him from leaving. He told them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” So, He continued preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

To Jesus, no human being is without value or importance. He desired the best for everyone, offering hope to the hopeless. Those who believed in Him discovered that they could entrust Him with all their problems, and He would help them.

Jesus spent much time in private prayer and meditation on the Scriptures before returning to minister to the people. Though He worked tirelessly day and night, the Bible does not mention Him ever falling sick—rather, He carried the burdens and diseases of others.

Even today, He bears our sicknesses and weaknesses. We should serve those in need, the poor, and the oppressed. We are called to pray with and for those who are weak and struggling. Consistent and dedicated efforts must be made to reach those whose hearts are ready for revival.

Questions:

1. What Scripture did Jesus read in the synagogue?

2. Why did the people want to throw Jesus off the cliff?

3. How did the demons know that Jesus was the Son of God?

4. Why did Jesus spend so much time in prayer?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 4:22-24.

[22-24] So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal Yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.’” Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.”

Prayer: Lord, we ask You to give us Your Holy Spirit so that we will not resist Your Word, and that we may know how to distinguish between true and false prophets. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Show the people's great anger—"they led Him to the brow of the hill that they might throw Him down headlong. But He passed through the midst of them miraculously, and went His way, because His time had not yet come."

DAY 210 (July 28)

TOPIC: The Fishermen Are Called Again to Be Disciples

(Luke 5)



The crowd pressed around Jesus at the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats on the shore, but the fishermen were not in them because they were washing their nets. Jesus entered Simon Peter's boat and told him to push it a little from the shore. Sitting in the boat, He taught the crowd. When He finished speaking, He said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." Peter was surprised, thinking that Jesus did not understand they had worked all night without catching anything.

Even today, many people know that daytime is not the best time to fish. As an experienced fisherman, Peter knew it was pointless. He said to Jesus, "Master, we have worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because You say so, I will let down the nets." Even today, there are many things God asks us to do that may not make sense or seem reasonable to us. However, if we obey simply because He commands us, we will be amazed. We should act because His wisdom and understanding surpass human knowledge. He can override natural laws because He is the Creator.

Peter respected Jesus, but he did not fully know who He was. He wanted to please Him because Jesus had been kind to him. So, Peter cast the nets and caught so many fish that the nets began to break. They signaled to their

partners in the other boat to come and help them. They filled both boats with fish until they nearly sank. At that moment, Simon Peter realized more clearly who Jesus was. He fell on his knees before Him, recognizing Jesus as the Lord of all creation. Feeling unworthy, sinful, and small, he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord." But although he said this, he held onto Jesus tightly—he did not want to let Him go! He was filled with awe, as were all those with him.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were partners with Peter and Andrew. Jesus told Peter with love, "Do not be afraid; from now on, you will catch people." These fishermen left everything and followed Him to become fishers of people forever. Before this, they would fish and return home, but now they knew they had a greater mission. They understood their new work was to win people to God's kingdom. Following Jesus was the greatest decision these fishermen ever made. Even today, Jesus is calling you and me to follow Him. Will you respond and open your heart so Jesus Christ can live within you?

There is no limit to what a person can do if they surrender and open their heart for the Holy Spirit to enter and dedicate their life to Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke words of hope, comfort, wisdom, and peace to these fishermen, who later changed the world after He ascended to heaven. Our weaknesses can become strengths if we rely on and trust God, just as the apostles did.

In that town, there was a man with leprosy who came to Jesus, asking to be healed and cleansed. Jesus stretched out His hand, touched him, and said, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately, the leprosy left him. Jesus instructed the man not to tell anyone but to go and show himself to the priests and offer the cleansing sacrifice as commanded by Moses for a testimony. However, the man did not follow the instructions. Instead, he spread the news of his healing, and the word about Jesus spread widely. Large crowds gathered to hear Him and be healed. After this, Jesus withdrew to a quiet place to pray.

Jesus spent much time in prayer, which is a lesson for all of us. We should not go a whole day—or even several hours—without praying. Personal prayer is the key to victory, though public prayers also have their place. Let us return to the altar of prayer, praying morning and evening as commanded in Exodus 29:39. Though we no longer offer animal sacrifices, we should continue this practice of regular communion with God.

On another day, Jesus was teaching at Peter's house. Among those present were Pharisees and teachers of the Law who had come from Galilee to observe Him. These religious leaders, who were older than Jesus—who was only about thirty years old—were curious about Him because everyone was talking about

Him. They wondered how a poor carpenter could do the miraculous things they had heard about.

While Jesus was speaking, there was a commotion. Four friends brought a paralyzed man on a mat, hoping to place him before Jesus. Since they could not get through the crowd, they climbed to the roof, made an opening, and lowered him right in front of Jesus. These must have been very close friends who deeply wanted their companion to be healed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the man, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” Even today, Jesus says these sweet words to us: “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” Many people still carry heavy burdens and live in sadness due to their sins, but Jesus offers forgiveness.

When the Pharisees heard this, they began to question in their hearts, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus asked them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?” He then said, “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” He turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Get up, take your mat, and go home.” The man immediately stood up, took his mat, and walked home, glorifying God. Everyone was amazed and praised God, saying, “We have seen incredible things today.”

Jesus brought rest to those burdened with sorrow, anxiety, and pain. He said, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” Thousands came to Him, and He healed them all. He did not ask where they came from or what sins they had committed—He simply met their needs. In every village He visited, no sick person was left unhealed!

Even today, no matter what weakness you face, you can turn to Jesus for help. When we face trials, if we turn to Him, He gives us strength and wisdom to endure. If we follow Him, He will reveal His will to us. Many, like the paralyzed man, are burdened by stress and anxiety. When we try to live by human traditions, our burdens grow heavier. Today, God invites us to give Him our worries and trust Him.

If we put God first, we will discover that He has countless ways to solve our problems. His school will free us from false teachings, bad habits, and misleading traditions. Jesus always had peace in His heart, even in danger or rejection. He knew human struggles, and no one could deceive Him.

Today, many people are anxious and afraid to trust Him fully. But the world's troubles cannot overwhelm us if we surrender them to Jesus. When we submit to Him, He carries our burdens. The Kingdom of Heaven begins here on earth when we give Him everything and accept Him into our lives. Every prayer of faith from a sincere heart is heard and answered by God, often beyond our expectations. No true believer's prayer is ever lost if offered in faith from an honest heart.

Questions:

1. Why did Peter say they could not catch any fish?

2. What does "from now on you will catch people" mean?

3. Have you taken time to pray today?

4. Why does Jesus have the power to forgive sins?

5. What did Jesus tell people carrying heavy burdens?

6. Who helped the paralyzed man through the roof?

7. Why should we not seek forgiveness of sins from other human beings, even religious leaders?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 5:4-6.

[4-6] When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for helping us with our daily provision. Help us to obey by letting down our nets into the water. Help us to bring people to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Song – I Will Make You Fishers of Men – https://youtu.be/RGTjNTzXG3s

DAY 211 (July 29)

TOPIC: Matthew is called to be a disciple and hosts a farewell feast for his friends.

(Luke 5)



After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax booth. He said to him, "Follow Me," and Levi left his work immediately and followed Jesus. He did not question who would take over the office that brought him wealth. Perhaps he was tired of living a life full of deceit and corruption. Although he knew he was making the right decision, he also understood that life would become harder. He realized he would have to walk instead of riding a camel and live in the wilderness instead of a luxurious house. He was willing to sacrifice and become a disciple of Jesus. He understood that money is not everything in life.

If you were called today, while having great wealth, to be a follower of Jesus, what would your answer be?

During that time, tax collectors were among the most hated people. They collected taxes for the Romans, who ruled the people with cruelty, and thus tax collectors were seen as traitors. Many of them were selfish and ruthless, overcharging people and keeping the excess for themselves. While some tax collectors were honest, their reputation was ruined by the dishonest ones.

Levi hosted a grand feast at his house for Jesus. This feast also served as a farewell to his fellow tax collectors, friends, and family. It provided Jesus with the opportunity to reach others with the message of eternal life. This same Levi, known as Matthew, later wrote the Gospel of Matthew. He documented the words of Jesus because he listened to Him and witnessed His works firsthand. Jesus knew that Matthew would write a book to spread the message of salvation and bring people to God.

It is said that only Judas and Matthew were the most educated among the disciples. While they were dining at Matthew's house, the Pharisees came and murmured about how Jesus' disciples were eating with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus responded to them, saying, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." He meant that those who recognize their sinfulness know they need God's help, while those who see themselves as righteous do not feel the need for God's assistance.

At a deeper level, Jesus' words mean that no one is truly righteous. Those who claim to be righteous by their deeds lack the righteousness that comes from heaven. Human righteousness conflicts with God's kingdom and leads to destruction.

We are all patients in a hospital suffering from the disease of sin. Saying, "I have diabetes, while someone else has high blood pressure," or "I only have a cough, while someone else has kidney failure," does not make one better than the other. We all need the healing of the Almighty God.

The disciples were not identical in character or background. You do not need to be exactly like someone else to be their friend. The beauty of our differences is that they allow us to reach diverse people and invite them to God's kingdom.

The Pharisees also pointed out that John the Baptist's disciples frequently fasted and prayed, as did the Pharisees' disciples, while Jesus' disciples were eating and drinking. Jesus responded, "Can you make the guests of

the bridegroom fast while He is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Jesus also shared a parable, saying, "No one tears a piece from a new garment to patch an old one. If they do, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new garment will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will spill, and the skins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins."

By saying this, Jesus meant that His teachings of eternal life were new and could not be mixed with the old traditions of the Pharisees without causing conflict.

The disciples followed Jesus, healed the sick, prayed for people, and preached the gospel. These ordinary men became great healers and preachers because of their relationship with Jesus. Today, there are people who still need these services. You are also a disciple of Jesus, regardless of your age. Let no one despise your youth or childhood. Accept Jesus into your heart and follow the example of the disciples.

Let us hear the disciples briefly introducing themselves:

Andrew: I was the first disciple. I was a fisherman. When I heard John the Baptist say that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Redeemer, I followed Jesus. The next day, I hurried to bring my brother Simon Peter to meet Him.

Simon Peter: I was a fisherman until Jesus called me to become a fisher of men. I was rough and impulsive, which made it challenging to be His disciple. Many people said I spoke without thinking. I believe there are many people like me. Jesus was patient with me and changed me. I was the first disciple to preach after Jesus' resurrection and perform a miracle. I also preached to the Gentiles and am mentioned more times in the Gospels and Acts than any other disciple.

James: My brother John and I were fishermen working with our father Zebedee. We left our business to follow Jesus. We were known as the "Sons of Thunder" because of our fiery temper. One time, in a Samaritan village, we wanted Jesus to call down fire to destroy the people who refused to welcome us. I was one of the closest disciples to Jesus, present during His transfiguration and at Gethsemane. I was the first apostle to be martyred for Jesus' name.

John: Like my brother James said, we had a fiery nature, which earned us

the name “Sons of Thunder.” Our mother Salome was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus. While Jesus was on the cross, He entrusted me to take care of His mother. I witnessed the growth of the church and wrote the Book of Revelation while exiled on Patmos. I am known as the “Apostle of Love” because I emphasized God’s love in my writings.

Matthew: People also call me Levi. I was a tax collector who overcharged people and kept the extra money. I was hated and considered a sinner. One day, Jesus came to my office and called me to follow Him. I held a feast for Jesus and invited my friends. I later wrote the Gospel of Matthew.

Thomas: I am known as “Doubting Thomas,” but I was willing to follow Jesus and even die with Him. When the other disciples saw the risen Jesus, I did not believe them until I touched His wounds. When I finally saw Him, I fell at His feet and said, “My Lord and my God!”

Judas Iscariot: I betrayed Jesus. Though I loved Him and He was kind to me, my greed for money was stronger. I hoped Jesus would establish a kingdom where I would hold a high position. I sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, but when I realized He would be crucified, I was filled with guilt and hanged myself.

If we ask God, He will answer—It is part of His plan to give us, through faith-filled prayers, what He would not provide if we did not ask.

Questions:

1. What did Matthew leave behind when he followed Jesus?

2. How can you hold a feast to reach others with the good news?

3. What words is the apostle Nathanael known for in the Bible?

4. Why didn’t Judas Iscariot change his ways?

5. Which apostle would you like to be, and why?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 4:19, 20.

[19, 20] Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for making me a fisher of men. Help me to love people and forgive my sins. Help my family to believe in You and obey You. Bless my neighbors and our nation so that many may receive the gospel. Bless the workers. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Place small objects that can be lifted with a hook and thus caught. Focus on explaining the meaning of fishing.

DAY 212 – (July 30)

TOPIC: Things to Do on the Sabbath

(Luke 6, Luke 13, and John 5)

One Sabbath day, Jesus and His hungry disciples were walking through grain fields, picking and rubbing heads of grain to eat. This act was allowed if someone was hungry, as long as they didn't take the food home. However, some Pharisees questioned them, saying, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" They meant that the disciples were harvesting on the Sabbath.

Jesus replied, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry? He entered the house of God, took the consecrated bread, and ate it, even though it was only lawful for the priests." Then He told them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath," and that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

On another Sabbath, Jesus went into a synagogue to teach. There, He found a man with a withered right hand. His hand was weak and thin due to lack of use. Because of his condition, the man could not get a job, bathe properly, or do any meaningful work. Doctors had tried to help him but failed, leaving him to beg for a living. Wherever he went, children stared at him, whispering and mocking him.

The scribes and Pharisees were watching closely to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. Knowing their thoughts, Jesus asked the man to stand up. Then He asked the Pharisees, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" After looking around at them, Jesus told the man, "Stretch out your hand," and it was completely restored.

The Jewish leaders were filled with rage and began to plot how to harm Jesus. Jesus then left and went up a mountain to pray all night.

The Pharisees did not like what Jesus had done. On another occasion, while dining at someone's house, Jesus asked them, "If your sheep or livestock falls into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't you pull it out?" Because of their hypocrisy, they remained silent, knowing the obvious answer. Jesus explained that if they would rescue an animal, how much more valuable was a human being!



Jesus was not saying that healing should be scheduled only on the Sabbath. Instead, He meant that acts of mercy should be done when the need arises. Healing someone on the Sabbath is like releasing them from bondage. Providing relief on this holy day is a good thing because the Sabbath is a day of good news.

Even today, hospitals and essential services operate on the Sabbath, and this is acceptable. However, workers should take turns to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend worship. Jesus saw the Jews as hypocrites who focused on outward acts while their hearts were filled with evil. Keeping the law without love for God cannot lead us to heaven. Good works should be the result of knowing God. Jesus said, “By their fruits, you will recognize them.”

As God’s children, we must show compassion to those who are suffering physically or emotionally. The Sabbath is meant to be a day of rest and fellowship with God. People should enjoy this day, reflecting on God’s creation and worshiping Him in the beauty of His holiness. The Sabbath is a good day to do good things—not for our own pleasures, as Isaiah 58 advises, but to do what pleases God. It is a time to study the Scriptures and to praise God for His creation and daily blessings.

The Sabbath is like a tithe of our time—a day set apart for our relationship with God, our Creator and Father. Although God does not need rest, He knows we do. Our bodies need rest—about eight hours of sleep each night and one day a week to pause from our work.

In California, some friends decided to spend their Sabbath afternoons building houses for people after church. Others have chosen to use the Sabbath to visit and comfort the bereaved, even if the death occurred earlier in the week. These activities reflect the true spirit of the Sabbath. We should strive to complete our regular work during the six days of the week so that the seventh day is reserved for our relationship with God—unless we are bringing worship to others.

The Jews had added many Sabbath regulations—reportedly up to 1,521 rules. For example, if the eighth day after a child’s birth fell on the Sabbath, they would still circumcise the child, even though it was a surgical procedure. Jesus wanted them to keep the Sabbath, but not as a burden that prevented people from receiving relief from pain, distress, or emergencies. Despite it being the Sabbath, the Jews were filled with anger and began plotting how to kill Jesus.

One Sabbath, while reading the Scriptures in the synagogue, Jesus saw a woman who had been bent over for 18 years because of an evil spirit. No doctor had been able to help her, and she could not straighten herself. Medical knowledge is limited, and even today, doctors cannot solve every physical problem.

Jesus saw this woman and had compassion on her. Although He knew the

Pharisees were watching to see if He would heal on the Sabbath, He was not deterred from doing good. Jesus laid His hands on her and said, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” Her back straightened immediately, and she praised God.

However, the synagogue leaders were angry and said, “There are six days for work, so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath!” They forgot that if they were in pain, they would not want to wait another day for relief.

This woman had been unable to work, relying on others for her daily needs, and she lived in sorrow. Perhaps she had children or grandchildren she could not care for, but that Sabbath, she was set free.

God does not need to exert effort to perform miracles—He simply speaks, and it happens. Someone once told Jesus, “Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.”

GOD hears prayers.
Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14). He also said, “If anyone serves Me, My Father will honor him” (John 12:26). When we live according to His Word, every precious promise He has given will be fulfilled in our lives. We do not deserve His mercy, but when we surrender to Him, He accepts us and works through us.

Questions:

1. What did the Pharisees say when the disciples ate the heads of grain?

2. What problem did the woman in this story suffer from for 18 years?

3. How was this woman healed?

4. How was the man with the withered hand helped?

5. What things should be done or avoided on the Sabbath?

Read the book The Desire of Ages about the life of Jesus, and you will be greatly blessed.

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Isaiah 58:12-14.

[12-14] Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

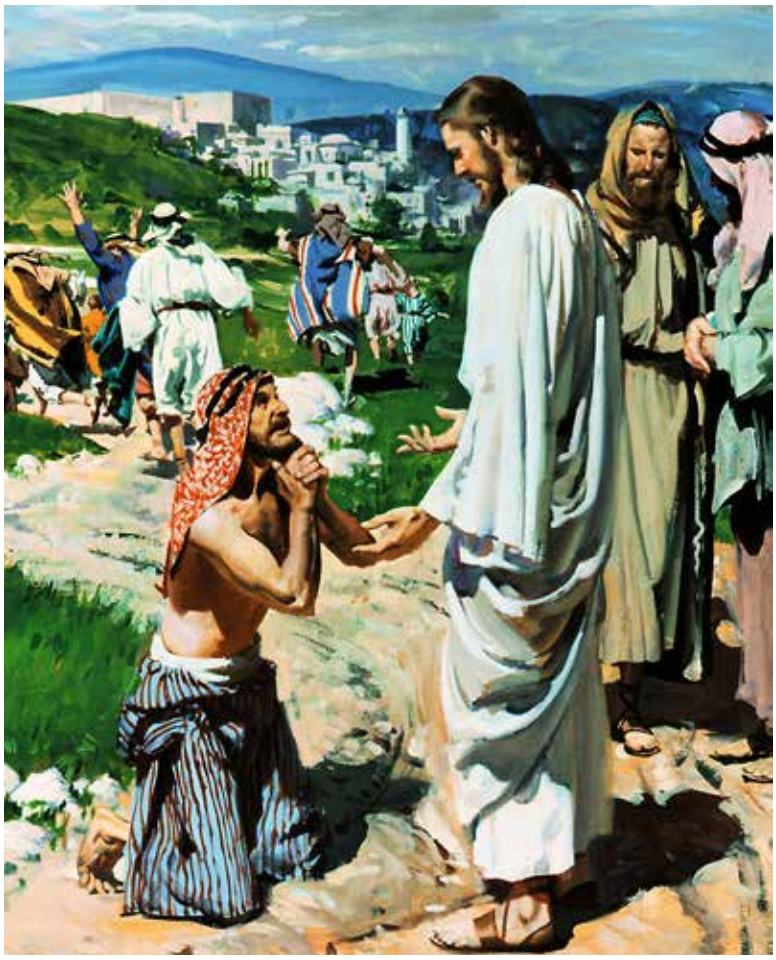
Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father. Help me to raise up the foundations of many generations and to repair what is broken in Your commandments, including the Sabbath which is highlighted in this passage. Help me not to do my own pleasure or follow what pleases me. I know I will delight in You. Thank You for feeding me with the heritage of Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: List all the things we should do on the Sabbath, how our thoughts should be, etc.

DAY 213 (July 31)

TOPIC: Healing on the Sabbath

(Luke 6, 13 and John 5)



One day, as Jesus was walking near the pool of Bethesda, close to the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, He saw a paralyzed man. Many people with disabilities, such as the deaf, the blind, and the lame, came to this pool because they believed that an angel would stir the water, and whoever entered first after the stirring would be healed of their disease or affliction. Jesus saw a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years lying there. Knowing that the Pharisees were watching Him closely and that He could avoid their scrutiny, He asked the man, "Do you want to be healed?"

The man had a small glimmer of hope, thinking that this young, strong man who was asking him might help him get into the water when it was stirred. So, he looked at Jesus and said, "I have no one to help me get into the pool when the water is stirred; someone else always goes down ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk." The man immediately stood up, took his mat, and began to walk. This happened on the Sabbath day.

When the Jews saw him rejoicing and giving his testimony, instead of sharing in his joy, they accused him, asking why he was carrying his mat on the Sabbath. They wanted to know who had healed him, but he did not know because Jesus had slipped away into the crowd. Later, Jesus found the man in the temple and told him, "Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you." Then the man realized it was Jesus who had healed him, and he went

to tell the Jews, not knowing their evil intentions.

The Jews began to persecute Jesus and sought to kill Him because He said that God was His Father. This man who had been sick for 38 years had lived a hard life—he could not walk, earn a living, bathe himself, wash his clothes, or even go to the bathroom alone. Imagine all the things he could not do before but could now do after being healed. Wasn't that something to celebrate? Do we rejoice with those who receive a miracle or succeed in some way? If not, we should!

Jesus explained that the Son could do nothing by Himself without the Father's authority. He told them that just as His Father raises the dead, He, the Son, also does what the Father does. He added that the Father had entrusted all judgment to the Son, so anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father. Satan had blinded their eyes, making them refuse to humble themselves before Jesus. They did not understand that He was the righteous and true Judge who would judge all humanity, and instead, they started judging Him!

Jesus told them that anyone who hears His Word and believes in the One who sent Him—God Almighty—has eternal life. Even today, eternal life comes from hearing and obeying God's Word. The Jews had created many laws for the people, turning the Sabbath into a burden rather than a day of joy. On the Sabbath, they could not even light a lamp or do small tasks. They relied on non-Jews to do such things for them on that day. They believed that only the Jews would be saved.

Jesus could have healed the man on any other day, but He chose to do it on the Sabbath to teach His people the proper way to honor and observe the Sabbath for God's glory. In explaining further, Jesus spoke about His divine authority, which angered the Jews, who thought He was blaspheming. It was difficult to please the people of His nation in any way.

Jesus told them, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life." Every prophecy, sermon, page, or story of the Old Testament pointed to Christ. The Old and New Testaments complement each other—one continues where the other left off.

The works to avoid on the Sabbath are the daily activities related to earning a living or personal pleasure. The synagogue leaders were embarrassed because they knew that if they had a problem themselves, they would not want Jesus to wait until the next day to solve it. Although the religious leaders were not

happy about the man's healing, others rejoiced at the miracle.

Jesus rebuked those complaining about healing on the Sabbath, saying, "You hypocrites! Don't you untie your ox in the morning to lead it to water, even on the Sabbath? Shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham, who has been bound for 18 years, also be set free on the Sabbath?" The synagogue leader was ashamed, and others were amazed at the healing.

The Jews had a misguided view of the Sabbath. They thought God created the Sabbath for people to serve it. But Jesus told them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." He declared that He was the Lord of the Sabbath, meaning He had the authority to determine how it should be observed. This statement must have shocked them because it meant, "I am the One who created the Sabbath, and I have the authority to define how it should be kept—not humans!"

Everyone should know that Jesus is the Word who created the world in six days, and on the seventh day, He established the Sabbath. He has authority over the Sabbath. Jesus did not break the Sabbath; He observed it perfectly but wanted to remove the hypocrisy surrounding it. Since He is the One who spoke the Word, He knows it completely and reflects on it—how much more should we, with our limited understanding?

No sick person who came to Jesus was left unhealed. No dead person whose family sought His help remained dead. It seems that everyone who met Him was revived! When He encountered the funeral procession of the young man of Nain, He brought him back to life! Those who came to Him with problems left filled with joy.

God did not create the Sabbath only for the Jews, as some believe. Consider that the first Jew came thousands of years after creation. Sabbath observance began in the first week of creation, right after Adam and Eve were made. So, the Sabbath existed long before the Jewish nation. Observing the Sabbath should not focus solely on what to do or avoid but on God's plan of joy and grace—being kind, doing good, and setting people free!

Jesus never denied the Sabbath but wanted to correct how it was observed. The Sabbath is not a burden; it is the joy of Jesus' grace, giving us rest from daily work and allowing us to develop a relationship with Him and find spiritual rest. Make an effort not to think about the past week's work on the Sabbath!

When Jesus said His Father works even on the Sabbath, they began to plot

to kill Him. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath and calling God His Father, without realizing that He truly was God. These people were willing to uphold the fourth commandment while breaking the sixth—"Do not kill." This accusation resurfaced when they crucified Him.

Be careful, because some false religions focus on specific laws while neglecting God's mercy and grace. Anyone who rejects Christ and refuses to listen to His words will be judged by those very words of life.

When you pray and ask the Lord for help, honor your Savior by believing that you receive His blessing. All power and wisdom are under His authority—all we need to do is ask.

Questions:

1. Why did God set aside the Sabbath after creation?
2. How can you identify which day is the Sabbath?
3. What activities should be done on the Sabbath?
4. Why were the synagogue leaders ashamed?
5. What did Jesus tell the man who had been sick for 38 years?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Exodus 20:8-11.

[8-11] "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for healing our diseases and teaching us that healing on the Sabbath is something You always do, and that it is in harmony with Your law. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Look at the chart of all the miracles Jesus performed and discuss which ones were on the Sabbath!

Activity of Healing on the Sabbath: And how to help children not to live in hypocrisy or worldliness in their lives.

DAY 214 (August 1)

TOPIC: The Gate to Heaven is Narrow

(Luke 13)

As He traveled through towns and villages teaching on His way to Jerusalem, someone asked Him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved and enter heaven, or will there be many?" Jesus answered, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for I tell you, many will try to enter but will not be able to. Once the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, you will stand outside and knock, saying, 'Lord, open for us!' But He will answer, 'I do not know you or where you are from.' Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with You, and You taught in our streets.'

But He will reply, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from Me, all you evildoers.' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves will be thrown out. People will come from the east and west, from the north and south, and they will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last."

Many want to enter heaven, but their actions do not match their words. Anyone who is determined to go to heaven must be willing to sacrifice, overcome selfishness, and avoid doing things that please themselves while hurting others.

We must surrender completely and deny ourselves. This is what it means to enter through the narrow gate. It means doing what may be difficult, but it leads to eternal life and brings joy to us, to our Heavenly Father, and to others. Are you ready today to keep God's Word in your heart and live it out in your actions?

Regarding the question of how many will be saved and how many will be lost, Jesus told them not to worry too much about that. God does not save people simply because they are descendants of Abraham but saves those who trust and believe in Him—those who recognize their need for His help.

Later, Jesus explained that the way to heaven is narrow, not decorated like a smooth, flowery road. In contrast, the road to hell is wide, paved, and easy



to follow. What kind of life do you choose? A life on the narrow road or the wide road? This is an important question we must ask ourselves every day. Every day, we face decisions about whether to follow the narrow road or the wide road.

We must be truthful, even if it means facing punishment at school or home. We must take time to help those in need, starting with our parents and siblings. These are the choices that reflect traveling on the narrow road.

The wide road leads to hell, while the narrow gate leads to eternal life. The wide road accommodates all kinds of bad behavior, including stealing, lying, wasting time, gossiping, insulting others, disrespecting parents, misusing God's name, jealousy, hatred, drinking alcohol, dancing improperly, watching immoral movies or TV programs, singing inappropriate songs, practicing witchcraft, hypocrisy, pride, sexual immorality, unforgiveness, and all other sinful behaviors.

We must be careful if we want to be saved. The Jews would easily accept someone who exalted themselves because they loved pride and recognition. However, Jesus taught about humility, helping those in need, and self-denial to remain on the narrow path.

Even today, many—including those working in churches, whether employed or volunteering—deny God by prioritizing human traditions over His Word. They live luxurious lives and forget that this is the wide road.

Helping people in need, especially in poor countries, is essential. Our assistance should begin with our relatives, our church community, and our neighbors. Let us reflect on our faith and how we know Jesus. Do we love Him because our parents do? Do we follow Him because it is a tradition? We cannot enter heaven riding on our parents' faith.

Every child is born without knowing God and must personally develop faith and a relationship with Him.

At one point, some Pharisees came to Jesus, warning Him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." Jesus replied, "Go and tell that fox, 'I will keep driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day, I will reach my goal.'"

Herod was known for killing people. Jesus explained that His death had to happen in Jerusalem, like the other prophets, not in Galilee.

Later, Jesus taught that when invited to a wedding feast, you should not sit in the place of honor, or the host may ask you to move for someone more important, and you will be embarrassed. Instead, sit in a humble place. Then the host may say, “Friend, move up to a better place,” and you will be honored in front of everyone.

If you exalt yourself, you will be humbled, but if you humble yourself, you will be exalted.

Jesus also said that when you prepare a feast, do not invite your friends, relatives, or wealthy neighbors who can repay you. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. You will be blessed because they cannot repay you, and you will be rewarded at the resurrection of the righteous.

This is very relevant today. Many people give gifts to their friends to receive something in return—a system of “give and take.”

During Christmas, for example, some people say, “I gave them a nice sweater, but they gave me a cheap plastic watch from China!” A typical family spends around $400 on gifts, causing stress about choosing the right presents and finding the money to pay for them.

We should pray to avoid falling into such customs. If we have a gift to give, we should give it cheerfully. If we do not, we should trust that God will provide in due time.

Jesus emphasized that if anyone wants to follow Him, they must count the cost. Just as someone building a tower must calculate the expense, or a king going to war must assess his strength, following Jesus requires daily commitment and seeking His strength.

God has a heaven full of blessings, which He wants to give to those who diligently seek His help—the help that only the Lord can provide.

Questions:

1. What does the narrow gate to heaven mean?

2. Do you prefer to travel the narrow road or the wide road? Why?

3. Why is it not good to sit at the back seats in church?

4. Why do many people prefer front-row seats at sports events?

5. When hosting a feast, whom should you invite?

6. How many people will be saved, and how many will be lost?

7. Who are the people who will weep and gnash their teeth?

8. How can the first become last, and the last become first?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 13:3-5.

[3-5] I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Prayer: Lord, help us to walk in the narrow way. Help us not to judge others but to focus on our own salvation with fear and trembling. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw the narrow way and the broad way. Explain the meaning of these words and these paths.

DAY 215 (August 2)

TOPIC: The Mountain of Blessing

(Luke 6, Matthew 5-7)

When Jesus spent the whole night in prayer, by morning, He began choosing His disciples. He always wanted to be with the Heavenly Father to seek guidance for every step He took. As these disciples learned from Him, they were sent out two by two to tell others, and they were then called apostles. Later that day, He called His disciples and chose twelve from among them: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathanael (also called Bartholomew), Matthew (also called Levi), Thomas (called the Twin), James (son of Alphaeus), Simon the Zealot (or the Canaanite), Judas (son of James, also called Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus), and Judas Iscariot, the betrayer.

He chose twelve men to walk with Him and to be taught so they could go everywhere and teach others across the whole world. Today, people call this "training the trainers." Some of these disciples had already been called before, but He called them again and added others. We know little about most of these apostles. For example, we know that Peter and John were outspoken and writers, so we understand them more than the others. Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain. After He sat down, His disciples came to Him, and He opened His mouth and began to teach them things that touched every part of human life on the journey to heaven. Luke mentions that Jesus also healed people that day. This sermon was an introduction and a commissioning of the disciples to begin their official work and to establish His ministry. Jesus wanted to explain that the kingdom of heaven was different from what people thought—He was not there to overthrow the Romans. He wanted to clarify the purpose of His coming to the world. Without any microphone, everyone heard Him clearly.



THE CHART OF THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

CHART 8 OF BLESSINGS

Blessed are the poor in heart	For the kingdom of heaven is theirs (verse3)
Blessed are the meek	For they will inherit the earth (verse5)
Blessed are those who mourn	For they will be comforted(verse4)
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	For they will be filled(verse6)
Blkessed are the merciful	For they will be shown mercy (verse7)
Blessed are the pure in heart	For they will see God (verse8)
Blessed are the peacemakers	For they will be called children of God(verse9)
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake	For theirs is the kingdom of heaven (verse10)

Jesus began His sermon by proclaiming the Eight Beatitudes, then spoke about believers being the salt and light. Salt does not remain in a heap by itself but spreads through food to bring taste and preserve it. He then spent a lot of time emphasizing the law—that He came to fulfill it, not to abolish it. Jesus kept all the laws He had given! He never broke the law.

To conclude this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught how to live a life as a Christian or believer. The Greek word for "blessed" is Makarios. I have heard some people being called by this name "Heri" or "Makarios." These blessings are not isolated but should be received together to bless others.

Jesus spoke of the Eight Beatitudes, or Eight Blessings, meaning happy are those who… It may be hard to understand how things like poverty can be considered blessings. However, we should remove these thoughts because we are blessed by Jesus in our spiritual poverty or sorrow. Let us seek Him earnestly, knowing He will give us the riches of joy and laughter.

Jesus saw many people who sought healing and those with various problems. This gathering required a spacious place because the available areas were not enough to hold everyone quietly as they listened to Him. His disciples surrounded Him while the crowds found places to sit, watch Him, and listen.

Jesus told the people that the secret to true happiness comes from how we live our lives before God. He began by saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those who are humble in heart will accept God's gift of salvation because they are ready to be taught by Him.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. This refers to those who grieve over their sins, recognizing that their wrongdoings bring sorrow to Jesus. They will allow the Holy Spirit to change them.

When wz are humble, we will not be troubled by people's harsh words, bad behavior, or challenging attitudes. We will have patience, and God will show us how to handle them.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. These people are eager to be fed the Word of God, which gives them joy and helps them resist Satan's temptations.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Being merciful is

more than words—it includes acts of kindness and compassion.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. While knowing the core teachings of faith is important, people recognize a pure heart through outward actions, identifying us as true disciples of Jesus. A pure heart rejects impure thoughts.

The heart is deceitful and full of deadly diseases—no one fully understands it. Let us give our hearts to Jesus today for cleansing.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. This blessing is repeated twice because Jesus knew His followers would face persecution and hardship. If you experience troubles for choosing God, find comfort knowing there is a blessing in it.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

If you face hardship or if people misunderstand you because of your faithfulness to God, do not fear. Do not hold grudges or seek revenge—eventually, everything will work for your good. What matters most is the love of heaven. Let us love God and others, and we will fulfill the entire law.

Many believed that those who suffered were cursed or unlucky. However, the kingdom of God is full of paradoxes—for instance, those who exalt themselves will be humbled, the weak are made strong, and the first will be last. People were amazed because they believed happiness came from wealth, fame, or power. Jesus explained that earthly honor is not necessarily related to the joy of following God.

Jesus told the people that all who love God are the salt of the earth—they bring flavor and preservation to life. But if salt loses its flavor, it becomes useless and is thrown out. For salt to be useful, it must mix with food. Similarly, believers must interact with others to draw them to Jesus. In those days, people used salt to preserve food since there were no refrigerators. Without people who love and serve God, the world would decay.

Jesus did not speak to doctors, theologians, or people with great authority—He spoke to ordinary people like us. So today, you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our good lives are a light to bless others and lead them to Jesus. Jesus is the great Light, and we reflect His light like the moon

reflects the sun. Once connected to Him, we must not hide our light but shine brightly for others to see our good works and glorify our Heavenly Father—not ourselves.

Jesus Presents Our Imperfect Prayers to the Father
Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. Even if it is not eloquently spoken, if it comes from the heart, it will reach the Holy Place where Jesus ministers. He will present it to the Father in perfect and pleasing words.

Questions:

1. Name the twelve apostles.

2. Name the Eight Beatitudes.

3. Read the book The Mountain of Blessing and savor the beautiful teachings of the Eight Beatitudes!

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 5:14-16.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Prayer: Thank You Lord because You did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it, and that all You have spoken will be fulfilled, not one shall pass away. Give us faith and courage to believe and live all that You have said. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The activity of “You are the Light of the World” is a spiritual lesson to teach us that an individual can be a source of goodness and guidance to fellow human beings. This light we receive from the Lord and spread to others. Try placing candles or torches under a bed, etc. Memorize the Beatitudes.

DAY 216 (August 3)

TOPIC: The Mount of Blessing – The Law and Living a Christian Life

(Luke 6, Matthew 5-7)



A significant portion of the teachings from the Mount of Blessing focused on the law and how to live a Christian life. Some thought that Jesus came to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but He told them that God's Word is extremely important. He said that heaven and earth will pass away, but not even the smallest letter of His Word will ever disappear. God has exalted His Word above even His Name. Therefore, anyone who breaks His commandments will be called the least in His Kingdom.

Some people today claim that the Scriptures or God's laws do not matter and that only faith is important. This belief is not from the Almighty God. If God's Word is insignificant, then everything is meaningless because everything was created through the Word. The Word of God reflects His character and represents Him.

When Jesus was arrested that Thursday night, He said that He could call upon 10,000 angels to fight for Him, but He did not, so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled! Do you see how important the Scriptures are? Even when He was in danger and facing death, He moved forward to give the Word the glory it deserves.

The Pharisees had a habit of reading the Scriptures and pretending to know them well, but they did not live according to them. Jesus instructed the people to follow what the Pharisees taught but not to imitate their actions because they were hypocrites who did not practice what they preached. He told the people that unless their righteousness exceeded that of the Pharisees, they would never enter heaven.

Jesus taught that true happiness comes from accepting Him and obeying His commandments by doing good and being kind so that God may be glorified. During His time on earth, there were the Ten Commandments, the Roman laws, the laws of Moses, and the additional laws of the rabbis.

The sacrificial laws of Moses ended when Jesus died, but the Ten Commandments remain eternal, just like God's throne. We must be careful when living among hypocrites and avoid using their behavior as an excuse to do wrong. If you have a hypocritical friend or family member, you should stand firm and declare: "Even if others are hypocrites, I will do the will of God by His grace." In doing so, you will set a good example for others and counteract the bad examples of believers who bring shame to the church.

Jesus elaborated on the Ten Commandments because the Pharisees believed that sin was only about actions. However, He revealed that sin also includes thoughts, intentions, and attitudes. Actions are the final outcome of these internal processes. For instance, while the sixth commandment says, "Do not murder," Jesus said that anyone who is angry or hates another person is already guilty of murder.

He taught that if we have wronged someone, we must first seek reconciliation before offering our gifts at the altar—because we cannot touch heaven without first making things right with others. Our large offerings do not impress God; He desires our hearts to be surrendered to Him for the salvation of our souls.

It is crucial to settle disputes quickly with anyone who accuses us, or things may become worse. Regarding the seventh commandment, which forbids adultery, Jesus said that even if we lust after someone else's spouse in our hearts, we are as guilty as the one who physically commits adultery. The same principle applies to theft—if you plan to steal something but are prevented by

circumstances, you are still guilty in God's eyes.

After studying Jesus' teachings, it becomes clear that no one is without sin! We cannot judge others—it would be like mocking someone in the intensive care unit (ICU) just because we are in a regular hospital ward. Critically ill patients need prayer, not ridicule.

Jesus wanted us to recognize the gravity of sin and our need for a Savior to forgive and empower us. He said that if our eyes cause us to sin through lustful desires, it would be better to lose an eye and enter heaven than to have both eyes and be cast into hell. Similarly, if any part of our body leads us to sin, it is better to cut it off than to be condemned forever. In heaven, all our physical imperfections will be restored, but there is no such hope in hell.

Jesus strongly prohibited divorce unless the spouse was unfaithful. He also forbade swearing by anything, including God's throne or our mothers. Our "yes" should simply be "yes," and our "no" should be "no." Many think that swearing is harmless, but God's Word forbids it.

We must guard our hearts and senses—what we see, hear, touch, and desire—to avoid sinning. Jesus instructed people not to retaliate against evil or seek revenge. If someone slaps your left cheek, turn the right one too. If someone demands your coat, give them your shirt as well. If someone forces you to walk one mile, walk two. Jesus emphasized loving our enemies because even sinners love those who love them. God alone will execute perfect justice at the right time.

Even criminals share their loot with one another, but a Christian should be different. Christianity does not permit hatred, violence, deceit, or revenge. We must learn to forgive and follow the will of Christ rather than our own desires.

Jesus affirmed that God's law is eternal—more enduring than the stars, the sky, the sun, or the earth. Although God has the power to change anything, His law remains the only path to health, life, and true happiness. Violating it brings destruction, chaos, and death.

God's holiness is revealed in His laws, which prohibit murder, adultery, theft, and other sins. The gospel reveals His love through the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Even today, we must not disregard God's commandments, as doing so leads to rebellion.

Although the ceremonial laws ended with Christ's sacrifice, the moral law—

the Ten Commandments—remains eternal for all generations. Jesus, the Lamb of God, now intercedes for us in heaven as our High Priest.

Jesus warned that anyone who breaks even the least of the commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. God takes His commandments seriously because they ensure our present and eternal joy.

Jesus prayed through the night before choosing His twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-13). Despite His exhaustion, He often withdrew to quiet places for prayer. His prayers sought protection for His followers and strength for His mission.

When tempted to speak in anger, remain silent and pray. Heavenly angels will assist you and keep evil forces away.

Questions:

1. List the names of the twelve apostles.

2. Which commandments are broken by hating someone or desiring another person's spouse?

3. Why did Jesus pray all night?

4. Why should we not seek revenge?

5. Why is it a sin to take revenge?

6. Why is it important to seek forgiveness when we wrong others?

7. Did God ever say that one of the Ten Commandments no longer applies?

8. Why are God's laws and Scriptures eternal?

9. Why is it a serious mistake to disobey the Ten Commandments?

10. Which commandment do you personally find difficult to obey, and why?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 5:21-24.

[21-24] "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Prayer: Thank You Father who dwells in the high heavens. Help us to keep Your commandments in our hearts. Remove hatred, evil thoughts, and all wickedness from us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Compare God's commandments in Matthew 5 with Exodus 20.

DAY 217 (August 4)

TOPIC: Blessed, Happy, or Fortunate

(Matthew 5)



Jesus was not only a healer but also the greatest teacher of all. As He helped people, He spoke in a simple and clear way, and people were happy and loved to listen to Him. He came from heaven to tell us about God's love. We must be His children with pure hearts, who speak the truth and are obedient. He did not discriminate against anyone because He viewed everyone as a potential citizen of the kingdom of heaven. God shows no favoritism.

When you look at the Beatitudes, they may seem contradictory or opposite to the way people usually understand things. For example, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs." Often, as the book of Job says, people thought that trusting in God meant always having wealth and laughter, without sorrow. But this is not true, because Job and others who feared God experienced sadness and grief.

Being poor in spirit means being humble and recognizing our need for Christ's righteousness, not our own. Those whom society rejects or disowns—such as the poor, tax collectors, or prostitutes—see themselves as having nothing to offer except the grace of God to help and cover them. They cry out to God for mercy, which leads them to repent and feel sorrow for their sins. The good thing for them is not only inheriting the kingdom of God but also being comforted by God Himself through the forgiveness and assurance of their salvation. When we receive mercy, it becomes easier for us to show mercy to others because we understand that we, too, are upheld by Almighty God.

Jesus gave an example of a Pharisee who went to the temple. This man measured himself and considered himself righteous while despising others. Jesus showed that sin can follow a person even to church because it first resides in the heart. This sin is spiritual pride.

The Pharisee stood in the temple and prayed in his heart, not to speak to God but to show off to others. In other words, he was gossiping about others to God, saying, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.”

But the tax collector stood at a distance and did not even dare to lift his eyes to heaven. Instead, he beat his chest in humility and sorrow, saying, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Jesus asked, “Which one went home justified before God?” The answer was the one who humbled himself. Jesus said, “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

When we pray, we should pray to God, not to inform Him of our goodness or to gossip about others. God sees our true selves and will reward us. God did not say, “Blessed are the most intelligent in class, the most beautiful, the wealthy, those with perfect teeth, or those with the correct religious doctrines.” Instead, He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

The Sermon on the Mount teaches us not to be selfish. Our hearts and intentions must be pure—when our thoughts are pure, our words and actions will also be pure. Understanding the correct teachings of the truth is important, but having a pure heart is the true reflection of daily Christian living. Being a member of a particular church is different from being a Christian or a child of God. First, we must be people who believe in Almighty God, and then our denomination comes second!

Learn each Beatitude one by one. For example, be a peacemaker when you see others fighting, arguing, or disagreeing. Take the role of a mediator, not a troublemaker. You are God’s instrument to bring reconciliation—where there is hatred, bring love; where there are wounds, bring healing; where there is darkness, bring light and hope; where there is sorrow, bring joy.

Do not wait for others to love, comfort, or forgive you first. Be the one to love, comfort, and forgive others. It will be easy to live a holy life in heaven, but living a holy life on earth is a different challenge that we must overcome now.

Do not be a troublemaker or someone who loves conflict. Life is full of hills, steep climbs, and many twists and turns, including suffering—especially for those who know the Lord. Jesus and the apostles lived in hardship. Believing in Almighty God has brought hatred and persecution since the time of Abel, who was persecuted and killed by his brother Cain.

When you believe in God, you declare war even among your closest relatives. Emperor Nero of Rome burned Christians alive. Some believers were sewn into animal skins and thrown to wild dogs to be torn apart. Even Jesus did not escape suffering—He was crucified on the cross. These persecutions will happen again at the end of the world. You can read about these persecutions in Revelation 13.

Suffering will continue for all those who seek righteousness because it purifies them and shapes them to reflect the character of God. God's character is compared to a precious, shining gem. It is a character of selflessness and service to others. Remember, suffering that we bring upon ourselves is not beneficial—but suffering for righteousness' sake is. God's wisdom is amazing and never fails for those who choose to follow it.

All who choose to follow God must trust Him completely, bear witness to Him, and serve Him. Today, the Sermon on the Mount is considered the most beautiful teaching of Christianity, but it is also the hardest to live out. We are called to be salt and light in the world today. Read Matthew 5 again and reflect on how you can live out these teachings in your life today.

God would do amazing works through His people today if they completely surrendered to His leadership. They need to be connected to the Holy Spirit at all times. If there were more prayer in the assemblies of those in leadership, and if they humbled themselves before God, we would see greater evidence of the Lord's guidance, and our work would progress more quickly.

Questions:

1. What words did the Pharisee use in his prayer?

2. What did the tax collector say in his prayer?

3. Why do the righteous face persecution?

4. Why is self-love instead of love for God the root of all sin?

5. Why is surrendering to God important?

6. We are nearing the end of the world's history according to prophecy. How does this relate to persecution?

7. What is food like without salt?

8. What is a room like without light?

9. How can we have a pure heart? Read 1 John 1:9!

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 5:11-12.

[11-12] "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

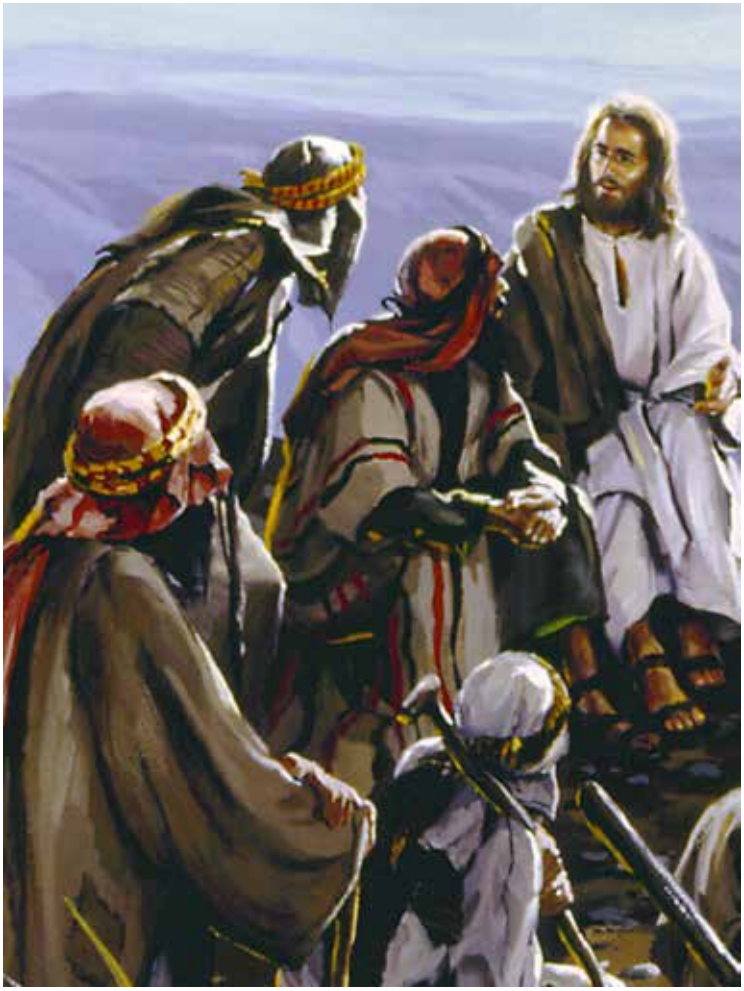
Prayer: Thank You Lord because You care for us so much. Help us to love, not to discriminate, and not to persecute others. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Memorize all eight Beatitudes. Look at those countries with severe persecution for faith, list them, and pray for the people. Or study the prayer of the Pharisee and the prayer of the tax collector (see online Barnabas Aid).

DAY 218 (August 5)

TOPIC: The Lord's Prayer That Jesus Taught Us to Pray

(Matthew 6)



Jesus told His disciples to love their neighbors and even their enemies. They should pray for those who mistreat them because the Heavenly Father causes His sun to rise on both the good and the evil. God loves even the unlovable; for the Bible says if we only love those who love us, we are doing nothing special— even sinners love their own friends and relatives. He told them to be perfect as their Heavenly Father is perfect. This perfection is spiritual maturity— a transformation of our thoughts, intentions, and behavior through submission to Jesus, so we become like Christ.

Jesus said we should not do good deeds to be seen and praised by others because what truly matters is how God sees us, not how people do. In those days, many people gave offerings publicly to show off their generosity. Jesus said that those who give for show have already received their reward— the praise of people. He instructed that when we give, our left hand should not know what our right hand is doing. Offerings should be given secretly, known only to God. When we give in this humble and private manner, we will receive God's blessings. If we have an offering, we should not worship without bringing it because blessings are promised. And if we have nothing, God knows that giving Him our hearts is the most important thing.

Jesus also instructed that when we pray, we should not do it to be seen by others, nor should we use long, repetitive prayers to impress people. He said that when we pray, we should go into a private place, close the door, and pray to our Heavenly Father in secret, and He will reward us. Jesus Himself spent much time in prayer, and seeing this, His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Even today, many people ask, "How should I pray?" Do you know how to pray? How does one speak to God? Do you find yourself running out of words when talking to God, yet you have endless words when chatting with friends? Do we need to use fancy, repetitive words like actors rehearsing a script? How should we address God when we begin to pray? Maybe you have friends who have never prayed and do not know how to start speaking to God— you can teach them how to pray.

God says we should speak to Him as our Father who loves us and desires a close relationship with us. He wants us to share our joys and sorrows with Him. Jesus always communicated with the Heavenly Father. Sometimes, He prayed all night, seeking to draw close to His Father and to receive guidance for His work on earth. The disciples told Him that John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray, so they wanted Jesus to teach them too. Prayer is simply talking to God as a friend; we do not need to impress others while doing it. Go to your room, pray privately, and speak to God as you would to a friend. We do not need to say too much because God already knows what is in our hearts. Share your joys and sorrows with Him.

Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer called The Lord's Prayer. Prayer relieves our worries and burdens because, through prayer, we entrust our problems to God, who has the power and authority to solve them.

It is good for every child and adult to learn and memorize The Lord's Prayer. God knows our needs, so we do not need to use lengthy prayers, especially in public. We should pray thoughtfully and sincerely, not mindlessly repeating words. When we pray, we should say:

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Through this prayer, we learn that God is our loving Father. He is real and essential for both our daily lives and eternity. We should ask Him to teach us to obey His voice and submit to Him so that we may become citizens of His kingdom one day. He is the one who provides all our needs— food, clothing,

and shelter. We must ask for forgiveness daily and forgive others as well. We should ask God to help us avoid sin and protect us from temptation and the evil ways of the world.

The key to spiritual life is surrendering ourselves to God and avoiding false teachings about the Scriptures, divinity, or miracles. We are only forgiven when we forgive others. If we do not forgive, we will not be forgiven. We should not hold grudges or seek revenge.

When we fast, we should not do it for public attention by looking sad or distressed. Instead, we should anoint our faces to appear normal because our fasting is for God, who sees what we do in secret and will reward us. Though God already knows our needs, expressing our desires through prayer allows Him to act on our behalf with His full authority and power.

Jesus promised to hear our prayers, which is why He taught us how to pray. This prayer includes praising and thanking God, asking for our needs, seeking forgiveness, and forgiving others. We should pray every day because it helps us understand God's ways and share our daily concerns with Him. Our prayers should also include the needs of others, not just our own. God desires to give us everything we need, but some things will only be given if we ask. Through prayer, we give God the authority and freedom to work in our lives.

We should not store up treasures on earth, focusing on material wealth and possessions. Instead, we should prioritize our relationship with God. We should store treasures in heaven by helping those in need and supporting God's work so that more people can hear the gospel. Our hearts will always be where our treasure is. If we love money, our hearts will be filled with it; if we love God and His work, our hearts will be centered on heavenly treasures, and one day, we will join Him.

Jesus knew people worried about life's problems, so He taught them that no one can serve two masters— God and money. We must choose to serve one. Jesus reminded us that even birds are fed by God without working for it, and we are much more valuable to Him. Flowers are beautifully dressed without effort, and God will take care of us even more. Therefore, we should not worry about tomorrow, for each day has enough trouble of its own.

God knows everything we need— our part is to trust Him. Those who trust Him will experience peace that surpasses human understanding, even when life is challenging. This peace does not come from the absence of problems but from Jesus calming the storms in our hearts and carrying our burdens.

Prayer Brings the Power to Overcome – We must put on the full armor of God and be ready to face spiritual battles. When trials and temptations come, let us turn to God in prayer. He will not leave us empty-handed but will give us grace and strength to overcome and break the power of the enemy.

Questions:

1. Why should we not worry about life like worldly people do?
2. Why can no one serve two masters?
3. What does it mean to pray?
4. How often should we pray?
5. How can we store treasures in heaven?
6. Why should we give offerings in secret?
7. Why does faith matter when saving even in earthly banks?
8. Why is it dangerous to love money?
9. Why does The Lord's Prayer say "Our Father" instead of "My Father"?
10. Recite The Lord's Prayer.

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 6:31-33.

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Help us not to fear what we shall eat or wear tomorrow, but to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, and all other good things will be added to us. Help us to be humble. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Activity: Act out "The Prayer of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector." Discuss the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14), focusing on how the Pharisee prayed with pride and self-righteousness, while the Tax Collector prayed humbly for repentance and mercy. The activity can include retelling the story, puppet shows, drawing and coloring, to show the importance of a humble heart in prayer, recognizing that true righteousness comes from God and not from self-exaltation. Memorize the Lord's Prayer.

DAY 219 (August 6)

TOPIC: Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.

(Luke 11 and Matthew 7)



Jesus continued to say that we should not judge others because when we judge others, we too will be judged with the same measure we use. As human beings, we do not know why a person does what they do or what is in their heart, so we should pray for that person to be changed by Christ Himself. The life of a Christian involves their relationship with God and their fellow human beings. We must first remove the speck in our own eye before we can help remove the plank in someone else's eye. Let us not be hypocrites, pointing out the wrongs others do while we commit even greater sins. The speck is like a grain of sand in the eye, while the plank is like a large pencil in the eye.

Let us pray for wisdom to know when to correct and rebuke, especially when God's name is being blasphemed or when innocent people are being harmed. Being tempted is not an excuse to sin. Do not cast pearls or valuable things to pigs—this refers to people who do not value spiritual treasures.

Jesus gave an example of a man who had visitors at midnight and went to his friend's house to borrow three loaves of bread because his guest, who had arrived from a journey, was hungry and he had nothing to offer. The man inside, due to laziness and sleepiness, said, "Do not trouble me; the door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything." However, because the man outside kept knocking and insisting, the homeowner eventually got up and gave him the bread—not because they

were friends, but because of his persistence.

Jesus said that if even a worldly person without God's love can eventually get up and help their neighbor out of persistence, how much more will God do for us? This example contrasts human nature with God's nature, not comparing them. Parables highlight specific lessons and leave out other details.

Jesus said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Everyone who asks receives, everyone who seeks finds, and everyone who knocks will have the door opened. God is more loving than earthly parents—talk to Him as a friend and as a loving Father through prayer. Trust Him because He loves you deeply. No parent will give their child a stone when they ask for bread, a snake when they ask for a fish, or a scorpion when they ask for an egg. So, if sinful humans know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will your Father in heaven give to those who ask Him?

Our heavenly Father is ready to give the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him. Jesus meant that we would be given everything we ask for—things that will not hinder our eternal character. Jesus emphasized the Holy Spirit, who helps us in many ways: reminding us of what to do, assisting us in prayer, comforting us, correcting us when we are wrong, advising us in difficult decisions, strengthening us, and empowering us to share the good news of the Kingdom. Some things we receive immediately when we ask, such as forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, love for others, a spirit of service, or God's grace.

The Holy Spirit is poured out on all His children who believe in Him. The Holy Spirit is God—the third person of the Trinity—just as we know God the Father and God the Son (the Holy Trinity). Another name for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God or the Comforter. The Holy Spirit is a gift for everyone, whether child or adult. Jesus also promised His disciples before leaving that He would give them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very important and has the character of Jesus—He is our friend and companion.

Jesus went on to say that we should do good to others, for that is the fulfillment of all the Scriptures, both the Law and the Prophets. There are only two paths: one with a narrow gate and the other with a wide gate. The broad path, which appears smooth and attractive, leads to destruction, but the narrow and less appealing path leads to eternal life.

Jesus also warned, "Beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." These false prophets can tear apart and

harm God's children. He said that a good tree bears good fruit, while a bad tree bears bad fruit. We must learn to distinguish between true and false prophets.

We are not to judge people but to recognize them by their fruits. Good fruits include love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Bad fruits or works of the flesh include witchcraft, hatred, jealousy, anger, discord, sexual immorality, envy, impurity, idolatry, drunkenness, quarrels, and similar things. Only those who do the will of the Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven—these are the ones who bear good fruits.

On the last day, many will claim they prophesied, cast out demons, and performed miracles in the Lord's name. But the Lord will say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Anyone who hears God's words and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. When the rains came, the winds blew, and the floods rose, the house did not fall because its foundation was on the rock. However, those who do not follow God's words are like a foolish man who built his house on sand. When the storms came, the house collapsed with a great crash. Even today, we must build our faith and hope on the Rock—Christ.

Jesus also warned that our way of life determines our eternal destiny. Many will claim to have performed miracles, but the Lord will reject them because they did not live by His principles.

When Jesus finished speaking on the mountain, the crowds were amazed by His teachings because He taught with authority, unlike the scribes and Pharisees. Even His actions displayed divine authority—no human could do what He did. His voice reached everyone without a microphone, and everyone felt the message was personally relevant. After finishing His teaching, He came down from the mountain, and His disciples followed Him.

Jesus also mentioned how John the Baptist came to prepare the way, but people did not listen. They criticized John for not eating bread or drinking wine, calling him demon-possessed. When Jesus came, eating and drinking, they called Him a glutton and a friend of tax collectors and sinners. These people were impossible to please—they criticized every servant of God while considering themselves righteous.

We must build our lives on the teachings of Jesus, not on human ideas or

selfishness.

Pray with faith. Align your lifestyle with your prayers to receive the blessings you seek. Let your faith not weaken, for the blessings you receive correspond to the faith you exercise.

“According to your faith, let it be done to you” (Matthew 9:29).

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matthew 21:22).

Pray, believe, and rejoice. Praise God because He has answered your prayers. Trust in His promises, for “He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).

God desires to do great things for us. Our duty is to pray and believe. Stay vigilant in prayer and cooperate with the God who hears prayers. Remember, “We are co-workers with God” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Speak and act in accordance with your prayers—it will make an eternal difference.

Questions:

1. Why should we not judge others?

2. What does “Do not cast pearls or valuable things to pigs” mean?

3. In your opinion, what things will you receive when you pray, and what things will you not receive?

4. How is a person who built their house on sand described?

5. Why did the man who was asleep get up to give his neighbor bread?

6. Who is the Holy Spirit?

7. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

8. Mention four ways to identify a false prophet.

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 7:7-9.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?”

Prayer: Father, thank You for the six promises You gave in these verses, and today we ask You to help us reach people. We are knocking so that we may be changed and given the robe of righteousness, and we are seeking from You the love of Agape.

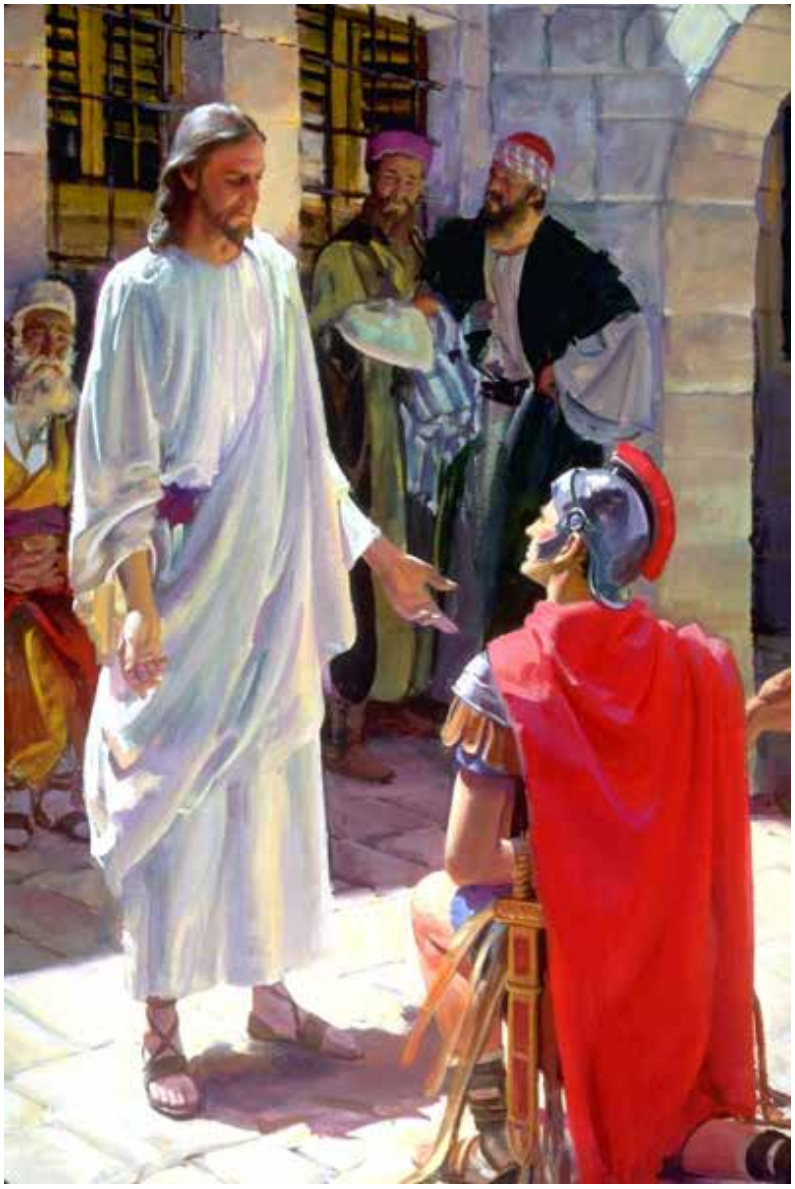
Activity: Act out asking for bread at night (Luke 11:5-13). Or carve out a speck and a plank and place them to compare. Or show a strong house and a weak house, or rotten fruits and good ones.

DAY 220 (August 7)

TOPIC: The Centurion's Servant is Healed

(Luke 7)

After finishing His teachings on the Mount of Blessings, Jesus entered Capernaum. There, a servant of a certain Roman centurion was sick and near death. When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to ask Him to come and heal his servant. This centurion loved people, including his servants. He had moved beyond the Roman prejudice and hatred toward the other nations they had conquered. The elders told Jesus that although the centurion was a Roman, he deserved help because he loved their nation and had even built them a synagogue. He cared for their community and ensured their well-being.



The elders did a good thing because, in those days, the Jews believed that when the Messiah came, there would be a great feast, but only Jews would be invited, and the Gentiles would not share in any blessings. Although servants were considered of low value, even less than property, this centurion loved people and was kind to those who worked for him.

Jesus sought to reach everyone—people in power, the poor, the tall, the short, foreigners, locals, women, children, and men. Wealth and status never intimidated Him. His priority was always to save souls. Even today, we should not fear sharing the Good News with people in high positions—whether

they are children of the rich, ministers, presidents, kings, business leaders, or military commanders. All these people need to hear the gospel. Often, such individuals are neglected because people are afraid to approach them, thinking they are too protected or too proud. We should let go of such thoughts because many people in authority are spiritually thirsty and only lack someone to tell them the truth.

Jesus went with the elders, but when He was near the house, the centurion sent someone to tell Him not to trouble Himself by coming because he felt unworthy to have Jesus enter his home. He said, “Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, and I command soldiers to go here or do this or that.” He did not want to appear as if he were commanding Jesus, knowing that Jesus was the Lord, representing the power and authority of heaven and earth. The centurion believed that whatever Jesus said would happen. He saw himself as unworthy before the Lord. While the Jewish elders argued that he deserved help because of his kindness, the centurion recognized that Jesus was the Commander of an innumerable army of angels and the Lord of all lords.

Jesus was amazed and turned to the crowd following Him, saying, “I have not found such great faith in Israel.” Indeed, this Gentile centurion was willing to acknowledge Jesus and declare his faith publicly. Jesus says that if we are ashamed of Him, He will also be ashamed of us; but if we confess Him, He will confess us before His Father. When those sent by the centurion returned to his house, they found the servant healed at that very hour—exactly when Jesus had spoken. It was the seventh hour when Jesus gave the command. Jesus had power over location, time, and distance.

Perhaps some people were envious that a Gentile received such praise, but that was the truth! Even today, when we are tempted to favor people from our tribe, race, or family while excluding others, we should remember that God shows no favoritism. Whether someone is rich or poor, Chinese or African, large or small, salvation is for everyone. Only He can save us because He is the Father of us all.

After this, Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by His disciples and a large crowd. As they approached the town gate, they met a funeral procession carrying a young man—the only son of a widow. In those days, a widow without a son faced significant hardships. She could be mistreated and left without a place to live or land to farm. Many people were accompanying her, weeping to show their compassion and support.

This young man was his mother’s only hope since children cared for their

aging parents or supported them in times of trouble, especially sons. Seeing the grieving mother, Jesus was moved with compassion. He approached the coffin and touched it. The pallbearers stopped to see what He would do. Then Jesus commanded the dead man, “Young man, I say to you, arise!”

At first, the people laughed, thinking Jesus did not understand that the young man was dead. But their laughter turned to silence as they saw the dead man rise, sit up, and begin to speak. The Bible does not specify his words, but he might have said, “Mother, why are you crying?” or “Why am I being carried?” or even “Thank you, Jesus, for giving me life to help my mother.”

Indeed, Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Death cannot remain where He is present. Jesus showed mercy and compassion to those who were suffering. He returned the young man to his mother. Fear gripped the crowd, and they glorified God, recognizing that a great prophet had arisen among them and that God had come to help His people. What they did not realize was that Jesus was more than a prophet—He was the Messiah and the Son of God.

News of this miracle spread far and wide. What began as a sorrowful procession to the graveyard became a joyful return to the widow’s home, with her living son walking beside her. What incredible joy!

Anyone who has lost a loved one—a parent, child, sibling, or friend—knows the deep pain of death. When we lose someone dear to us, let us remember that Jesus has the same power today that He had when He told the young man in Nain to arise. One day, He will raise everyone from their graves when He returns in the clouds to gather His people to live forever. Those who were raised in Bible times lived for 50 or 70 more years, but those resurrected at the second coming of Christ will live for eternity.

Today, His words also bring us back to life from spiritual death. Many have abandoned their faith and been destroyed by sin. If we trust in Jesus today, He will lift us up and give us the power to walk again in righteousness. If our spiritual eyes were opened, we would see how often Jesus saves us from death and evil without us even realizing it.

When trials and hardships come, do not rely on human help. Instead, trust in God completely. Telling others about our problems often weakens us and does not provide them with any real power to help. We should seek strength from God, who never fails and has no limits.

Questions:

1. What did the Jewish elders say to Jesus about the Roman centurion?

2. What did the centurion tell Jesus?

3. Why was the widow crying?

4. What did Jesus do when He approached the coffin?

5. Why is eternal life important?

6. According to Scripture, where does a person go after death?

7. Can we say that the Pharisees and Sadducees had their issues, but Gentiles like the Romans were more open to accepting the Lord? Discuss!

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 7:6-8.

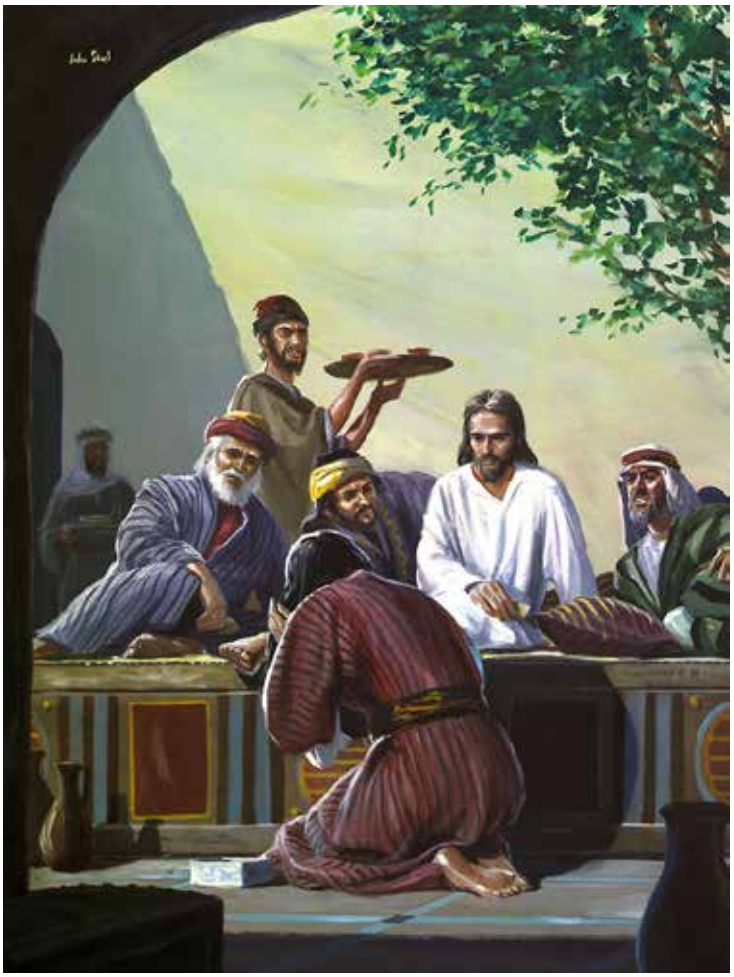
[6-8] …"Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Prayer: Lord, thank You for healing, and we are grateful that You have made us worthy to come before You through the blood of Jesus Christ. Praise be to You, our King.

DAY 221 (August 8)

TOPIC: Mary Magdalene and the Perfume of Love

(Luke 7, John 12)



A man among the Pharisees named Simon the Leper, who had been healed of leprosy by Jesus, invited Jesus to his house for a meal, and they sat together. Many people were present, hoping to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, or to meet Jesus and present their problems to Him. The resurrection of Lazarus convinced many that Jesus was the Messiah. Lazarus was living proof of Jesus' greatness, and it is said that some wanted him dead to erase the evidence of Jesus' power.

Behold, a woman who was a sinner, known for her life of prostitution, learned that Jesus was in Simon's house, reclining at the table. She brought with her a jar of expensive perfume made from pure nard, worth about three years' wages, desiring to express her gratitude to Jesus.

This was the same woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons and had saved from being stoned to death. Because of this, she was ready to follow Jesus wherever He went and to serve Him, for she knew exactly who He was. She loved to listen to His teachings and desired to express her thankfulness to Him. She wanted to be free from Satan's power and was ready to dedicate herself fully to God. This is the same woman to whom Jesus had said, "Go and sin no more."

Even today, if God has delivered us from the grip of Satan, we must surrender to Him daily, seek to do His will, and follow His commandments to avoid falling back into Satan's grasp.
Mary Magdalene stood behind Jesus, near His feet, weeping tears of gratitude. She began to wash His feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair, kiss them, and anoint them with the perfume. Many might not have understood what was happening, but the fragrance filled the entire house.

When Simon the Pharisee saw this, he thought to himself, "If this man were a prophet, He would know who is touching Him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Others also began to speak amongst themselves, and Mary may have felt embarrassed, thinking, If only the ground would open and swallow me. She worried about what Jesus would say—would He agree with Simon?

But Jesus, being the Lord, knew Simon's thoughts. He said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." Startled, Simon replied, "Say it, Teacher."

Jesus then told a parable: "A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the means to repay him, so he forgave both debts. Which one of them will love him more?"

Simon answered, "I suppose the one who was forgiven the larger debt."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus replied. Then, turning toward Mary, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, and you did not give Me water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give Me a kiss, but she, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with perfume."

"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

Through this, Simon realized that Jesus was indeed the Lord because He could read thoughts. According to the customs of the time, Simon should have offered water to wash Jesus' feet, greeted Him with a kiss, and honored Him with oil, but he had failed to do so.

Simon thought he was honoring Jesus by inviting Him, but he realized he had not even fulfilled basic acts of hospitality. Yet, Jesus did not expose Simon's faults publicly, even though He knew them. However, Simon had hoped Jesus would expose Mary's sins.

Jesus accepts any gift we bring to Him—whether it is a simple flower picked by a child or something as valuable as gold. When Jesus finds us, He does not leave us the same; He transforms us to become better people.

Simon did not understand the depth of God's love and mercy. He believed that sinners should be immediately rebuked or avoided. But Jesus said to Mary, "Your sins are forgiven."

At this, those reclining at the table began to wonder, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But Jesus reassured Mary, saying, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would later betray Jesus, objected when he saw the expensive perfume. He said, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?"

Mary may have feared her family would criticize her for wasting money. However, Jesus settled the matter, knowing that Judas was not genuinely concerned for the poor—he was a thief who used to steal from the disciples' money bag. Despite his position as treasurer, Judas was ready to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Jesus did not publicly shame Judas, even though He knew his wickedness. This teaches us not to publicly humiliate others, even when we know their faults. Instead, we should speak to them privately and pray for them.

Jesus told Judas, "Leave her alone; she has kept this perfume for the day of My burial. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me."

That night, Judas left Simon's house and went to the chief priests to arrange Jesus' betrayal, receiving thirty pieces of silver.

Even today, Satan and bad friends do not love us. After using us, they discard us like empty containers. Only God knows our true value, for He is our Creator. The value of a human being can only be measured by the death of Christ, not by human standards, no matter how powerful they may seem.

Mary Magdalene later became one of Jesus' faithful disciples. She stood by Him at the cross, witnessed His burial, and was the first to see Him after His resurrection. She also received the Holy Spirit among the 120 disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Let us, like Mary, express our love for Jesus while we and others are still alive. Do not wait until people die to show them love.

Questions:

1. Why did Simon the Leper doubt Jesus?

2. Was Judas Iscariot genuinely willing to help the poor?

3. What great act did Mary perform?

4. What gift will you give to Jesus today?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 7:47.

[47] "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

Prayer: Thank You so much Lord, forgive us our sins. We pray that we may love You as Mary loved You. Protect us from the evil one so that we may not be discouragers like Judas. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Anoint someone's feet with fragrant ointment, then share the discouraging words of Simon and Judas.

DAY 222 (August 9)

TOPIC: Martha and Mary – Two Sisters Who Served Jesus

(Luke 10)



As they continued their journey, the disciples and Jesus arrived at the home of their friends, Martha and Mary. They welcomed Him joyfully because they loved this famous Teacher. When He arrived, all their worries melted away. Mary Magdalene, her sister, and their brother named Lazarus lived in Bethany, about four kilometers from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus loved to visit this home because of their friendship and hospitality. They were also His disciples. They showed kindness to Jesus by providing Him with food and a place to stay.

They may have also taken care of His personal needs, like washing His clothes and other tasks. These siblings loved having Jesus as their guest and rejoiced every time He came. They served Him by cooking and offering other forms of hospitality we give to guests who visit or stay in our homes. Can you think of some of these acts of kindness? They believed in Jesus, and whenever He entered their home, people would gather, leading to many guests to serve.

Martha appears to be the eldest or perhaps the owner of the house. She welcomed Jesus into their home, or maybe they had invited Him to stay with them as He passed through the city. Her sister Mary, instead of helping Martha prepare food for the guests, sat with the men in the living room, eager to

hear the words of hope from Jesus. Martha waited for Mary to come and help stir the fire or cook the food, but she never came. The twelve disciples and other guests remained in the living room close to Jesus, listening to His words while Mary was refreshed by His teachings.

Wouldn't you also want to sit near the greatest Teacher in the world and listen to Him? Martha signaled Mary to come, but Mary was focused on listening to Jesus. So, Martha eventually came to complain to Jesus because her signals seemed to go unnoticed. She asked why Jesus, the loving Lord and Teacher, didn't care that her lazy sister had left her to serve alone. Martha spoke openly without fear, expressing her frustration directly rather than addressing it privately. She felt that although Jesus was kind, He seemed to favor her younger sister. She said, "Lord, don't You care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?"

If you think about it, even in today's world, Martha had a valid point. When more than thirteen men, including the Lord Himself, enter your home, you naturally rush to prepare a meal. Perhaps they had not eaten for a while, and it would not be wise or considerate to sit idly and leave the work to someone else. However, the Lord answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus appreciated Martha's hospitality, knowing that preparing food and serving guests takes time, especially without modern conveniences like gas stoves, electricity, or today's easy-to-use cookware. However, He was also impressed by Mary's choice to prioritize seeking God's kingdom first by listening to His words—words she believed would guide her for a lifetime, unlike physical food, which satisfies only temporarily. Everything has its place; Jesus was not saying that preparing food was unimportant. Instead, He encouraged Martha to find a balance so she could also listen to the Bread of Life Himself—spiritual nourishment from heaven.

Jesus told the Jews, and He tells us today, that He is the Bread of Life. Just as He was physically present with the Jews for a short time, we should also prioritize hearing His holy words over other concerns. It is not a valid excuse to skip attending church to prepare meals for guests. Other tasks can wait for a little while. Martha fully understood this message, and she likely felt grateful because it is easy to get distracted—especially for women who are busy preparing meals.

It is wrong to let cooking or cleaning prevent you from attending worship services, no matter how many guests you have. Let us never fall into that

habit. It is wise to organize our time to receive both physical food and the Word of Life because the food we eat is temporary, while God's Word is eternal. Remember, we have only a short time to receive these words before the door of grace closes.

Work and play are important. For a child to grow well, they need to play—it helps them imitate real-life situations and learn valuable lessons. However, we must not forget to seek God's kingdom first. Before going to bed, we should read God's Word. We should pray and ask for His blessings. Before eating, we should also read the Bible and pray. If you think you don't have time, try this: don't eat until you've made time to read the Word of God—you will feel hungry and find the time to nourish your soul as well!

Prayer and Faith Will Work Wonders
I fear that the critical and essential faith we need is lacking. Are we not fighting against discouragement and temptations that seek to break our spirits? God is merciful, and if we rejoice in the truth that sanctifies and enriches our lives, we can do great and lasting work for Him. Prayer and faith will accomplish amazing things. The Word must be our weapon of warfare. Miracles can be performed through the Word because it is profitable for everything.

Questions:

1. Why was Martha burdened?

2. Why did Mary seem unconcerned?

3. Why didn't Jesus criticize either Martha or Mary?

4. Why is it good to invite guests?

5. Do you read God's Word before eating?

6. How can we be like Mary in a busy, Martha-like world?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 10:41-42

[41] "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father, help us not to be troubled by many things, but only to choose that good part, which is You Yourself. Help us to love and obey You. Forgive us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of Martha and Mary.

DAY 223 (August 10)

TOPIC: The Sower, Jesus Teaches in Parables

(Mark 3 and 4)

Even Jesus' family struggled to understand His mission and divinity. One day, they tried to seize Him because they had heard from others that He was out of His mind. They thought He would cause problems with the authorities because He had left His carpentry work, was walking around with unusual disciples, sometimes went without eating, and did other things they considered strange. The scribes said, "Isn't this the Son of David?" Without realizing it, they were calling Him by the title He deserved and the one foretold in prophecy. They never denied that He came from the royal lineage—they knew the Messiah would be the Son of David—but their mistake was stopping there!

They were amazed when a mute man possessed by a demon could speak after Jesus cast the demon out. This man thanked Jesus because he had never spoken since childhood. He had struggled, unable even to call on Jesus for healing. Imagine living without hearing your child laugh or sing. But when he was healed, he could finally hear the sounds of birds singing, children playing, and neighbors celebrating his healing. Perhaps his first words were, "Thank you, Jesus." Being grateful is both good and essential. This man had stored thousands of unspoken words in his heart, and now his tongue was loosed to speak.

Instead of rejoicing, others accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus questioned how Satan could drive out Satan. Any kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. If Satan opposes himself, his kingdom cannot endure but must come to an end. Jesus meant that if His works were from Satan, how could He be casting out demons and causing them to tremble in His presence? The demons wanted to flee when they saw Him, begging to enter a herd of pigs to escape His presence. Their fear of Jesus showed clearly that they did not want to associate with or cooperate with Him.

Seeing that their words were blasphemous, Jesus warned them, "Truly, I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." He said this because they were accusing Him of being possessed by an evil spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us

of sin and leads us to repentance (John 16:8). If we harden our hearts and repeatedly ignore His voice, eventually, we will no longer hear His warnings, and our conscience will no longer convict us of wrongdoing.

If you are wondering whether you have committed the unforgivable sin, rest assured you have not! Those who have committed it no longer care about sin or their spiritual condition.

Jesus also said, “Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters.” A good tree bears good fruit, while a bad tree bears bad fruit. In the same way, a person’s words reflect the condition of their heart. Jesus warned against careless speech, saying that everyone will give an account for every empty word they have spoken on the Day of Judgment. The scribes and Pharisees had become so self-righteous that they no longer saw themselves as sinners.

When the scribes and Pharisees demanded a sign, Jesus replied that no sign would be given to them except the sign of Jonah. He explained that the people of Nineveh would rise at the judgment and condemn that generation because they repented at Jonah’s preaching. Even the Queen of Sheba (Ethiopia) would stand in judgment against them because she traveled far to hear Solomon’s wisdom, yet someone greater than Solomon was present among them—Jesus Himself—but they rejected Him.

These two examples—Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba—show that even people from pagan nations recognized the truth and repented, while the religious leaders of Israel, despite having Jesus Himself, refused to believe.

Jesus warned that when an impure spirit is cast out of someone and the person’s heart remains unchanged, the spirit returns with seven others more wicked than itself, leaving the person worse off than before. This illustrates what happens when someone rejects the truth and refuses to listen to God’s voice.

At one point, Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see Him, but because the crowd was so large, they sent someone to call Him. Perhaps they had heard the Pharisees’ accusations and wanted to persuade Him to stop. The Bible doesn’t specify their reasons, but every family tries to offer advice to their loved ones. Jesus’ siblings did not fully understand His mission. Instead of supporting Him, they sometimes caused Him pain, making it easier for Him to stay with friends like Lazarus.

Jesus responded, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” He answered His

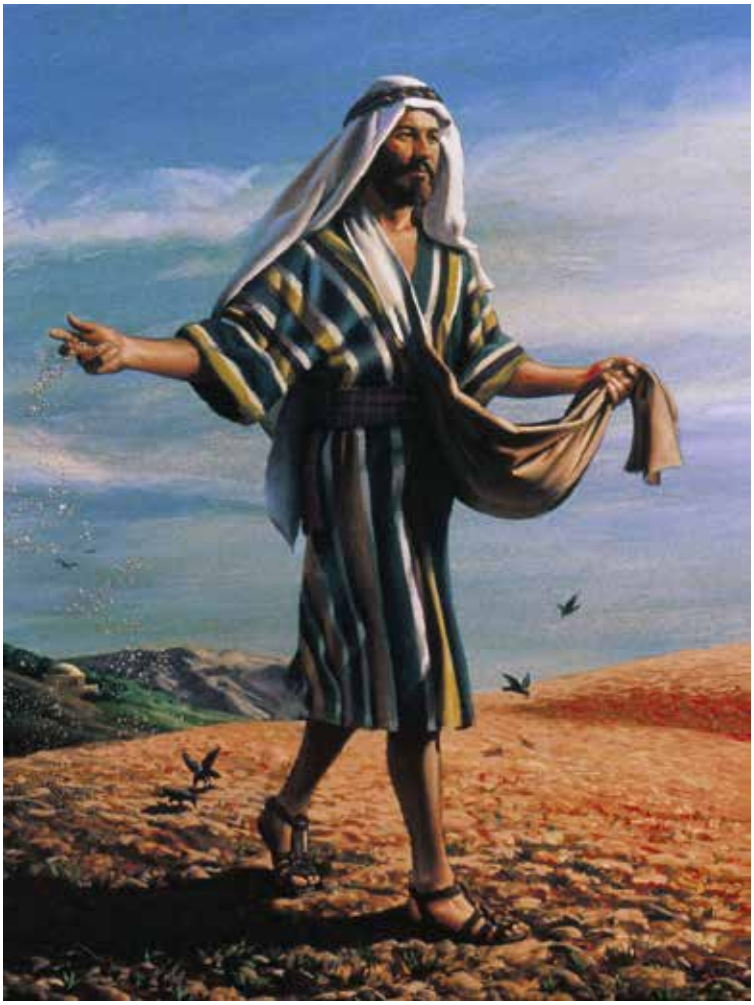
own question, saying, “Whoever does God’s will is My brother and sister and mother.” This means that doing God’s will is what truly makes someone a member of God’s family.

Are you joyful knowing you are part of God’s family? If your family rejects you for following Jesus, take comfort in knowing that even Jesus’ own family thought He was ruining His life. However, after Jesus’ resurrection, His family came to believe in Him and even wrote some books of the Bible.

Even today, those who dedicate their lives to serving God without worldly rewards are often considered strange or even crazy. Yet, Jesus reminds us that if we leave everything for His sake, we will receive many blessings both now and in eternity.

Jesus began teaching in parables, using everyday things to explain heavenly truths. One of His most famous parables is the Parable of the Sower:

A sower went out to sow. Some seeds fell on the path, and birds ate them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, sprouted quickly, but withered under the hot sun because they had no roots. Some seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns choked the plants, preventing them from bearing fruit. But some seeds fell on good soil and produced a bountiful harvest—thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times what was sown.



Jesus explained that the seed represents God’s Word. The different soils represent the conditions of people’s hearts. Some hear the Word, but Satan immediately takes it away. Others receive it joyfully but fall away when trouble comes. Some hear it but are distracted by life’s worries, wealth, and desires. But those with good hearts receive the Word, hold onto it, and bear much fruit.

Let us not lose heart in sowing the Word. If we faithfully sow, we will surely reap a harvest.

Questions:

1. What did the Jews accuse Jesus of when He cast out demons?

2. What does “Satan cannot drive out Satan” mean?

3. Who are Jesus’ mother and brothers? Are you His sibling today?

4. What do the seeds that produced fruit represent?

5. What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?

6. Where did the sower’s seeds fall, and what do those places symbolize?

May God greatly bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 4:2-4.

[2] Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away…”

Prayer: Father, we thank You. Help us not to grieve Your Spirit. Help those who are persecuted by their families and others. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The parable of the Sower. Bring seeds and small seedlings as you explain.

DAY 224 (August 11)

TOPIC: The Parables of Jesus – The Wind Obeys Him

(Mark 4, Matthew 8)

When Jesus taught in parables, He began with an agricultural example. He said that the kingdom of heaven is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. While the man sleeps, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how—only God knows. However, another person came and sowed weeds among the wheat, so both the grain and the weeds grew together. When a servant asked if he should pull up the weeds, he was told no—he should wait until the harvest, when the difference between the wheat and the weeds would become clear.

When the harvest came, the man brought his sickle to gather the crop he had planted. On that day, he separated the wheat from the weeds. The wheat represents those who obey and have faith in Him, while the weeds represent the wicked. The weeds will not be in heaven, as they were burned in the fire. The weeds symbolize people who continue in their own ways without surrendering to Jesus. Do you think anyone wants to be like the weeds?



When you wonder why some people in the church behave in ways that raise questions, or why some who claim to love God lack love themselves, you may realize that these could be the "weeds." However, do not judge them—leave the judgment to God. When Jesus calls someone, He wants them to die to their old way of life.

Then Jesus gave another parable. What shall we compare the kingdom of God to? It is like a mustard seed which, when planted, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet, when it grows, it becomes larger than all garden plants and produces large branches where the birds of the air can nest in its shade.

With many such parables, Jesus—the Great Teacher—taught the people. Luke, the physician, recorded about nineteen of these parables. Jesus always spoke in parables to the crowds but explained everything privately to His disciples and to those who were humble and willing to learn. He showed how these parables related to the kingdom of heaven. All who humbly poured out their hearts to hear and obey His Word were transformed in remarkable ways by His teachings.

The greatest miracle of all is that God forgives our sins and helps us live victorious lives. These parables made His teachings easier to understand. Two-thirds of Jesus' parables focused on money or possessions. He did this to reveal where a person's heart truly lies—because a person's heart is where their treasure is, meaning what occupies their thoughts most often, such as wealth or material things.

That evening, Jesus told His disciples to cross to the other side of the lake. Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along in the boat. Suddenly, a fierce storm arose, and waves crashed over the boat, filling it with water. Meanwhile, Jesus was at the back of the boat, asleep on a cushion—resting in perfect peace. The frightened disciples woke Him, saying, "Master, save us! Don't you care that we are perishing?" Without panic or fear, Jesus arose, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Immediately, the wind stopped, and a great calm followed. Creation recognizes the voice of its Master—whether it be the wind, demons, water, plants, or all natural forces—they obey Him.

Jesus then asked the disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Filled with awe, the disciples asked each other, "Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" They began to understand that this was God with them, for only God has such absolute authority. Indeed, the disciples were in the greatest classroom ever—being taught by the greatest Teacher of all time. God Himself was instructing them face to face. I have

often wondered what it would be like to have such an opportunity!

The disciples were building their character upon the foundation of Christ so that they could help others gain eternal life. They had witnessed many miracles, yet they still sometimes forgot who He was, thinking He was merely another human being. While He was fully human, He was also fully God—there has never been, and never will be, anyone else like Him.

Even today, Jesus calms the storms in our hearts. In all of life's storms, call upon Jesus from the depths of your heart, saying, "Lord, save me!" and He will bring you deliverance. Sometimes it may seem as though He is asleep and unaware while we face danger, but in every situation, He has the power and authority to save.

With sincerity of heart and a hunger for spiritual things, cry out to God. Strive earnestly in prayer until you receive victory. Commit your entire being—soul, body, and spirit—into the hands of the Lord. Decide to become His beloved servant, fully dedicated to His will, guided by His wisdom, and filled with His Spirit.

Questions:

1. What do the weeds and the good crop represent?
2. Why did the wind obey Jesus' voice?
3. What is the mustard seed compared to?
4. Why did many of Jesus' parables focus on money or possessions?
5. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
6. Why is everyone's life experience a school for building character to become like Christ?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 4:9-13.

[9-13] And He said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. When He was alone, those around Him with the Twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear

and not understand, lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them. And He said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

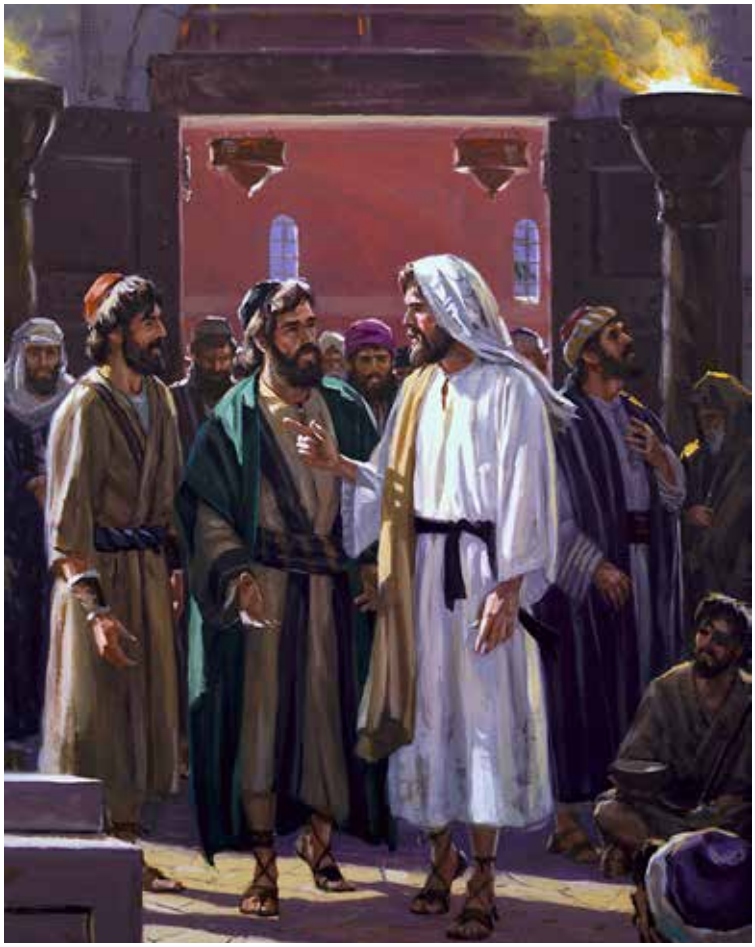
Prayer: Thank You, Father, for removing fear from us in the storms of life. Thank You for protecting us from the enemy who sows tares. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 225 (August 12)

TOPIC: The Twelve Apostles Go to Work

(Matthew 10, Luke 9)

When the time for Jesus' birth arrived, the Israelites had mingled with people who did not believe in or love the things of God. They had adopted traditions, customs, and other beliefs that made them unfaithful to God. Even the Pharisees, who had the Scriptures of Truth, became hypocritical and corrupt. Jesus began to rebuild the church, and the apostles were His first followers. When Jesus chose the apostles, He took time to organize and structure the church as an institution so that when He ascended to heaven, they would continue His work.



The apostles were the first leaders of the Christian church, and their influence extends to future generations up to the present day. We stand on the shoulders of these men, and all of us stand on the chief foundation, which is Jesus Christ. This apostolic church worked faithfully, teaching the truth. As Christians today, we must follow everything they wrote and left for us until that glorious morning when Jesus will appear in the clouds with the trumpet sound, along with angels, to take us to live with Him forever.

They did not have office buildings or church meeting places to plan their missions. They carried out their work on mountains, by the sea, and in open spaces. They saw much of creation—like the blue skies and green grass—and their hearts were comforted as they listened to their Teacher share parables.

Jesus knew the weaknesses of each disciple. Some sought positions of power, others had quick tempers, and some were dissatisfied with the Roman government. They traveled and lived with Jesus for three and a half years, learning how to save souls. John, the youngest and the one who loved to stay close to Jesus, gives us a deep picture of God's power to transform anger into love. We do not read anywhere that Jesus called Judas to join His group. Perhaps Judas joined with hopes of gaining a position in the new government he expected Jesus to establish after overthrowing the Romans. Jesus did not drive him away, and others saw him as a good man working for God, although sadly, his intentions were far from pure.

Judas was selfish and greedy, but Jesus gave him the opportunity to change if he chose to. Jesus corrected the apostles when they were wrong, but they were not offended or tempted to join another group. The closer they were to Jesus, the closer they became to one another, agreeing on what they did. Jesus did not assign angels to save humanity—this work was given to people like you and me. Despite our flawed characters, Jesus is ready to teach us to become like Him. Jesus helped the apostles understand that His kingdom was not about overthrowing Rome but was far greater than any earthly nation.

Jesus did not heal the sick and cast out demons by Himself only—He also gave the disciples the authority to do these things. All twelve cast out demons and healed the sick. The apostles became both preachers and healers. Jesus sent these twelve with instructions not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritan towns but to start with the lost sheep of Israel. He told them to preach that the kingdom of heaven was near. They were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, and cast out demons. They were not to charge for these services because they had received the power freely, and they should give it freely.

He told them not to take gold, silver, copper, a bag, extra clothes, a staff, or sandals because a worker is worthy of their support. When they brought the good news to people, those people were expected to provide for their needs. He instructed them to find a trustworthy and hospitable person in any village they entered and stay with them until they left the area. Upon entering a house, they were to offer peace, and if the house was deserving, their peace would rest on it. If not, their peace would return to them.

If anyone refused to welcome or listen to them, they were to leave that house or town and shake the dust off their feet as a testimony against the rejection. Jesus warned that it would be more bearable for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for towns that rejected the message of God.

The apostles were given authority and the ability to perform great works, but Jesus also warned them about the Sadducees, Pharisees, priests, and the council of elders. He told them that He was sending them out like sheep among wolves because many people love evil and do not want to hear God's message. He advised them to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.

Jesus warned them to be careful of people because they would be handed over to local councils and flogged in synagogues. They would be brought before governors and kings because of Him, as a testimony to them and the nations. Even today, millions of believers face persecution, especially in countries within the "10/40 window" (latitude and longitude), like North Korea, Somalia, and many others. Look at a map to see this window! We must remember these people in our prayers. Some countries are also experiencing wars, which disrupt public worship for many believers.

These trials allow people in high positions to hear the message and prepare for God's kingdom. Jesus told the apostles not to worry about what to say when they were arrested because God's Spirit would speak through them. At that time, family members would betray one another to death—parents against children and children against parents. They would be hated by everyone because of Jesus, but those who endure to the end will be saved.

When persecuted in one town, Jesus told them to flee to another to continue sharing the good news of God's kingdom and the coming judgment. He assured them that they would not finish spreading the message to all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

A student is not above their teacher, nor is a servant above their master. It is enough for the student to be like their teacher. If people called Jesus "Beelzebul," how much more would they mistreat His followers? Jesus told them not to be afraid because nothing is hidden that will not be revealed. Whatever He told them in secret, they were to proclaim openly. They were not to fear those who could kill the body but could not kill the soul. Instead, they were to fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

The apostles went out to all the towns of the region, preaching and healing every kind of disease.

When Jesus said He had given them authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and not be harmed by poison, He did not mean they should purposely handle snakes or drink poison to test their power. It meant that if these things happened accidentally while spreading the gospel, they would be protected.

In the 1800s, some people held snakes and drank poison, claiming God would protect them. This is foolishness and a misinterpretation of Scripture. Similarly, when Jesus said, “If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out,” He did not mean to take it literally—otherwise, the world would be full of blind people who still sin.

Tell Jesus your needs with sincerity of heart. You do not need to engage in a long debate or sermon with God. With a heart broken over your sins, simply say, “Save me, Lord, or I will perish.” There is hope for such souls—they will seek, knock, and find. When Jesus removes the burden of sin, your heart will be refreshed by the peace of Christ.

Questions:

1. Why didn’t Jesus drive Judas away, even though He knew his heart?

2. Why should we not worry about what to say if we are taken to court?

3. Why did Jesus say a student is not greater than their teacher?

4. What is the difference between the church of the priests like Annas and the apostolic church Jesus established?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 10:1, 2.

He called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, we pray that we may deny ourselves and follow You. Thank You for giving us the power to cast out demons and to heal every disease and sickness. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Teach the children and youth, then send them out two by two—through role play or in real life.

DAY 226 (August 13)

TOPIC: Sending the Seventy Disciples on a Mission

(Luke 10)



The Lord Jesus gathered seventy disciples, apart from the twelve, and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place He intended to go. This helped ease the work and ensured that people understood the message of God well so that they could make informed decisions about the good news. He told these seventy, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest." Even today, the harvest is plentiful—many people are ready to hear the news of God's coming kingdom, but both children and adults are often too busy or fail to give it attention. However, it is a command for us, even if we cannot do much, to pray fervently for the Lord to send laborers to work in His field. Every child, adult, and elder can do this.

He told them that He was sending them out like lambs among wolves. They were not to carry a purse, bag, or sandals. Some people were cunning and opposed the light because Satan used them; outwardly, they appeared to be good people, but they were the wolves. Others acted as spies among them, intending to capture and imprison them. The apostles were told that whoever received them was receiving Him, the Son of God, or the Heavenly Father. They were instructed not to greet people on the road or waste time with lengthy stories or gossip, as their mission was urgent and required focus.

Any house they entered, they were to bless it with peace, showing that they came as people of peace with a sincere desire to help others with eternal matters. If the hosts were unwilling to learn God's Word and caused trouble, they were to leave, and their peace would return to them. If they found a person willing to hear the message of God's kingdom, they were to stay in that house, eating and drinking what was provided, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. They were not to move from house to house, as this would give the impression that they were seeking personal comfort or were difficult to please. Instead, they were to reach others from that central point.

In any town where they were welcomed, they were to eat what was provided, heal the sick, and declare that the kingdom of God had come near. However, in towns where they were not welcomed, they were to leave and publicly declare, "Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near." It would be more bearable for Sodom on the Day of Judgment than for a town or person who rejects God's Word. Anyone who listens to God's messengers listens to God Himself, and anyone who rejects them rejects God.

The seventy disciples returned joyfully, saying, "Even the demons submit to us in Your name!" Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." He gave them authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing would harm them. However, He told them not to rejoice because the spirits submitted to them, but to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. The instructions given to the seventy disciples were very similar to those given to the twelve apostles.

These first evangelists are an example for everyone who loves God today—both children and adults. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles recalled His instructions and shared His teachings with the people. Jesus spent more time healing than preaching. His voice was the first sound many deaf people heard, and His face was the first thing many blind people saw after being healed. He brought joy like a bright light. Even today, the work of evangelism should follow His example—feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowful, and

giving hope to the hopeless.

The apostles dressed like ordinary people and went into the towns to share the good news, pray with the people, and read the Scriptures. Those with problems were brought to them for help. The apostles rejoiced in their ability to heal and preach and did not focus on the suffering they faced. Jesus warned them that He was sending them among wolves, but they were to be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves. Jesus was never arrogant or harsh without cause.

We should avoid arguing to win debates or to convert people to our denomination. Our main goal is to help souls turn to God and follow the Scriptures, not human traditions. It is the gentle words of Jesus that win hearts, not our debating skills or power. Some world leaders, like former U.S. President Bush and Iraq's Saddam Hussein, claimed to defend God, but God does not need human defense—He is all-powerful.

True Christianity is about gentleness, not competition. We may win arguments but lose the spiritual battle. Our true enemy, Satan, wants to distract us with disputes and make us lose sight of our mission. Christianity is about God seeking humanity with love, while religion is humanity seeking God, sometimes through truth and sometimes through error. Only the Messiah reveals the whole truth—He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jesus wants us not to fear persecution. If we are taken before rulers, He will give us the words to speak. However, we must study the Scriptures because the Holy Spirit will only remind us of what we have already learned. Jesus warned that even their families might reject them. He did not send them to seek suffering but to save lives and speak the truth with love.

Those who love God must prioritize His teachings over human approval. Jesus emphasized that we should not fear those who kill the body but cannot harm the soul. Witnessing about Jesus involves more than just knowing His teachings—it means loving and caring for others. We can misrepresent Jesus by lying, being harsh, selfish, or lazy.

Jesus knew that His followers would always face opposition because Satan constantly fights against God's kingdom. He promised that anyone who helps His messengers is serving Him. The Apostle John wrote that if the sea were ink, the sky were parchment, the trees were pens, and everyone a writer, it would still be impossible to record everything they learned from Jesus.

When the apostles reported their successes, Jesus took them aside to pray

and rest. They had been so busy serving others that they had not taken care of their physical needs. Jesus knew they needed rest and time to reflect. Even today, rest is vital for anyone serving others to prevent exhaustion and spiritual weakness. We must spend time studying the Scriptures, praying, and reflecting to maintain a strong relationship with God.

God Answers Prayers of Faith with Power
When people devote themselves like Elijah and possess faith as he did, God reveals Himself in mighty ways. When people pray earnestly like Jacob, God's power will be seen again.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the seventy disciples and the twelve apostles?

2. Who are the wolves and the lambs in today's world?

3. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to rejoice?

4. What authority did Jesus give the disciples?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 10:5-7.

[5-7] When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

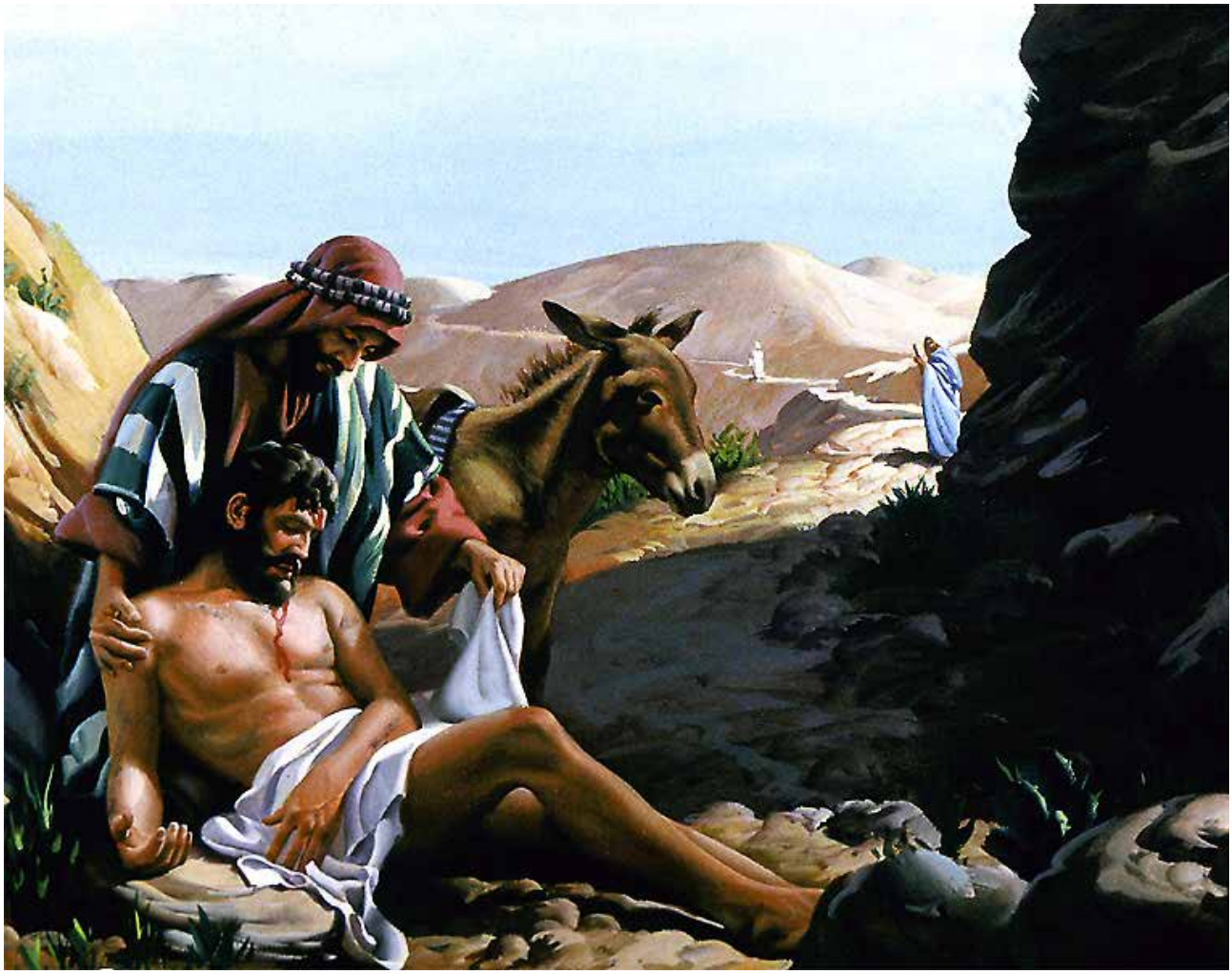
Prayer: Thank You for sending the seventy disciples and giving them power to make the work easier. Help us to encourage people as we share the good news. Forgive our sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: House-to-house work—methods of visiting homes effectively! Sit down and write these methods from your own experience and from books or others' experiences.

DAY 227 (August 14)

TOPIC: The Good Samaritan

(Luke 10)



The apostles were very blessed because many people longed to see the things Jesus did with their own eyes. King David, Abraham, and others would have leaped with joy to see the Messiah. Even those considered wise were kept from understanding many things, but the apostles were told everything. We are also fortunate today to have the Word of God because we have access to the same teachings the apostles received.

We, too, have the opportunity to help those in need—whether at our schools, with our parents, our siblings, friends, or anyone who requires assistance—just like the Good Samaritan we are about to read about.

It is easy to share the message of salvation by setting a good example of caring for others and showing compassion. Love is the foundation of the kingdom of heaven—loving our God in heaven and loving our neighbors. From childhood, we are often taught to think of ourselves first and to fight for our own needs before considering others. However, in the kingdom of Jesus, we are called to prioritize the needs of others.

In God's kingdom, if you fight battles on your own without relying on Him, you will fail. But if you surrender to Him, you will have victory. When the seventy disciples returned, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said:
"I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what You were pleased to do."

He told them that everything had been entrusted to Him by His Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. Turning to the disciples privately, He said they were truly blessed to witness these things, for many prophets and kings had desired to see what they saw but did not see it, and to hear what they heard but did not hear it.

Indeed, the apostles were incredibly fortunate to stand face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Himself. Wouldn't you also desire such an opportunity?

One day, a lawyer came forward and asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus, knowing he wanted to engage in a debate, responded with a question, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" The lawyer answered correctly, summarizing the entire law:
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live."

Wanting to justify himself—perhaps to avoid the responsibility of loving his neighbor—the lawyer asked, "And who is my neighbor?" This was because the scribes were hypocritical, loving themselves and displaying outward piety while lacking genuine love for people or God.

In response, Jesus told a parable:
"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he

came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was, and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

Jesus then asked the lawyer, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The lawyer replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Through this parable, Jesus answered the question for all humanity. Even today, our neighbors are not only our relatives, people of the same tribe, those living near us, members of our denomination, or our friends. Our neighbors are anyone in need of our help. Jesus settled the question of “Who is my neighbor?” once and for all.

The Law of Moses instructed people to show kindness and mercy to orphans, widows, strangers, and the poor. The Samaritan risked his safety by stopping on a road known for robbers and worked hard to care for the injured man. Showing compassion and helping those in need, without thinking of ourselves, is crucial.

Do not say, “This is my time to rest, don’t bother me,” or “I don’t owe you anything.” Such attitudes violate the principles of heaven. Some people refuse to help others in hospitals, perhaps because there are few nurses, or because others are unkind. Do not let such things discourage you—help where you can, and God will give you the opportunity and blessing to fulfill your desire to assist others. He Himself will sustain and empower you.

Sometimes, people bring trouble upon themselves, but that does not mean we should refuse to help them. For example, if someone falls and breaks a bone while playing, do not say, “They brought this on themselves!”

A life of loving others and loving God is the key to the kingdom of heaven. God is Love—not just that He has love, but that He is Love itself. Many people from different nations, like the Samaritan, may not have heard the gospel or read the Scriptures, but they live according to the principles of God’s

kingdom. By the work of the Holy Spirit, these people become a blessing to others. Even if they do not know God or Jesus Christ as we do, they are still God's children.

Another person once asked Jesus which commandments were the greatest, not to trap Him, but out of genuine interest. Jesus told him he was not far from the kingdom of God.

Following in Jesus' footsteps does not mean going on a pilgrimage to Israel or Egypt, but rather helping those in need—whether they are the lonely, the elderly, orphans, widows, homeless children, or those in need of professional advice or medical care.

For the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, a Christ-like character, wisdom, strength to do His work, and every other gift He has promised—we can ask. We must also believe that we receive what we ask for and give thanks to God for providing it.

Questions:

1. Why were those who saw and heard Jesus' teachings so blessed?

2. What good deed did the Samaritan do?

3. Who is my neighbor?

4. Why is it easier to help friends, relatives, or those from our tribe?

5. What blessings do we have even though we did not see Jesus face-to-face during His first coming?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 10:27-29.

[27-29] … 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for giving us hearts of compassion so that we can help those who suffer misfortunes. Help us to love You deeply and to love people. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A role play of the Good Samaritan.

DAY 228 (August 15)

TOPIC: Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness

(Matthew 10)



You are more valuable than sparrows, even those that seem unattractive. – Matthew 10:11

Jesus told His disciples that two sparrows are sold for only a penny, yet none of them falls to the ground or dies without the knowledge of the Heavenly Father. Despite their dull gray and brown colors compared to other birds, God still cares for them. How much more does He love us, human beings? Even the very hairs on our heads are all numbered. It is not easy to count the hairs on a person's head—some people today, using machines, can count up to three hundred thousand or even five hundred thousand hairs on a single head. God cares for us deeply and knows everything about us. He knows us better than we know ourselves! We should not be afraid, for we are more valuable than many sparrows. If we acknowledge Him before others, He will also acknowledge us before His Father in heaven. But if we deny Him before others, He will also deny us before His Father in heaven.

And if we fail by denying Him, as the Reformer Jerome did, we should ask for forgiveness and start a new journey of hope. God accepts a broken and repentant heart.

Jesus also told them not to think that He came to bring peace on earth, but rather a sword and division. He came to bring conflict between a man and his

father, a daughter and her mother, and a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. This means that when one person believes in God and the other does not, tension and strife may arise between them. A person's enemies will be the members of their own household. Anyone who loves their father or mother more than God is not worthy of Him. Anyone who loves their son or daughter more than God is not worthy of Him. Whoever tries to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Christ's sake will find it.

Jesus knew that believers would be hated just as He was hated. Some people hated Him simply because others were coming to Him for help and guidance. Even today, similar things happen. If you are in school and strive to be obedient and well-mannered, others may dislike you. If you work hard and earn good grades, some children may accuse you of being a show-off. In my experience as a teacher, I have encountered children who deliberately fail or misbehave just to fit in with others. Those who hated Jesus tried to trap or harm Him, but those who loved Him did not follow the wicked crowd—they were willing to do good for Jesus' sake.

Anyone who welcomes a servant of God welcomes God and Jesus Himself. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Whoever welcomes a righteous person because he is righteous will receive the reward of a righteous person. Even if someone gives a small cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is a disciple, they will certainly not lose their reward.

Jesus was saddened when He saw that some cities where He had performed great miracles refused to repent of their sins and turn to God. Because He knew what was in people's hearts, even when they spoke with pretense, He could see through their hypocrisy. He declared, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! Woe to you, Capernaum!" meaning, "I pity you, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum," because they had received more opportunities than others to hear the message but did not make the decision to follow God. He said that if the miracles performed in those cities had been done in Tyre and Sidon, the people there would have repented long ago, wearing sackcloth and covering themselves with ashes as a sign of remorse and sorrow.

Jesus warned that it would be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the Day of Judgment than for these cities because they had greater opportunities but did not act on them. He even said that if the miracles performed in those cities had been done in Sodom, it would have remained standing to that day and would not have been destroyed. It will be easier for the land of Sodom to endure judgment than for those who have been given the opportunity to hear God's Word and do nothing about it. To whom much is given, much will

be required. Even today, those of us who have access to the Scriptures have received much, and therefore, we should read and obey God's Word without delay.

The Pharisees and Sadducees, who were once enemies, became friends because they shared a common opponent—Jesus. Even today, we should avoid such behavior. Instead of making the enemy of our enemy our friend, we are called to love even those we perceive as our enemies and those who seem unlovable.

The teachings of Jesus challenged the traditions of the religious leaders of the time because He did not teach human traditions, customs, or their legalistic rules. His life exposed their corruption and hypocrisy. This caused the leaders to feel as though they were losing their power and status. Although the Roman government was cruel and oppressive, Jesus did not focus on changing earthly governments. Instead, He focused on the hearts of those who claimed to believe in God but lived contrary to His character.

The Holy Spirit touched people's hearts with the truth of God's Word, but they had the choice to accept or reject it. Although Jesus could heal any disease, raise the dead, and teach with remarkable wisdom, He could not force people to open their hearts to Him. Some people, blinded by prejudice and hatred, chose to reject Him despite the evidence before them. A transformed heart is a great miracle, but Jesus does not force us to change—He is willing to perform this miracle if we allow Him.

If we have the privilege of hearing or reading God's Word, we have a responsibility to follow it without delay. Let us not procrastinate by saying, "Tomorrow, I will obey God's Word."

We also need to pray and fast to receive faith, even as small as a mustard seed. In ancient times, this was the smallest seed sown by farmers. Just as a tiny seed can grow into a large plant, even a small amount of faith can accomplish great things.

Let us give God the glory in everything—our thoughts, intentions, words, and actions—because it is by His power that we are able to do all things.

Living by God's Word means surrendering our whole lives to Him. It fosters a sense of ongoing need and dependence, drawing our hearts closer to God. Prayer is essential because it is the life of the soul. While family prayers and public prayers have their place, it is the private communion with God that sustains spiritual life.

Questions:

1. We are more valuable than which birds?

2. What does it mean that our hairs are numbered?

3. Why were Tyre and Sidon praised in comparison to Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin?

4. Why do wicked people hate the righteous?

5. How can you distinguish between someone being hated for their goodness and being hated for their wrongdoing?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 10:29-32, 34.

[29-32, 34] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven… Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Prayer: Thank You, our heavenly Father, for Your care. We pray that we may confess You even in times of persecution. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Activity: Count your own hair or someone else's, or draw two sparrows.

DAY 229 (August 16)

TOPIC: Carrying the Cross

The cost of being a disciple of Jesus - Luke 12, 14 and Matthew 10.



Jesus told His disciples that there is a cost to following Him. Anyone who wants to follow Him must carry their cross and follow Him, sharing in His sufferings. Throughout the history of the church, people have sacrificed both materially and physically. Some have been imprisoned, tortured, lost their jobs, been mocked, rejected by their families, or even killed for the sake of Christ. Only God knows how much His people have suffered.

Today, many preach a gospel of material prosperity, claiming that those who believe in God will live comfortably and become wealthy. This "prosperity gospel" promises that by following Jesus and giving offerings to certain ministries, people will receive cars, money, mansions, and all kinds of luxury. Some pastors in certain countries have become billionaires, buying private jets and traveling from place to place, and some even misuse the congregation's offerings. Such actions do not reflect what the Messiah desires! The truth is that many believers will not become rich in this world, but ultimately, Jesus will give us rewards far more valuable than earthly possessions. In the end, we will see that heaven was easy to attain, and we did not sacrifice enough to deserve to enter when compared to its glory.

Jesus said He came to bring fire and division. Fathers will be divided against their children, daughters against their mothers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law. He said that anyone who comes to Him without "hating"

their father, mother, child, brother, sister, or even their own life cannot be His disciple. Whoever loves father, mother, friend, or anyone else more than Jesus is not worthy of Him. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow Him is not worthy of Him. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for His sake will save it. Jesus meant that anything we love more than Him disqualifies us from being His disciple. This includes self-love, attachment to friends, family, or any other thing—He must be the first priority in our lives.

Being a disciple of Jesus means accepting Him as the Christ, the Savior, and the LORD of our lives. We must follow Him as the first priority, with everything else coming second. Accepting Jesus also means understanding that suffering may come, but we should not shy away from sharing the full message out of fear of persecution. Following Jesus requires discipline. Some people feel that Jesus wants to control their lives. The truth is, we cannot live however we please and still be true Christians or God's people. We are in Christ's school to shape our character to be like His. Our character is the only thing we will take to heaven; everything else will be left behind. Therefore, our character must be built and refined to resemble His.

Jesus told the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and then be killed. Peter objected, saying this should not happen, but Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God." Our hearts are deceitful—just a few hours earlier, Peter had confessed Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of the Living God, but shortly after, he spoke like Satan. No one should think they stand firm by their own strength, for that is when they are most likely to fall.

Jesus warned that people would expel His followers from synagogues and even kill them, thinking they are serving God. This prophecy has come true, as some people today kill the innocent, believing they are fulfilling God's will. Jesus told His followers to remember that if the world treats them badly, it treated Him the same way. The world loves its own but persecutes those who love God. Before following Jesus, it is important to count the cost. However, nothing the world offers is more valuable than what Jesus gives.

Every dream, thought, ambition, and desire must be surrendered under the authority of Jesus. Every talent, ability, wealth, or valuable possession must be given to Jesus; otherwise, these things will become idols and lead us astray. This includes our personal opinions and ideologies! Athletes, before competing, train diligently—sometimes all day—eating specific foods, staying hydrated, maintaining strict sleep schedules, and more, all to win a medal.

They willingly give up leisure and comfort for the sake of victory. Shouldn't Christians be even more diligent? The rewards of athletes and worldly achievements are temporary, but the prize of running the spiritual race toward heaven is eternal.

Before building a structure, one must calculate the cost to avoid being mocked for not completing it. Likewise, before going to war, a nation must assess whether it can defeat the enemy; if not, it must seek peace to avoid being overpowered. Counting the cost of being a disciple includes being prepared for emotional pain, rejection by society, poverty, imprisonment, or even death. If a hand or foot causes you to sin, it is better to cut it off and enter eternal life maimed than to go to hell with all your limbs. If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out—it is better to enter heaven with one eye than to be cast into hell with both.

We must love our enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting repayment. Our reward will be great. Anyone who has left home, spouse, siblings, parents, or children for the kingdom of God will receive much more in this world—and in the world to come, eternal life. Disciples should not be troubled, for Jesus has prepared a place for them so that where He is, they may be also. Hebrews 11 speaks of people of faith who endured great suffering but will rise again in the first and better resurrection.

If we follow Jesus, we must carry our cross. Every Christian has a cross—believers must turn away from worldly pleasures and desires. "Do not love the world or the things in it."

We can communicate with GOD in our hearts; we can walk in fellowship with Christ. As we go about our daily tasks, we can bring our heart's desires—those deep longings no human ear can hear—but God listens. No earthly noise can drown out the soul's cry, which rises above the street sounds and machinery's roar. It is GOD we speak to, and our prayers are heard.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to carry our cross?

2. Why must a person calculate the cost before building or going to war?

3. Why is anyone who loves their father, mother, or relatives more than Jesus not worthy of Him?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 14:27, 28, 33.

[27, 28, 33] Whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? … In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be My disciples.

Prayer: Thank You, heavenly Father, for the gift of life. Forgive our sins, we pray that You help us to count the cost by surrendering our desires and personal interests. Help us to be faithful even to death. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of yourself carrying the cross. Discuss the meaning of the cost of discipleship. Or use a heavy backpack (according to the child's or youth's strength). Surrender desires, plans, dreams, and personal interests to follow the example and will of Christ, which require obedience, sacrifice, and perseverance—even to the point of death—for faith's sake.

DAY 230 (August 17)

TOPIC: The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Precious Pearl or a Fishing Net.

(Matthew 13)



Jesus continued to speak in parables, which drew the listener's attention and encouraged reflection. This method also protected those willing to listen from the trouble caused by His critics. After His death and resurrection, many recalled His parables, and their minds became open to the Holy Spirit's work for transformation. Even today, many continue to be inspired to offer meaningful interpretations of these parables, sharing them in various ways to draw people closer to Jesus.

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went and sold everything he had to buy it. He did not try to bargain or ask for a lower price because he knew it was of great worth.

Even today, we should not focus on doing the minimum to enter heaven. There is an old song first graders used to sing about a farmer who planted potatoes. While digging, he found a diamond—what luck! He threw away his hoe, went to the city, bought himself a car, and became rich. What luck for the farmer! The kingdom of heaven is far more valuable. We must set everything else aside and seek it first because all other good things will follow. Earthly treasures fade away and cannot bring true joy. Therefore, we should prioritize seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness, and all other things will be added to us.

Jesus is the precious pearl—let us seek Him today. Pearls are formed in fascinating ways and are highly valuable. They are created when a grain of sand enters the shell of a sea creature (an oyster). The pearl begins to form as layers build around the grain of sand. Pearls are beautiful and shiny, and people can admire them for hours. Most pearls are about the size of a pea, though some are larger. Pearls can sometimes be more valuable than gold. Divers often search for oysters, but it is rare to find a pearl. When they do, they sell it for a high price because of its beauty and rarity. Anyone who starts a relationship with God and obeys Him has discovered the most valuable pearl.

Jesus also shared another parable, saying that the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, gathering fish, crabs, seaweed, and other debris. When the fishermen pulled the net ashore, they collected the good fish and threw away what was useless. This is how it will be at the end of the age—the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous. The wicked will be thrown into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Many wonder why there are wicked people who still call on God's name and attend worship services. The Bible explains that not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord" will enter heaven, but only those who do the will of God. Jesus said that on the final day, some will claim they performed miracles in His name, but He will say, "I never knew you."

What does it mean for God to "know" us? It is not about His awareness that He created us—it means we have fully surrendered to Him, living according to His Word. The English phrase "to surrender" reflects this idea: dying to our old, selfish ways so that Jesus can live through us. Whether young or old, we must not focus on others but remain committed to this spiritual race, which is the greatest competition of all.

Jesus asked if the people understood these teachings. Then He said that every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who brings out treasures both new and old. This means that everyone who loves God can present timeless truths in a fresh and meaningful way.

Jesus loves us deeply. God sent His only Son to live among us and teach us so that we would hear and obey. Jesus did not teach in schools; instead, He taught wherever people gathered—on mountainsides, by the sea, and in open spaces. He used simple, relatable stories that were easy to understand and share with others.

If Jesus were with us today in our town, where do you think He would teach? What examples would He use? Perhaps He would talk about mobile phones, radios, plastic buckets, airplanes, or buses—things that did not exist in His time. Jesus taught the most important truths of all—God's love, the kingdom of heaven, and eternal life. He emphasized God's Word, prayer, and our relationship with Him and others. We must listen carefully to His teachings because they are more valuable than anything else we can learn in life.

Jesus also taught about Himself, saying He is the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd, and the True Vine. There are over 300 known names for Jesus. You can read a book called The Name Above All Names, which lists 365 names of Jesus, and there are even more names we will discover in heaven.

Jesus often spoke plainly, declaring that He came from God and that His Father is God. He said He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—the only path to the Father. His teachings are the foundation of everything good in the world. If we build our lives on His teachings, we will be wise. If we love Him, we must follow His commands and obey Him. God is very close to us. Jesus said eternal life is found in knowing Him because He alone gives the gift of everlasting life.

Everyone desires a long life, free from aging, sickness, and wrinkles. Jesus is ready to hear our prayers and grant us eternal life. By praying and reading His Word daily, we will be reminded of God and guided to follow His ways. Jesus is willing to do everything for us to ensure our salvation. His death on the cross answered every question from angels and God's creation—demonstrating that God loves us. It is not just that God has love—He is Love.

It is amazing that we, as imperfect and sinful human beings, can speak directly to God. What greater power could anyone desire than the ability to communicate with the Almighty, unlimited Creator? Weak and sinful people have the privilege of speaking with their Maker. We can utter words that reach the throne of the King of the universe. We can talk to Jesus as we walk along the road, and He says, "I am at your right hand."

Questions:

1. How can we seek the precious pearl?
2. How is the kingdom of heaven like a fishing net?
3. Where will the wicked be sent, and where will the righteous go?
4. List 10 to 20 names of Jesus.

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 13:31, 32.

[31-32] He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, that Your kingdom starts small in our hearts and continues to grow. I pray that I may be Your faithful servant in every stage, and that Your kingdom may grow within me and among my neighbors. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Sing the song "The Farmer with a Field" and discuss what a Pearl is! Bring mustard seeds, show them to the children, plant them, and wait for them to sprout.

DAY 231 – (August 18)

TOPIC: Five Loaves and Two Fish Feeding Thousands

(Matthew 14, Mark 6)

Jesus was not only known as a healer but also as a great teacher. When people heard His teachings, they forgot their troubles, and even those who were hungry did not feel their hunger as they listened for hours. His teachings were a magnet for people. He was a fountain and channel of all good things. Jesus spoke using everyday examples. When He sat on a boat by the shore, He used parables to help people's souls. The people remembered these parables, held onto them, and applied them in their lives. When He taught, He did not always give immediate answers—He wanted them to think about the meaning for themselves. Then, He helped those who chose the kingdom of God to understand deeply.

In those days, teaching using parables, proverbs, and riddles was common. He also fulfilled the prophecy that said, "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world." Even today, children and adults enjoy stories and illustrations in sermons. After the crowds left, the disciples would ask Jesus to explain the parables. He told them that the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, meaning Emmanuel (God with us). The field is the world, and the good seed represents those who enter the kingdom of God. The weeds are the children of the evil one. The enemy who sows the weeds is the devil, the harvesters are the angels, and at the end of the age, the wicked will be gathered and thrown into the fire of hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. But the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

People were amazed at His teachings and asked, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother called Mary, and aren't His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where did He get all these things?" Jesus told them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own hometown and in his own household." Sadly, He did not perform many miracles there because of their unbelief. Today, let us pray for faith, because unbelief hinders God from doing great things in our lives. Jesus told Jairus, "Just believe!" So today, as you read this, believe! If you struggle with belief, ask God for faith. It is one of His promises, and He will increase your faith.



At this time, Jesus also received the news of the death of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Him and was His relative on His mother's side. Saddened, He withdrew with His disciples to a solitary place by boat. But when the crowds heard where He was going, they followed Him on foot and arrived ahead of Him. When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Perhaps the spiritual leaders at that time were not helpful. Many of the priests were Sadducees, who did not believe in heaven or the resurrection, which discouraged people.

Jesus healed their sick and taught them, often going without food or rest. In the evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." But Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples were amazed because there were thousands of people. Philip said it would take two hundred denarii (or thousands of dollars) to feed them all. Jesus asked what they had. Andrew, Peter's brother, found a boy with five barley loaves and two small fish and brought the information to Jesus. This boy may have caught the fish, and his mother likely prepared small loaves for him. That morning, he set out to hear Jesus, unaware that his small lunch would bless thousands—including Jesus Himself. Whatever little you have, if offered to Jesus, can bless many.

Andrew is not mentioned as often as his brother Peter, but he was always working behind the scenes to help things run smoothly. Jesus asked the disciples to bring the five loaves and two fish. Then, He told the people to sit down in groups of fifty on the grass. He took the loaves and fish, looked up to heaven, blessed them, and broke them. He gave them to the disciples, who distributed them to the people. Everyone ate and was satisfied, and they collected twelve baskets full of leftovers. This teaches us not to waste food, for many poor people are in need. If you know you will not finish your food, do not serve more than you can eat. Take a little at a time and finish it before taking more.

If you have extra food or wealth, do not waste it—share with those in need. This miracle shows us that God is the one who provides our daily needs. When we are willing to share with others, He will always ensure we have enough, whether it is food, shelter, or clothing. If God feeds the birds and animals, how much more will He care for human beings, who are more valuable? No matter how intelligent or capable we are, we can only give to others what God first gives us. Our ability to bless others depends on how much we are willing to share.

It is not right to leave the work of sharing God's Word or providing for others

only to pastors or church workers. When we are fed by the Word of God, we must also share it with others to receive even greater blessings. Just like the little boy who gave his lunch, we experience joy when we become channels of blessing. When people saw the bread being multiplied, they pointed to the boy, recognizing him as the one who shared. Even though Jesus had all power, He did not give the people luxurious food—He gave them simple bread and fish, and they were satisfied. This shows us that living simply allows us to be generous without being trapped by greed or unnecessary expenses.

Through this miracle, Jesus teaches us that He is the provider of all our needs. Even today, the process of planting seeds and harvesting food is a miracle. The leftover baskets may have been taken home by the disciples to share with others, spreading the blessing even further. When we follow God faithfully, we can be assured that He will meet all our needs. Whenever we face challenges, we should bring them to Him in prayer.

That day, about 5,000 men ate, not counting women and children. If there were 5,000 men, the total number of people could have been at least 15,000. The people said, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” But He was more than a prophet—He was Emmanuel, the Messiah! The boy with the loaves and fish became a blessing because Jesus used what he had. That day changed his life forever.

Even today, children, do not think you have nothing important to offer. Whatever little you have, if given with humility, can be used by God in great ways. If you have guests and the food seems insufficient, pray, and God will multiply it.

If you are willing to help those in need, you will be blessed, and your own needs will be met. Most importantly, you will experience the joy that comes from the Lord.

Questions:

1. How does the devil sow weeds today?

2. Why are there no weeds in heaven?

3. How can you prevent the devil from sowing weeds in your life?

4. Why didn’t Jesus perform many miracles in His hometown?

5. Why did Jesus ask the people to sit in groups of fifty?

6. Why is it important to feed the hungry?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 6:36, 37.

[36-37] Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat. But He answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to Him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the daily bread You give us. We pray that You help us to feed the hungry and thirsty, and clothe those without garments. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Loaves and biscuits shaped like fish, etc.! Read this passage carefully and act it out.

DAY 232 (August 19)

TOPIC: Peter Walks on Water

(Mark 6)



After feeding the crowd with bread, Jesus realized that the people wanted to seize Him and make Him king because they had received food. They thought a king who could provide plenty of food would keep their stomachs from growling with hunger. These people also wanted someone with the power to deliver them from Roman rule. However, Jesus was not a political leader but a spiritual one. Even for someone who desired to lead these people, it was a challenging task because they were fickle—one moment, they were angry and resentful, and the next, they were filled with love and joy.

The disciples were also exhausted from carrying hundreds or thousands of baskets of bread. Jesus withdrew to the mountain to be alone and pray; He compelled His disciples to go ahead of Him to the other side while He dismissed the crowd. Afterward, He went up the mountain to pray alone. By evening, while He was still alone, the disciples' boat was in the middle of the sea, struggling against the waves because the wind was strong. They wished Jesus were with them to keep them safe.

Yet, Jesus had not forgotten His friends. Around three o'clock in the morning, as the disciples were distressed, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea as

if it were dry land. The disciples were terrified, thinking He was a ghost or a spirit, and they cried out in fear because they knew the force of gravity would not allow an ordinary human to walk on water without sinking.

Jesus told them, “Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.” Even today, He speaks these words to each of us—say them aloud and believe them. Peter responded, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” Jesus said, “Come,” and Peter did what no other human had ever done—he stepped out of the boat and began to walk on water.



He walked successfully until fear and doubt crept in. Perhaps he looked at his companions and proudly thought that he was special for walking on water instead of giving glory to God’s power. As soon as he lost focus, he began to sink and cried out, “Lord, save me!” This is recorded as the shortest prayer in the Bible.

Even when we pray short prayers, the Lord hears us—especially prayers for deliverance from evil. There are several prayers that God cannot refuse to answer, such as “Lord, save me from sin,” “Forgive me,” “Show me Your true way,” “Reveal Yourself to me,” “Make me Your instrument,” “Teach me to be generous,” “Show me the purpose of my pain or struggles,” “Grant me wisdom,” “Give me courage and patience,” “Show me why I am here on earth,” and “Bring good out of my suffering.”

Jesus stretched out His hand, caught Peter, and said, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got back into the boat, the wind ceased, and the disciples worshiped Him, saying, “Truly, You are the Son of God.”

In Gennesaret, they met the two men who had been possessed by demons and lived among the tombs. These men had been healed and had become missionaries. When people recognized Jesus and His disciples, they sent word throughout the region, begging to touch even the hem of His garment, and all who touched it were healed. The former demoniacs had spread the news everywhere, and Jesus and His disciples came to reap the harvest of precious souls.

The following day, people searched for Jesus. They did not see the boat

arrive, but they noticed the disciples were alone, so they went to Capernaum to look for Him. When they found Him, they asked, “Rabbi, when did You come here?” Jesus realized they were not seeking Him for salvation or because they recognized Him as a prophet but because they had eaten the bread and were full.

He told them that the food that endures to eternal life is what the Son of Man will give them—the words of eternal life from God. They asked, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus replied, “Believe in the One He has sent.” They mentioned that their ancestors ate manna in the wilderness and said Moses had given them this sign.

Jesus corrected them, saying that it was not Moses who provided the bread but God Himself who gives the true bread from heaven. The people then asked for this bread so they would never be hungry again. Jesus declared, “I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

He continued, “All whom the Father gives Me will come to Me, and I will never drive away anyone who comes to Me. I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me—that I should lose none of those He has given Me but raise them up on the last day. Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.”

The Jews murmured against Him because He said He was the Bread that came down from heaven. They questioned, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?”

Jesus told them, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them. God Himself will teach humanity. Anyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me.”

Jesus revealed Himself to the people. Only those guided by the Spirit could recognize Him; those who did not allow God’s Spirit to lead them remained in darkness. Jesus said, “The Father loves the Son and has entrusted all judgment to Him. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father.”

He explained that anyone who hears His words and believes in Him has eternal life and will not be condemned but has passed from death to life. He declared that a time would come when the dead would hear the voice of the Son of Man and rise from their graves—those who have done good will rise to eternal life, while those who have done evil will rise to face judgment.

Jesus said He could do nothing apart from His Father's will, and John the Baptist had testified about Him. Although John was a lamp that burned brightly for a time and people rejoiced in his light, Jesus' testimony was greater because He was the Son of God.

He told them, "You search the Scriptures thinking they give you eternal life, but the Scriptures point to Me. Yet you refuse to come to Me to have life." He knew they did not have the love of God within them because, although He came in His Father's name, they did not accept Him.

Jesus warned them that Moses, in whom they placed their hope, would be their accuser. If they truly believed Moses, they would believe Him, for Moses wrote about Him. But since they did not believe Moses' writings, how could they believe His words?

God's word is like a ladder or a chain—if we reject one part, the entire truth is compromised. The Ten Commandments are also like a mirror—if one part is broken, the whole mirror is shattered.

Pray, and you will receive. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, and an increase in faith. Every sincere prayer will be answered—it may not come in the way or time you expect, but it will come in a manner that meets your true needs. Prayers offered in solitude, weariness, or trials are always heard by God—not always as expected, but always for your ultimate good.

Questions:

1. Why did the people want to make Jesus king?

2. Why were the disciples afraid when they saw someone walking on water?

3. What do you think caused Peter to sink?

4. Can you remember a short prayer you have prayed?

5. How did Jesus know these people did not have the love of God in their hearts?

6. Why do people prefer physical food over the Word of God?

7. Can reading God's Word and then eating be helpful to these people?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 14:27-30.

[27-30] But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's You," Peter replied, "tell me to come to You on the water." "Come," He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Prayer: Our dear Father, thank You for the gift of this new day. Guide every thought, word, and action. Help me today to love You deeply and to trust You fully. Give me peace in whatever I face. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Take a basin or bowl, fill it with water, and place something like a paper clip—it will sink. Or have each child or youth spend time in private prayer—what should they pray for? Then discuss together.

DAY 233 (August 20)

TOPIC: Some Disciples Turn Back and Others Abandon Him

(John 6)

Jesus told them that the will of God who sent Him was that He should not lose even one. Everyone who looks to the Son of God has eternal life. Some of the Jews murmured because He said He was the bread that came down from heaven—meaning the bread of heaven or manna—saying, "Is this not the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can He say He came down from heaven?"

Jesus told them that no one can come to Him unless God draws them. He emphasized that He is the Bread of Life from heaven, meaning the Word of God. He told the people that the manna their ancestors ate in the wilderness did not give eternal life because they died, but whoever feeds on the Word of God will live forever.

The Jews argued among themselves, asking, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus repeated, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. But whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever eats My flesh remains in Me, and I in them, and they will live because of Me, just as I live because of the Father."

He spoke these words in the synagogue in Capernaum as a figurative speech or parable. We know that God does not want us to eat human flesh or drink human blood. Jesus did not mean literal eating or drinking. Even today, we know that cannibalism is a sin. In societies that do not know God, cannibalism is still not acceptable, and those who practice it are punished by death because someone must be killed for others to eat them. Some communities, such as those in Papua New Guinea, were known for practicing cannibalism for many years, even in this century. Many missionaries who went to preach were killed and eaten.

When Jesus said these words, He did not mean that people should eat human flesh. But when His disciples heard this, they found it a hard teaching and asked, "Who can accept it?" Knowing that His words troubled them, Jesus

said, “Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before?” Jesus knew that some among them did not believe.

Because of this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. Jesus asked the remaining twelve disciples, “Do you also want to leave?” Peter answered boldly, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.” It was then that Jesus began to reveal that one of them would betray Him.

We must be ready to hear the words of life, even when they are difficult to understand. The disciples misunderstood Jesus’ symbolic language and took His words literally.

It was also the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the three major Jewish festivals that symbolized Jesus. The Jews, in their blindness, sought to kill Him. His brothers told Him to go to the festival so that people could see His works and not perform miracles in secret. Even His brothers did not believe in Him until after His death and resurrection. Jesus told them that His time had not yet come, so while His brothers went to the festival openly, He went later in secret.

The Jews searched for Him at the festival but did not find Him. When the festival was halfway over, Jesus went to the temple and began to teach. The people were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without being taught?” Some wondered, “Why is He speaking publicly while others seek to kill Him?” They were not spiritually enlightened due to their hardened hearts.

They thought that when the Messiah came, no one would know where He was from, so they doubted Jesus. They even insulted Him, calling Him a Samaritan possessed by a demon. Their pride and hypocrisy blinded them, while little children had their eyes opened and worshiped Jesus. Although they sought to seize Him, no one laid a hand on Him because His time had not yet come. Yet some believed in Him, saying, “When the Messiah comes, will He perform more signs than this man?”

Opening the Heart to a Friend
Prayer is opening the heart to God as to a friend. It is not to inform God of who we are but to enable us to receive from Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us but lifts us up to Him.

When Jesus was on earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He instructed

them to present their daily needs before God and cast all their burdens on Him. The assurance He gave them that their prayers would be heard is the same assurance for us today.

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus' brothers not believe in Him?

2. Why did Jesus have knowledge even though He had not studied?

3. Is formal education the only way to become knowledgeable? What is knowledge?

4. Can someone be more knowledgeable than a university graduate without attending university?

5. Why did some of Jesus' disciples turn away and abandon Him?

6. How did Peter respond boldly when asked if he wanted to leave?

7. What did Jesus mean when He said He is the Bread of Heaven and the Living Water?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 6:51.

[51] I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, You are our bread of life. Guide me to glorify You and to know that You alone satisfy my soul. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

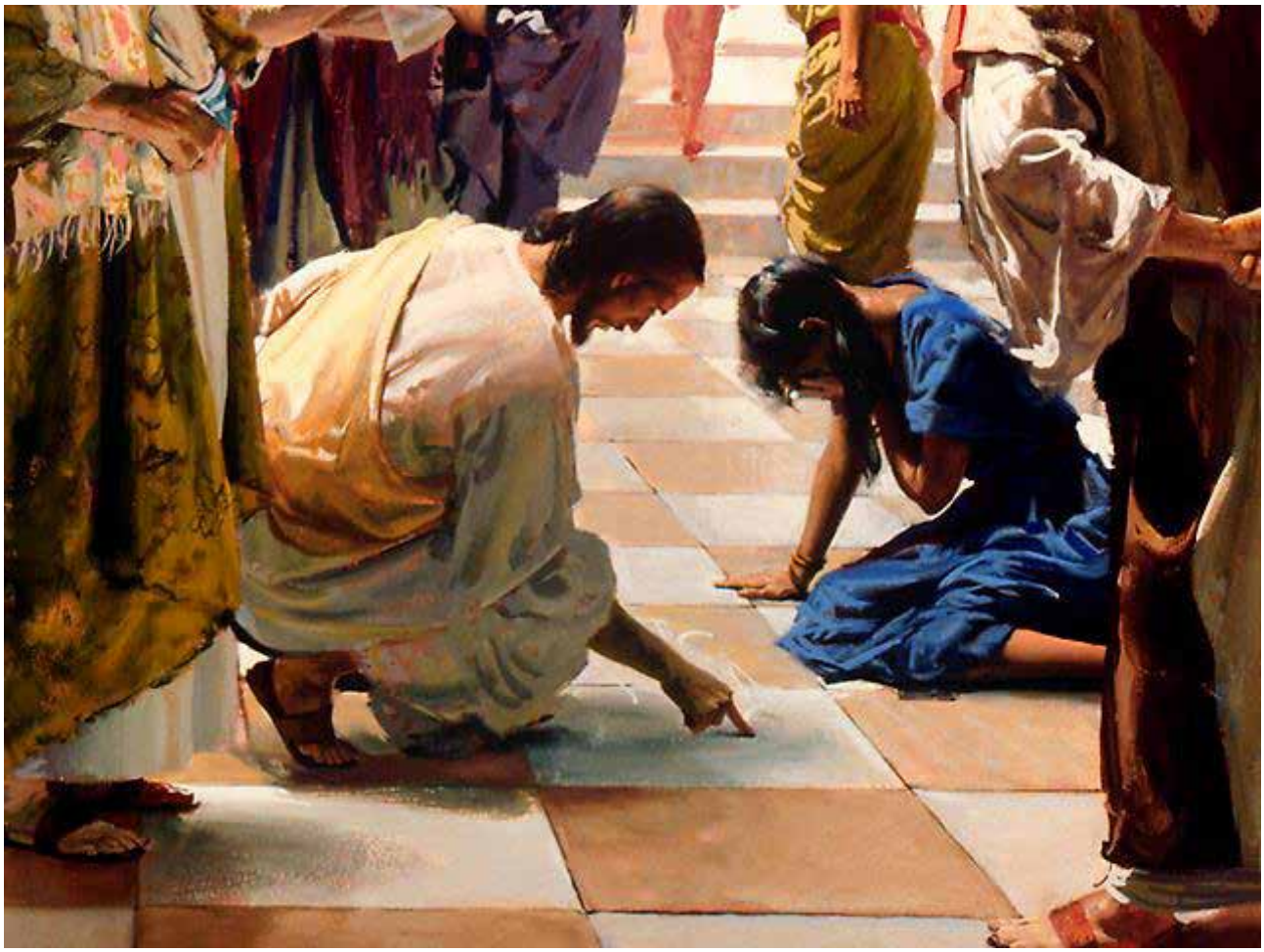
Activity: Cut bread into pieces and place it in a plate or basket. Discuss the meaning of the bread of life, or the sacrament/communion or the Lord's Supper and its significance.

DAY 234 (August 21)

TOPIC: The Woman Caught in Adultery

(John 8)

On the last day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me will have rivers of living water flowing from within them," meaning that everyone who believes in Him would receive the Spirit of God. Many believed in Him, but others said, "The Christ does not come from Galilee, but from Bethlehem." They did not even want to ask whether He was truly born in Bethlehem but was later taken to Nazareth in Galilee as a child. Everyone who asked God to reveal the truth was shown this mystery. Some wanted to arrest Him but were unable to lay hands on Him, and when the officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees were asked why they had not arrested Him, they answered, "No one has ever spoken like this Man!" And this was true—no one had ever lived or acted as He did!



These officers had already been shown that He was the Messiah. But the Pharisees mocked them, saying, “Have you also been deceived? Do you think you have more spiritual knowledge than we do?” Then Nicodemus said to them, “Does our law judge a man before hearing him and knowing what he is doing?” Nicodemus was secretly a disciple of Jesus. He loved Jesus but feared people and sought to please men rather than God. The priests and Pharisees answered, “Search and see that no prophet comes from Galilee!” They read the Scriptures with their minds, but their hearts were filled with hatred and wickedness. They did not realize that the very Word Himself was among them—the One who had inspired the writing of the Scriptures and knew them completely! Yet, He still continued to learn every day. These poor people did not know who they were standing before! Even today, we need spiritual eyes to know God, and by knowing Him, we receive eternal life.

When we read God’s Word today, it is not just to gain knowledge but to transform our lives. Had they done even a little research about where Jesus was born, as the Scriptures in Micah 5:2 say, they would have easily recognized Him. Furthermore, the Scriptures reveal that the prophet Jonah came from Galilee, yet they claimed no prophet had ever come from there—this showed the limitations of their knowledge. If they had asked God to show them the truth, they would have known that Jesus is the Light of the world, and whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. May God help us to remove darkness today—let us not wait for tomorrow!

Jesus went to sleep on the Mount of Olives, and in the morning, He returned to the temple, where people gathered around Him to be taught. It was there that the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, dragging her along. They brought her alone, without the man, intending to trap Jesus. They said, “In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What do You say?” According to the Law of Moses, both parties caught in adultery were to be brought forward and judged in court with witnesses before receiving the death penalty. However, under Roman rule at that time, only the Romans had the authority to carry out executions, so the Law of Moses could not be enforced independently. If Jesus said they should not follow the Law of Moses, they would accuse Him of being a false prophet or a traitor to the Jewish faith.

But Jesus knew the hearts of men and did not need anyone to tell Him what they were thinking—He could see their thoughts clearly. The woman trembled with fear, her clothes torn from being dragged, as she tried to hide her face in shame. When Jesus looked at her accusers, He saw people without compassion and knew their thoughts. Their lack of love saddened Him. Without answering them, He bent down and began to write on the ground with His finger. We do

not know exactly what He wrote, but it appears His words convicted them. Knowing their hearts and intentions, Jesus continued writing on the ground in silence.

These people knew they were not without sin themselves. Some think Jesus may have been writing down their sins, because after they continued questioning Him, He stood up and said, “Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,” and then bent down again to write. Their consciences convicted them, and they began to leave one by one until no one remained.

Jesus stood up and saw only the woman, and He asked her, “Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?” When she said no, He told her, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” This woman was Mary Magdalene, the one who later anointed Jesus’ feet with perfume.

The sin of adultery brings fear, diseases, anxiety, unwanted pregnancies, guilt, evil thoughts, and even social exclusion. That day, adultery almost cost Mary her life. Jesus did not tell her to continue in sin—no! He forgave her and commanded her to leave her sinful life. Only God can perfectly balance mercy and justice!

Even today, many people are harmed or killed due to infidelity. Others suffer from mental illness caused by immoral sexual behavior. Mary was rescued from this sin. Some fall into such sins due to bad friends or the lure of money. Solomon warns young people against being led into immorality by their peers, saying, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not arouse or awaken love before it is time.” It is not only boys who lead girls into sin—bad friends of any kind can be a bad influence. Young people should guard their purity in thoughts, words, and actions. If someone tries to lure you into sin, tell them that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that you are keeping yourself pure for marriage. If you feel endangered, do not hesitate to tell your parents, guardians, or a God-fearing adult.

Jesus reached out to everyone—men, women, the rich, the poor, the short, the tall, foreigners, and locals. We, too, should reach out to all people without fear! Jesus did not condone sin—He hated sin but loved the sinner. He respected the Law of Moses, and since no two witnesses agreed on the woman’s guilt, He did not condemn her. Jesus came to die for our sins and to deliver us from sin. Sin is serious, but God is merciful and desires to save us from it.

Mary was not told to return to her sinful life but was commanded to change

by the grace of God. Our God is full of wisdom and mercy. This story reminds us to be compassionate toward those trapped by sin, for all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.

If you see a friend caught in sin, pray for them and lovingly guide them back to the right path. Do not gossip about them. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers—ask God for wisdom in handling such matters.

The invitation from God remains: "Come to Me." Whatever your burdens or worries are, take them to the Lord in prayer. We can share all our concerns, small or great, with Jesus. When we stay close to Him, Satan has little opportunity to tempt us. Only Jesus should be our most trusted confidant.

Questions:

Why is it important to allow the Spirit of God to guide us when studying history?

Did Jesus agree with Mary's sin?

Why did the accusers leave when Jesus wrote on the ground?

What does it mean that God wrote the Law on stone but possibly wrote their sins on the sand?

Are there people around you struggling with sin whom you can reach out to?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 8:12.

[12] When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for being the Light of the world and for loving us sinners. You tell us to go and sin no more. Help us to be victorious. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A role play using a torch—Jesus is the Light of the world, and what that means. Or act the story of the woman dragged before Jesus. Jesus faced

the scribes and Pharisees by writing on the ground and then declaring that the one without sin should be the first to throw a stone. The crowd dispersed, leaving Jesus alone with the woman caught in adultery, to whom He said, “Go and sin no more.” This chapter also includes Jesus’ teaching about His identity as the Light of the World (John 8:12) and His claim to the Truth that leads to freedom from sin.

DAY 235 (August 22)

TOPIC: The Blind Man is Healed

(John 9)

Jesus continued teaching in the temple treasury during the Feast of Tabernacles, declaring that He is the light of the world and that His testimony is true. He told them that He knows where He comes from and where He is going, but they do not know where He comes from or where He is going. He also said that when He departs, they will seek Him, but they will not find Him, and this made them wonder where He was going. He told them that He is from above, while they are from below, and that they would die in their sins unless they believed in Him and lifted up the Son of Man.



Even His close friends did not know where He was going. They speculated that perhaps He was going to Greece or Italy. Jesus told them that those who believe in Him would become His disciples and be set free, for committing sin is being a slave to sin. They claimed they were children of Abraham and could not be enslaved. Jesus responded that if they were truly Abraham's children, they would not seek to kill Him because Abraham did not do such things. Abraham loved God and obeyed His commands. If they had heavenly thoughts, they would love God and His Son, whom He had sent, and they would understand His teachings.

Jesus told them clearly that anyone rejecting His teachings and those of His Father belongs to the devil, not to God. They were involved in murder and lies like the devil and did not act according to the Scriptures. He further said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and was glad. This likely refers to when Abraham, being tested to offer his son Isaac, was shown by God many other glorious things, including the future sacrifice of Jesus, making Isaac's sacrifice unnecessary. It was not the ram caught in the thicket that replaced Isaac but the greater and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offered so that all might be saved.

The Jews were astonished, saying that Jesus was not even fifty years old, yet He claimed to have seen Abraham. They accused Him of being a Samaritan and having a demon. Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." They then picked up stones to throw at Him because they recognized that He was using the divine name "I AM," which God had revealed to Moses. By using this name, Jesus was revealing Himself as the very God who led the Israelites through the wilderness. However, Jesus left the temple unharmed, hidden by God's power.

During that week, while the Feast of Tabernacles was ongoing in Jerusalem, Jesus declared that He is the Light of the World and that whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. As He passed by, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. The disciples wanted to know why he was blind—was it because of his sins or those of his parents? You may also wonder about such questions today!

A similar question was raised when Pilate sent soldiers to the temple, and they killed Galilean worshippers. Jesus asked whether they thought those Galileans were worse sinners than others because they suffered in that way. He told them they were wrong to think so. People believed that disasters or accidents happened as a punishment for sin. Jesus warned them that unless they stopped judging others based on their misfortunes, entering heaven would be difficult for them. He gave another example of the Tower of Siloam, which collapsed and killed eighteen people—not because they were more sinful than others.

Many people today wonder why some are born with disabilities or why bad things happen. Not all suffering is a punishment from God, for we live in a world of sin, and in the great cosmic conflict, there are rules of engagement that we do not fully understand. You can read lesson number 159 about Job's story and a book called The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, which is available online. However, sometimes, sin does cause suffering. For example, a pregnant woman who drinks alcohol can harm her unborn

child, leading to disabilities. Likewise, someone who indulges in gluttony can become overweight and develop diabetes or hypertension, resulting in paralysis.

Jesus answered that the blind man's condition was not due to his sins or his parents' sins but so that the works of God might be displayed in him—His glory, power, and healing. Jesus said that He must do the works of the One who sent Him while it was still day because night was coming when no one could work. As He said this, He spat on the ground, made mud with His saliva, and applied it to the blind man's eyes. He then instructed him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man obeyed, and when he returned, he could see—this was the same man who had been known as a beggar.

His neighbors were amazed and questioned whether it was really him or someone who looked like him. Some doubted, while others insisted it was the same man. When asked directly, the man confirmed, "I am he." They inquired how he had been healed, and he explained that a man named Jesus had healed him by applying mud to his eyes and instructing him to wash. When asked where Jesus was, he did not know.

They brought the healed man to the Pharisees, who questioned him because the healing took place on the Sabbath. Some Pharisees argued that Jesus could not be from God since He healed on the Sabbath. But the healed man reasoned that a sinner could not perform such miracles. His logical thinking caused division among the Pharisees.

When they asked the man again about Jesus, he declared that Jesus was a prophet. Not satisfied, they called his parents, who confirmed that he was their son and had been born blind. However, fearing expulsion from the synagogue if they acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, they said, "He is of age, ask him."

The man rejoiced, seeing the sky, flowers, his parents, friends, and the beauty of the world for the first time. He was full of questions and discoveries, grateful for the light that Jesus had brought into his life. Perhaps the first face he ever saw was that of Jesus Himself!

This story teaches us to share in the joy of others rather than engage in meaningless arguments or doubts. When Jesus was on earth, He taught His disciples how to pray, encouraging them to present their daily needs and burdens to God with the assurance that their prayers would be heard. That same promise applies to us today.

Questions:

1. Why do people like to boast about being children of Abraham but act contrary to him?

2. Where was the blind man told to wash his eyes?

3. What new things did the blind man see for the first time?

4. How did Jesus answer the question about being born with disabilities?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 9:25, 26.

[25-26] They said again to the blind man, “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.” He replied, “Whether He is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind but now I see!” Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your healing. Help us to give You glory, grant us peace and strength for today. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss why people are born with disabilities and the Galileans who were killed.

DAY 236 – (August 23)

TOPIC: The Blind Man Who Was Healed Is Cast Out of the Synagogue

(John 9)



They called the blind man again after questioning his parents and told him to give glory to God for his sight and not to give glory to Jesus because they considered Him a sinner. The man replied, "Whether He is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I do know: I was blind, but now I see." They asked him again, "What did He do to you?" By this point, the man was tired, for he had received a great miracle, but they wanted to trouble him out of their hatred for Jesus and their unbelief. These people were more blind than the blind man himself without realizing it. That is when he said to them, "I have told you already, but you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" At this, they began to insult him angrily, saying, "We are disciples of Moses. As for this man, we do not even know where He comes from."

These people were more spiritually blind than the man, for they did not realize that the One standing before them was greater than Moses. Although they intellectually acknowledged the names, cities, and events recorded in the Scriptures, their hearts were untouched. The man asked them, "How is

it that you do not know where He comes from, yet He opened my eyes?" He continued, "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began, it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They replied, "You were born in sin, and you are teaching us?" And they cast him out of the synagogue.

Jesus heard what had happened and, when He found him, asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" The man answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and it is He who is speaking with you." The man said, "Lord, I believe!" and worshiped Him.

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Some Pharisees who were with Him heard these words and asked, "Are we also blind?" Jesus answered, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

If we stand for Jesus without shame or fear, as the blind man did, Jesus promises to stand for us. When Jesus spoke to people, He knew their hearts, and by their deceitful hearts, they condemned themselves.

He told the teachers of the Law that true shepherds enter the sheepfold by the gate, but thieves and robbers enter by other means. Jesus declared, "I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me. I call My sheep by name and lead them out. When I bring out My own sheep, I go before them, and they follow Me because they know My voice. They will not follow a stranger but will flee from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

Those who care for sheep know how much a shepherd loves and tends to his flock. Even today, some churches expel members not because they have sinned or broken God's commandments but because the church leaders follow dark paths or harbor some form of wickedness. Such leaders despise certain individuals and seek to remove them from their sight.

It is crucial not to follow human traditions or the doctrines of any church but to seek God and His Word. Every believer must be part of a fellowship that follows the Word of God, which is the Bible, and avoid traditions or teachings of men that contradict it. Each church should examine itself and abandon customs that conflict with God's Word.

What is encouraging is that Jesus accepted the blind man's worship even after he had been cast out of the synagogue. I do not suggest that anyone should separate themselves from church fellowship, for Hebrews 10:25 urges us not to forsake assembling together. However, if you are expelled from a church because of the wickedness of its leaders and not because of your sin, be encouraged knowing this has happened before. But if you are suspended due to your sins, repent, follow the teachings of the Scriptures, and return to fellowship.

Today, we can distinguish whether someone is of God—whether they are a spiritual leader or an ordinary member—by their teachings and conduct. When Jesus said these things, many did not understand. So, He declared, "I am the Door, and I am the Good Shepherd." Unlike a hired hand who seeks the flock's wealth, Jesus cares about the eternal life and well-being of their souls. When the hired hand sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches and scatters them. But Jesus, the Good Shepherd, lays down His life for the sheep—for us—to deliver us from sin.

Jesus also said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. There will be one flock and one Shepherd." This means that many who do not yet know God and Jesus will one day hear the message—whether through people, the radio, or books—and will join God's flock.

Many people today worship other gods unknowingly, such as those following Hinduism and Buddhism, with billions of adherents. There are others who believe in the God of heaven but do not fully understand His Word or character. God will reach out to them so that we will all be one flock. God is one, and His teachings do not differ—there is only one God worldwide and one paradise.

We should be humble and ready to learn from God rather than clinging to our traditions, our religion, or what our relatives have taught us. We must rely on the written Word—the Bible. Always strive to draw others to know God and pray that we may all be together in heaven when Jesus returns.

Some people, influenced by Satan, accused Jesus of having a demon or being insane. Others argued, "These are not the words of a demon-possessed man. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" Jesus affirmed that He and the Father are one. The Jews picked up stones to stone Him, but He asked, "For which of My works do you stone Me?" They replied, "Not for a good work but because You, being a man, make Yourself God."

Even today, Jesus remains the most remarkable figure in history. His life defines the years before and after His coming. He is the Son of God, our Savior, and our Lord.

Let us be careful not to speak recklessly against God's people but be humble and willing to learn His Word. Many Jews recognized their shortcomings but refused to abandon their heavy traditions.

May we always speak the truth about God, whether we perform miracles or not, so that our words and actions draw others to Him.

Our prayers are never a burden to God. There is no wrong time or place to pray. Like Nehemiah praying before King Artaxerxes, we can silently lift our hearts to God for guidance anytime, anywhere.

Questions:

1. Why did the blind man refuse to listen to the wicked people?
2. If Jesus were working on earth today, what challenges would He face?
3. Who is the hired hand?
4. Who are the "other sheep" that are not of this fold?
5. Why is it blasphemy and a lie to say that Jesus has a demon or is insane?
6. What kind of blindness did the Pharisees have?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 9:2, 3.

[2-3] His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Prayer: Dear Father, sometimes we do not understand why bad things happen to good people or to humanity in general. Help us to have faith in our hearts, give us wisdom to make decisions that please You. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss or role-play the man born blind receiving his sight, and then Jesus revealing to him that He is the Son of God.

DAY 237 (August 24)

TOPIC: The Demon-Possessed Man of Gerasa

(Mark 5, Matthew 8, Luke 8)

They arrived on the other side of the sea after the storm had been calmed, in the region of the Gerasenes. When they got out of the boat, they were met by two men coming from the tombs, possessed by evil spirits. These men lived in the tombs, and no one could bind them—not even with chains. Many times, they had been bound with chains and shackles, but they tore them apart. No one was strong enough to subdue them. Their appearance was terrifying—you might even wonder if they were really human. They were fierce, and no one could pass through that area.



In the city, people had seen those with mental illnesses and called them mad because of their strange behavior. I myself have been chased and beaten by people like these while I was in third grade in Mbeya town. Everywhere, there are people suffering from mental and spiritual affliction, and their families are helpless to assist them because these individuals are uncontrollable and resistant. In Western countries, such people are often forcibly taken by the police to hospitals, where they are restrained or given medications. This practice did not exist in ancient times.

These two men lived among the tombs and in the mountains, crying out day and night and cutting themselves with stones. Even today, Satan torments people through evil spirits. These demons are Satan's followers—the fallen angels mentioned in Revelation 12. When the demon-possessed men saw Jesus, the demons within them cried out, "What

do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come to torment us?" because Jesus had commanded the impure spirits to leave the men.

Jesus asked the demons their name, and they replied, "Legion," meaning they were a vast number of Satan's angels living within these men—possibly 2,000 or more. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to enter a herd of pigs nearby. They recognized His supreme authority and had to request permission. Jesus granted their request, and the evil spirits entered the pigs. The herd—about 2,000 in number—rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned.

The herdsmen fled and spread the news in the town and countryside. The people were terrified by what had happened. The local people had been clearly instructed not to raise or eat pigs, but they had disobeyed this command. The following day, the sea must have been filled with floating pig carcasses—an unforgettable sight in a land where pigs were considered unclean.

When the townspeople came to Jesus, they found the once-possessed men sitting calmly, clothed, and in their right minds. These were the same men who had been filled with a legion of demons. The people were afraid. Although some marveled at the miraculous deliverance, those who owned the pigs were upset by their financial loss. They valued their profits over the freedom and healing of their fellow human beings.

The entire town came out to meet Jesus and pleaded with Him to leave their region, fearing more losses. They did not consider their spiritual salvation or invite Him to heal others—they only thought about their material wealth.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the formerly possessed men begged to go with Him and become His disciples. However, Jesus instructed them to go home and tell their families what God had done for them. Revelation 12:11 says that believers overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. These delivered men became the first missionaries Jesus sent out. They went to Decapolis (a region of ten cities), sharing the great things Jesus had done for them, and everyone was amazed. When Jesus returned to their region six months later, the people who had previously rejected Him were now ready to receive and follow Him—thanks to the testimony of these formerly possessed men.

Even today, there are many evil spirits. Demons are Satan's agents—the fallen angels cast out of heaven as described in Revelation 12. The Gospels document how Jesus cast out demons. Satan and his angels know who Jesus is. They were created by Him as angels of light before choosing to rebel and torment

humanity. Demons were active during Jesus' earthly ministry, attempting to hinder His mission of salvation from birth to crucifixion. They remain enemies of God and humanity, seeking to destroy us.

We must put on the full armor of God. Denying the existence of Satan or demons is dangerous—it is wiser to acknowledge the enemy's reality while trusting in God's power to overcome.

It is vital to remember that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. Satan's power is limited to what God allows. God desires our salvation above all else—that is why He sent Jesus Christ. Through Him, we receive the strength to resist Satan daily. If demons have power, Jesus has even greater power. Whenever Jesus encountered a demon-possessed person, He cast the demons out and commanded them to leave.

Anyone who accepts Jesus as their Savior is under His protection. If Jesus is your Savior, you have no reason to fear evil spirits—by the mighty name of Jesus, demons must flee.

We learn that great things happen when people are willing to share the mighty works of God. Has God done something great in your life? Do not hesitate to tell others. Your testimony has power.

Questions:

1. Why did the demon-possessed men live among the tombs?

2. What did the demon-possessed men say when they saw Jesus?

3. How do we know that Satan exists?

4. What does the term "demon" mean?

5. Why did the demon-possessed men want to follow Jesus?

6. What great things has God done for you?

7. Why is sharing your testimony about God's great works important?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 5:19-21.

[19-21] But Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around Him while He was by the lake.

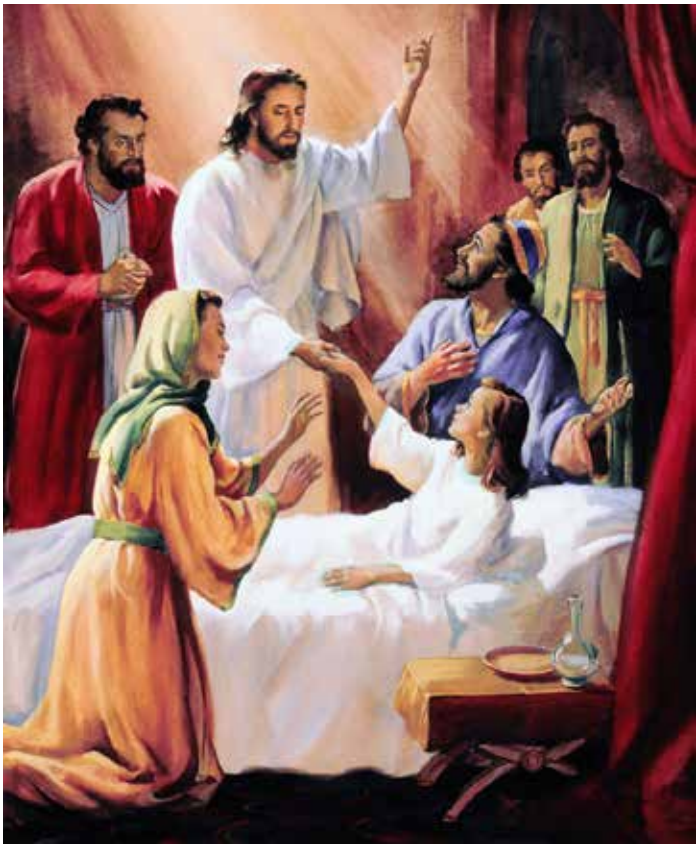
Prayer: Thank You so much, grant us healing and remove sorrow from our lives. Bless my family, help us in our financial situation. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out Jesus getting into the boat, and those delivered from demons asking to follow Him as disciples, but Jesus telling them to go to their homes and tell their people the great things God had done for them and His mercy.

DAY 238 – (August 25)

TOPIC: Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with the Issue of Blood

(Mark 5)



When Jesus returned by boat and prepared to cross back, a large crowd had gathered by the sea. Then came a man who was one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, and he fell at Jesus' feet, pleading earnestly with Him, "My little daughter, who is twelve years old, is at the point of death. I beg You to come and lay Your hands on her, so that she may be healed and live." So, Jesus went with him, and the crowd followed, pressing around Him.

This synagogue ruler had set aside all his thoughts of judging Jesus or speaking ill of Him because he was in distress. What good would it do to pretend he knew everything or to act mighty when his household was falling apart?

As the crowd pressed on, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years came forward. The same year Jairus' daughter was born was the year this woman began to suffer from her illness. Twelve years is a long time—enough for a child to grow and reach seventh grade—and yet, this woman was still sick. She had visited many physicians, but nothing had helped. She had spent all her money on treatments and had only grown worse. Even today, medical care can be very expensive.

According to the Law of Moses, this woman was considered unclean and was isolated from others. She could not attend synagogue or any form of public worship. She could not have children or interact with others for those twelve years. She endured tremendous suffering.

When she heard that Jesus was passing by and that He had healed many of their physical and spiritual ailments—even raising the dead—she decided to go and see Him. However, she was afraid to approach Him directly due to her condition. Instead, she thought, "If I can just touch the hem of His garment, I will be healed." As soon as she touched His garment, her bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed.

Jesus, knowing that power had gone out from Him, turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched My clothes?" His disciples were surprised and said, "You see the crowd pressing around You, and yet You ask, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus kept looking to see who had done it. Then the woman, trembling with fear, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at His feet and told Him the whole truth. She could not hide it any longer.

Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be free from your suffering." Even today, we can reach out and touch the hem of His garment through prayers of faith.

Meanwhile, Jairus patiently waited as Jesus ministered to the woman and others along the way. He may have wondered why the Teacher was delaying, especially since he had told Him that his daughter was critically ill. But Jesus never hurried or rushed; He moved calmly, following the Father's direction.

As Jairus was still waiting, some men from his house arrived and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" Jairus was overwhelmed with grief, and people began to console him. But Jesus overheard their words and said to Jairus, "Do not be afraid; only believe." Jairus, although filled with worry, chose to wait and trust.

When they arrived at Jairus' house, Jesus did not allow anyone to follow Him except Peter, James, and John. Upon entering, He found a chaotic scene—people weeping and wailing loudly. In those days, it was customary to hire professional mourners to amplify the sound of grief.

Jesus asked them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." The mourners, who were sure the girl was lifeless, laughed at Him in disbelief. Then, Jesus sent everyone outside, taking only the child's parents and His three disciples.

He took the girl's cold, lifeless hand and said, "Talitha koum!"—which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." Immediately, the girl stood up and began to walk around. She was twelve years old. The people were completely astonished.

Jesus strictly instructed them not to let anyone know about this and told them to give the girl something to eat. Though Jesus asked for silence, the parents could not keep quiet. They shared the miracle with friends and neighbors, and soon the news spread everywhere, bringing great joy.

Even today, Jesus loves and cares for children. Children, do not hesitate to ask Jesus for what you need today.

Questions:

1. What did Jesus tell Jairus when he was informed that his daughter had died?

2. What words did Jesus speak to the twelve-year-old girl?

3. What hardships did the woman with the issue of blood endure?

4. How can we touch Jesus today with the touch of faith?

5. What does Talitha mean?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Mark 5:35, 36.

[35-36] While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

Prayer: Good Father, may Your name be glorified, we pray for courage to be patient and to be people of thanksgiving. Be praised, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Activity: A play of the story of Jairus, his daughter, Jesus, and the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. Show Jairus' patience, his conversation with the sick woman, and the people on the way.

DAY 239 – (August 26)

TOPIC: You Cannot Serve Two Masters

(Luke 16)

Jesus gave a parable about a rich man who had a manager. The manager was accused of wasting his master's possessions. The master called him and said, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer."

The manager thought to himself, "What shall I do now? My master is taking my job away. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg. I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses."

So, he called each of his master's debtors and asked the first, "How much do you owe?" The man replied, "A hundred measures of olive oil." The manager said, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty."

To another, he asked, "How much do you owe?" He answered, "A hundred measures of wheat." The manager said, "Take your bill and make it eighty."

The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. Jesus remarked that the people of this world are often more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than the people of light.

Jesus said, "Use worldly wealth to make friends for yourselves so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."

Questions:

1. What clever action did the dishonest manager take?
2. Why did Jesus suggest we should be wise like the manager?
3. Why did the Pharisees, who loved money, mock Jesus?
4. What does the term manager mean?
5. What responsibilities has God entrusted to us today?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 16:13.

[13] No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

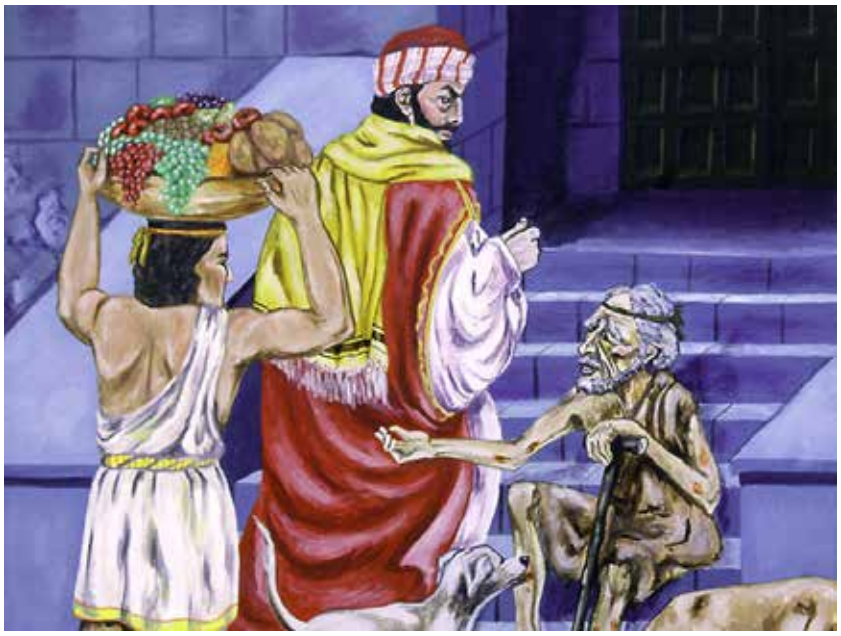
Prayer: Father, help us not to serve things or wealth but only You. Forgive our sins. Help us to pray for others. Help those who are persecuted in various countries because they serve You, Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The faithful steward, not the crafty one. Read the story and narrate it.

DAY 240 (August 27)

TOPIC: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

(Luke 16)



Jesus told a parable that the Pharisees recognized from their traditional stories. He said there was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores. Lazarus longed to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and even dogs came to lick his sores.

One day, the poor man died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, the rich man looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue because I am in agony in this fire."

But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, a great chasm has been set between us and you, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

The rich man then pleaded, "Then I beg you, Father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

The rich man insisted, “No, Father Abraham! But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”

Abraham said, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Jesus told this parable to the Pharisees, who loved this story despite it being part of their folklore and not an actual event. He emphasized that people must listen to the Scriptures and act upon them while they are alive because no one can change their ways after death. What we do in this life affects our destiny in the next. Everyone should take care to do good now to avoid future punishment.

This parable contradicts other teachings of the Kingdom of God. It was a story from their traditions, not a factual event. We could compare it to the fable of the tortoise and the hare – it carries a lesson but is not an actual occurrence.

For instance, Abraham’s bosom cannot literally hold everyone. Moreover, how could Abraham be at peace if people are sitting on his chest? Additionally, someone in Hades cannot see what is happening in heaven.

Nonetheless, the lesson we take from this parable is that acts of kindness to those in need have eternal rewards. Words cannot fully express the glory prepared for those united with Christ. Our lives are hidden with Christ in God, and we are assured that when Christ, who is our life, appears, we will also appear with Him in glory. With confidence, we can call God our Father.

Questions:

1. What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teach us?

2. Why is this not a real event but a parable?

3. Has God given eternal life to the wicked?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 16:31.

[31] He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, remind us that while we are alive here on earth, we must help the poor and those in need. Bless us so that we may bless others. Forgive us for neglecting and despising the poor. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Tell the meaning of the story of the rich man and Lazarus—what it means, or what it does not mean.

DAY 241 (August 28)

TOPIC: Returning Thanks

(Luke 17)



Jesus healed a man with leprosy who approached Him. In those days, people believed that leprosy was a punishment from God for sin, although this was a mistaken belief. Only a few cases in the Bible describe leprosy as divine punishment, such as King Uzziah and Miriam, the sister of Moses.

The leper mentioned here may have hidden and carefully observed his surroundings before approaching Jesus, fearing that people would stop him. Eventually, he took a bold step, fell at Jesus' feet, and pleaded, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Jesus, filled with compassion, reached out and touched him—an extraordinary gesture since no one had touched the man for a long time. Jesus told him to go and show himself to the priest as required by the Law of Moses so that he

could be officially declared clean and return to society.

On another occasion, while traveling to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through a village in Samaria where ten lepers stood at a distance. Because they were considered unclean, they could not approach others and were required to shout, “Unclean, unclean!” to warn people to stay away.

When these ten lepers saw Jesus, they cried out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” Jesus told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests,” as required by the Law of Moses. As they went, they were healed.

One of them, a Samaritan, when he saw he was healed, returned to Jesus, praising God loudly. He fell at Jesus’ feet and thanked Him.

Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then He said to the man, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

The other nine had no valid excuse for not returning to thank Jesus. Some may have planned to give thanks later, others wanted to confirm their healing first, and others might have been too proud to acknowledge the help they had received.

Leprosy was a dreadful disease—parts of the body like hands, feet, ears, and nose would decay and fall off. The affected person would lose physical sensations, meaning they could get injured without realizing it. People with leprosy were isolated from their families and communities, living in caves or separate shelters.

Jesus also told a parable about a servant who, after working all day, is still expected to serve his master before taking care of himself. This teaches us that doing our duty does not earn us special praise—we are simply fulfilling our responsibilities.

Miracles are extraordinary works beyond natural explanation. Unlike witchcraft, which causes harm through the power of the devil, Jesus’ miracles revealed His divine nature and His compassion for humanity. The Bible encourages us to pray for healing, seek medical help, and trust God.

Sometimes, God in His wisdom allows people to endure illness for a greater purpose. For example, Timothy had stomach issues, which were managed with a simple remedy. However, Paul suffered from a physical affliction and was told he would not be healed but would receive God’s strength to endure.

Ultimately, God works all things for the good of those who love Him. Though healing is part of God's promise, even if we are not healed immediately, we trust that He loves us and has a greater plan. One day, all sickness and suffering will end, and we will live forever in joy and God's presence.

A Place of Refuge Always Open
The way to God's throne is always open. Even when you cannot kneel in prayer, your silent prayers can always rise to Him for strength and guidance.

Questions:

1. Can you list seven reasons why the healed lepers did not return to give thanks?

2. Why did lepers live separately from others?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 17:16-19.

[16-19] He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then He said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, I ask You to give me a grateful heart. May I not take Your goodness for granted. Thank You for giving me a good family. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out the lesson of the ten lepers. And its teaching—let each person ask themselves if they are fulfilling it.

DAY 242 (August 29)

TOPIC: Sin Can Follow a Person to Church

(Luke 18 and 21)

Jesus told them that they should always pray and never lose heart because God will grant justice and answer those who cry out to Him day and night. However, when the Son of Man—Jesus Himself—comes, will He find faith on earth? Or will people have forgotten and lost heart in life?

Jesus encountered people who loved to see themselves as superior and believed their religion was better than others. In those days, tax collectors were viewed as traitors, and many were known to be thieves who overcharged people and pocketed the extra money. Tax collectors were often wealthy, and people despised them.

Jesus shared a parable about two men who went to the temple to pray: one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisees considered themselves righteous and viewed others as sinners. The tax collector knew he was a sinner. While praying in the temple, the Pharisee stood and boasted, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I earn." He forgot that he was speaking to God, not to boast or gossip about others.



The tax collector, however, stood at a distance and did not even dare to lift his eyes

to heaven. Instead, he beat his chest and said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Jesus said that the tax collector went home justified before God rather than the Pharisee. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Prayer is not an opportunity to gossip about God’s people—it is a conversation with God as our friend. When you want God to listen, do not boast about how good you are or how bad others are—God already knows you completely. Focus on telling Him your needs and asking for His help. Those who depend on God and confess their sins will receive eternal life.

It is wrong to think that we are better than others or that we never make mistakes. We must not look down on others because Jesus loves them too and died for them.

One day, while Jesus was in the temple, He witnessed something that has inspired millions of people worldwide. The rich were offering large sums of money—leftovers from their wealth. But a poor widow approached slowly and fearfully to place her offering in the collection box. Jesus noticed her generous heart. He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on.”

Perhaps her friends questioned why she gave all her money instead of keeping it for herself. Even today, people may discourage you from giving generously. But do not miss out on the blessings when the Holy Spirit prompts you to give. No one who gives to God remains poor. This widow believed that God wanted her to support His work. She was filled with joy when Jesus praised her act of faith.

Her offering has become a lasting example for generations—she gave sacrificially, trusting that God would care for her needs.

Some people today refuse to give offerings, claiming that church leaders misuse the money. However, Jesus praised the widow and did not tell her to stop giving, even though He knew some Pharisees were hypocrites.

Even today, there are widows and orphans who are very poor. They should offer their hearts to God with love and gratitude. The small gifts we give with joyful hearts are multiplied by Jesus to bless many.

Our offerings can make a lasting impact on the work of God and the needs of others. Even if some leaders misuse the funds, our responsibility is to give, and their responsibility is to manage it rightly. Do not stop giving because

of dishonest people. If you discover corruption, report it appropriately, but continue to fulfill your duty of tithes and offerings.

Jesus knew about the dishonesty of some religious leaders, but He still commended the widow for her faithful giving. The misuse of offerings does not excuse us from our responsibility to give back to God.

The widow did not worry about how her offering would be used—she focused on doing her part. You too should do your part for God.

The Secret of Spiritual Power—Prayer
Prayer is the breath of the soul and the secret of spiritual strength. Without regular prayer, your spiritual life will weaken, and your faith will fade.

Why did Jesus praise the widow who gave two small coins? Why should we give offerings?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 18:1.

[1] Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Prayer: Thank You, heavenly Father, help us to pray and not faint. Help us to be like the widow with two mites, giving with all our generosity without looking at what others are giving. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The widow, two coins, and the offering box—and the words of Jesus praising her.

DAY 243 (August 30)

TOPIC: Zacchaeus, the Short Man Who Climbed a Tree

(Luke 19)



Jesus said that people should always pray and not lose heart. He shared a parable about a judge who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow repeatedly came to him, asking for justice against her adversary. For a while, he refused, but eventually, he thought, “Even though I do not fear God or care about people, because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice.”

Jesus taught that if an unjust judge could grant justice, how much more will God—who is just—answer those who cry out to Him day and night?

Jesus gave these teachings to humble those who trusted in themselves and despised others.

One day, as Jesus passed through Jericho, a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and a wealthy man, wanted to see Him. But because Zacchaeus was short, he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed Jesus gladly. The crowd murmured, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

But Zacchaeus stood and said, “Lord, here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Zacchaeus’s encounter with Jesus transformed his heart. He was once a man driven by greed, but after meeting Jesus, he became generous and honest.

This story teaches that Jesus seeks to save everyone—even those society despises. No one is beyond God’s grace.

Let us ask God for true repentance and the power to correct our wrongs. Jesus is seeking the lost today. Are you ready to walk with Him?

Questions:

Why did people hate Zacchaeus?

Why did Zacchaeus want to see Jesus?

How did Zacchaeus know whom he had wronged?

What significant words did Jesus say to Zacchaeus?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 19:9, 10.

[9-10] Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Prayer: Thank You, dear Lord, for always seeking and saving the lost. Help us also to have love for lost people. Go before us today, and teach us how to pray. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of the story of Zacchaeus, who was healed from greed for things and wealth. Or the widow and the judge, who asked for help.

DAY 244 – (August 31)

TOPIC: The Faith of the Persistent Woman

(Matthew 15)

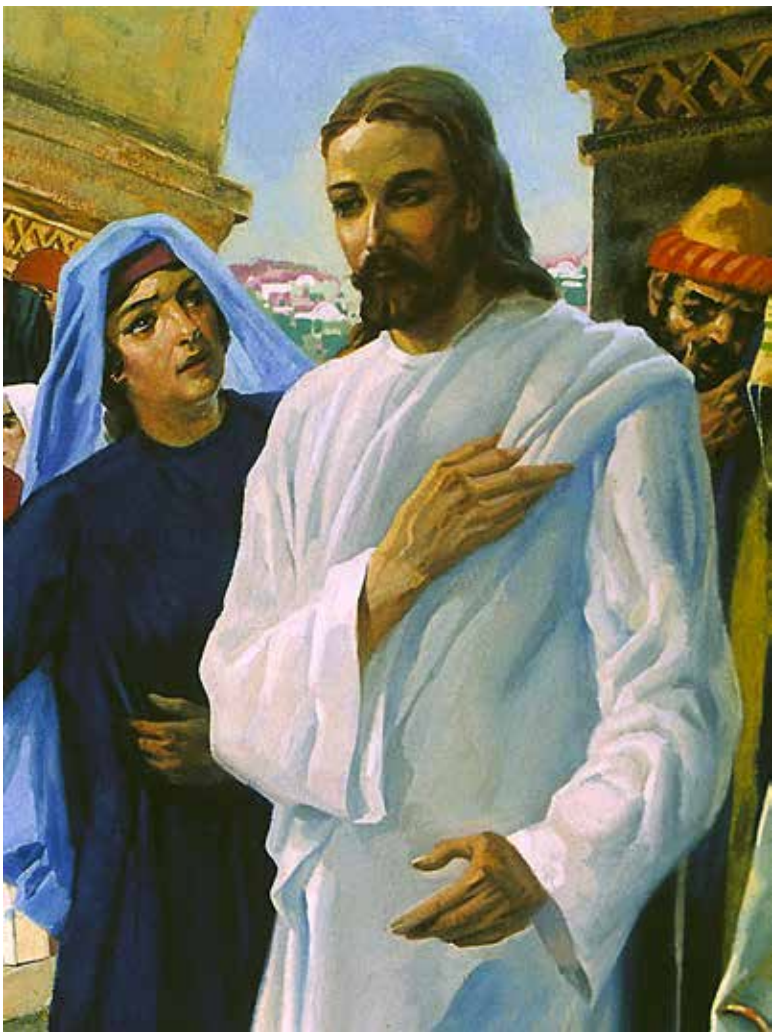
The Pharisees and the scribes questioned Jesus about why His disciples broke the traditions of the elders by not washing their hands before eating. Jesus replied that they were eager to maintain human traditions while disregarding God's commandments. He gave them an example from the fifth commandment, which says, "Honor your father and mother." Yet, they avoided helping their parents by declaring their possessions as a gift devoted to God, thus excusing themselves from their responsibilities. Jesus called them hypocrites, as they honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him, teaching human traditions instead of divine commandments. Even today, many people prioritize religious traditions over God's Word, which is a serious mistake.

Jesus explained that it is not what enters the mouth that defiles a person, as it simply goes to the stomach and then out of the body. Rather, what comes out of the mouth reflects the heart's condition. He meant that the Jews focused on external cleanliness like washing hands while their words and thoughts were full of evil. Evil thoughts such as theft, lies, and murder are far more harmful than eating with unwashed hands. When the disciples told Him that the Pharisees were offended by His words, Jesus replied that every plant not planted by His Father would be uprooted. He warned them that the Pharisees were blind guides, and if a blind man leads another blind man, both would fall into a pit.

Jesus then traveled to the region of Tyre and Sidon, near the Mediterranean Sea. This area was outside Jewish territory, where people worshiped other gods. The disciples thought they would have a quiet time with their teacher in this foreign land, but suddenly, a Canaanite woman from that region came to Jesus. She cried out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." However, Jesus did not answer her at first. He wanted to test her faith and teach His disciples, who would later carry the gospel to all nations and must learn not to discriminate. Seeing Jesus remain silent, the disciples urged Him to send her away because her cries were disturbing them. They thought suggesting her dismissal would please Jesus since she was a foreigner and a pagan woman.

They were surprised when Jesus told them He was not sent only to the lost

sheep of Israel but to all people. Salvation is like the sun – it shines on everyone, allowing each person to choose whether to accept or reject it. The woman came and knelt before Him, pleading, “Lord, help me!” She needed Jesus’ mercy and healing for her daughter, just like any other human being. In God’s eyes, all people are equal. Jesus feels our pain regardless of where we come from—whether Burundian, Rwandese, Gogo, Sukuma, Kisii, Luo, Acholi, Congolese, Ethiopian, or Somali.



Jesus responded, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs,” implying that the Jews were considered the “children” and Gentiles were “dogs.” Yet, the woman was not offended. With wisdom from heaven, she replied, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” Despite the harsh metaphor, she recognized that being a “dog” at the feet of the King of Kings was far better than having all the riches of the world’s rulers.

Today, many people understand this better because they value their dogs highly. Some provide luxury beds, special dog food, and even treat dogs like their own children. A neighbor once told me they spent $1,000 monthly to feed their 140-kilogram dog. Another person paid thousands of dollars for a kidney surgery for their dog, which successfully saved its life. In many African countries, such expenses are unimaginable. For them, it would be easier to get another dog. People often say that dogs are loyal friends who love without resentment. For those living alone, dogs offer companionship, assist the blind, and protect against intruders.

In Western cultures, dogs are highly valued, but in ancient times and even today, some people treat dogs cruelly, throwing stones at them without reason. While dogs are animals and not equal to humans, they too are God’s

creation and suffer because of human sin. Although Jesus did not die for dogs, and humans are far more valuable, we should still treat animals with kindness. If we refuse to listen to God, even animals like Balaam's donkey may serve Him better than we do.

The woman recognized Jesus as the Son of David and acknowledged His power. Jesus, seeing her great faith, said, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." At that moment, her daughter was healed from afar.

Though Jesus was first sent to the Jews, He loves everyone from every nation. We are all His children. Some may think His words to the woman were harsh, but He wanted His disciples to understand the value of every soul, regardless of tribe, language, or nationality. He was ready to help the woman from the moment she approached Him.

Do you think your tribe is superior to others? Or that your mother is better than everyone else's? While that may feel true, in God's eyes, we are all equal. He does not care where you come from—He cares that He created you and has a plan for your life. The woman and those around her were transformed by their encounter with Jesus and believed in God.

Jesus left Tyre and Sidon and went to the Sea of Galilee, where He healed the blind, the mute, the crippled, and many others. The crowd marveled and praised the God of Israel. He also healed a deaf man who could hardly speak. Taking him aside, Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears, spat, and touched his tongue. Looking up to heaven, He sighed and said, "Ephphatha!" meaning "Be opened!" Immediately, the man's ears were opened, his tongue loosened, and he began to speak clearly.

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone, but the more He instructed them, the more they spread the news. People were amazed, saying, "He has done everything well—He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Yet, the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked—who can understand it? Although Jesus healed freely without requiring payment, the religious leaders still sought to kill Him. Today, medical specialists charge exorbitant fees—sometimes $50,000 or millions of shillings for a single surgery. But Jesus, the Great Physician, healed without leaving scars or requiring long hospital stays, yet people plotted against Him.

Jesus performed approximately 37 miracles recorded in the Bible. In many villages He visited, He did not leave a single sick person unhealed. His miracles demonstrated His power over nature, disease, demons, and even death itself.

Nothing is too difficult for Him. Jesus loves you and me and has all power—never forget that. Whatever your problem, big or small, tell Him about it.

God delights in hearing your troubles and joys and is eager to provide the best solution for you. Cast all your cares on Him, and commit to serving Him faithfully (Matthew 28:19-20).

Questions:

1. What defiles a person?

2. What does "even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table" mean?

3. What kind of power does Jesus have?

4. Why did people continue to spread the news about Jesus' miracles despite being told not to?

5. How many miracles did Jesus perform?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 15:8, 9.

[8-9] "'These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'"

Prayer: Lord, thank You so much, I ask You to protect me from fake or hypocritical life. May I not worship You with words only, but may my heart be sincere and close to You. Help me to teach Your instructions and not human ones. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Crumbs or pieces of bread. The persistent and humble Canaanite woman—her pleading and not giving up. The healing of her child.

DAY 245 – (September 1)

TOPIC: The Feeding of the 4,000 with Bread and Fish for the Second Time

(Mark 7-9)

While continuing to heal people in the region of Decapolis—where He had previously instructed the two demon-possessed men from Gerasa or Gadara to go and testify as missionaries—the crowd grew large. They stayed with Him for three days, and during this time, they lacked food. Many became weary and faint from hunger. The disciples suggested that Jesus dismiss the crowd so they could return to their homes because they had nothing to feed them with, and even if there was food, it would not be enough because the crowd was too large.



Jesus, filled with compassion, called His disciples and told them, “I have compassion for these people; they have been with Me for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, for some of them have come from far away.” The disciples, having forgotten the power of Jesus—or perhaps thinking He would not perform a miracle for the Gentiles—asked, “Where can anyone get enough bread to feed these people here in the wilderness?”

Jesus then asked them how many loaves they had. What you have in your hands, if you are willing to offer it, is what Jesus uses to bless others. They answered, “Seven loaves and a few small fish.” Jesus took the bread and fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples to distribute to the crowd.

From this, we learn that giving thanks to God is essential. We should not eat like birds, who eat without awareness. We, as human beings with understanding, should recognize that the Lord provides our daily bread and all our needs. It is good to give thanks and praise His name. Everyone ate and was satisfied, and the disciples collected seven baskets full of leftovers. About 4,000 men were fed, not counting the women and children.

After feeding the crowd, Jesus got into a boat and went to the region of Dalmanutha. There, the Pharisees came and began to question Him, seeking a sign from heaven to test Him. Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” They had already seen and heard many things that should have built their faith, but their hearts remained hardened.

Jesus understood that after more than two years of performing public miracles, His disciples had witnessed everything. Yet, Satan had blinded them, preventing true belief. The words of Jesus transformed the lives of many who believed. From His miraculous birth, the star guiding the wise men, and the angels singing, to all the miracles He performed—many ignored these signs. Jesus grieved that they still wanted more signs and knew that no amount of miracles would soften their hardened hearts.

He said that the only sign left for them would be the sign of Jonah. Just as the people of Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching, the Jews should also humble themselves and believe. Despite witnessing so many healings and miracles, they remained unrepentant. Some people wanted miracles only for personal reasons, but Jesus knew that even if He performed more miracles, their hearts would not change.

Even today, some people twist the Scriptures for personal gain, like the Pharisees who sought recognition and power. The main problem is selfishness—caring only about oneself and not the ministry of Jesus. The Jews misunderstood because they were unwilling to understand. They focused on their outward actions rather than having a transformed heart. Even today, our good works can be corrupted by selfish motives. Human traditions that are not based on Scripture can lead us away from God. Only God can change our hearts from selfishness to a heart that loves and serves others. This transformation of the heart is the greatest miracle, proving that God is actively working in our lives.

Jesus' entire life was a sign from God, but many ignored it. He did the will of His Father and spoke the truth. Even today, some people demand miracles to believe in God. If God knows a miracle will help someone believe, He will provide it. However, if it is just to satisfy curiosity, like a magic show, it will not benefit their spiritual lives.

The true miracle is when a selfish person becomes generous and caring. This heart transformation is evidence that God exists. Whenever the Word of God is preached, the Holy Spirit performs miracles by changing people's lives and leading them toward eternal life.

When Jesus arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Him, begging Him to touch and heal him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. He spit on the man's eyes, laid His hands on him, and asked, "Do you see anything?" The man looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking." Jesus then placed His hands on the man's eyes again. This time, his vision was fully restored, and he could see everything clearly.

As they left and got into a boat, the disciples realized they had only brought one loaf of bread and had forgotten the rest. Jesus warned them, "Be careful! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." The disciples misunderstood and thought He was referring to their lack of bread.

Jesus, aware of their confusion, asked, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? Don't you remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand and the seven loaves for the four thousand? How many baskets of leftovers did you collect?" They still did not grasp His message.

The “yeast of the Pharisees” referred to their hypocritical and corrupt teachings.

Later, as Jesus and His disciples traveled to Caesarea Philippi, He asked them, “Who do people say that I am?” They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets.”

Then Jesus asked them directly, “But who do you say I am?” Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus affirmed him, saying, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” He instructed them not to tell anyone.

Jesus then spoke openly about His coming death, saying that He must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, be killed, and after three days rise again. Peter, not understanding God’s plan, rebuked Jesus privately. Jesus turned and rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

We must be careful with our words. Even well-meaning words can oppose God’s truth.

Questions:

1. How many people were fed?

2. How was Peter used by Satan?

3. What sign did the Jews want?

4. What is the “yeast of the Pharisees”?

5. How did Jesus heal the blind man?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Mark 9:23, 24.

Jesus said to him, "'If You can'? Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Prayer: Lord, thank You for all Your promises. I believe, help my unbelief. I ask You to make me Your chosen vessel. Use the gifts You have given me as You will. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Play—the blind man of Bethsaida. Mark 8:22-26.

DAY 246 (September 2)

TOPIC: Carrying the Cross and Denying Oneself

(Mark 8, Matthew 17)



He called the crowd together with His disciples and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel will save it." He asked them, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, which only lasts a short time, yet lose their soul or forfeit eternal life?" He told them, "If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of them when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." He further said, "On the day of judgment, everyone will be repaid according to their deeds."

He told His disciples that some people standing there would not die until they saw the Kingdom of Heaven come with power, referring to the revelation of Jesus' glory. Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain privately. There, He was transfigured before them—His face shone with glory and radiant light. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than any launderer on earth could bleach them. Suddenly, Elijah and Moses appeared—men who had lived on earth but were now in heaven—and they came to encourage and strengthen Him before His crucifixion.

Peter, James, and John would not have recognized them, but Jesus introduced them, and they overheard their conversation. These two had lived as human beings and understood the sorrow in Jesus' heart. If Jesus failed to complete His sacrifice, even Elijah and Moses would lose their place in heaven because they had entered through the grace and merit of the sacrifice Jesus was about to make on the cross. While Elijah and Moses spoke with Jesus, the disciples

were asleep and missed most of the conversation. If they had stayed awake, they would have been strengthened for the days to come when their faith would be tested, and they would face fear and doubt.

When Peter woke up, overwhelmed by awe and fear, he said, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three shelters—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” At that moment, a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!” This voice was heard three times in the Scriptures: at Jesus’ baptism, when He was with the Greeks in the temple courtyard, and here on the mountain.

The disciples looked around but saw no one else—only Jesus. Overcome by fear, they fell facedown. This was the voice of Almighty God from heaven. As they came down the mountain, Jesus instructed them not to tell anyone what they had seen until He had risen from the dead. They obeyed but discussed among themselves what “rising from the dead” meant. They asked Him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus replied, “Indeed, Elijah must come first to restore all things by turning people’s hearts back to God and preparing them for the coming of the Messiah.” Then He told them that Elijah had already come, referring to John the Baptist, and that the wicked had mistreated and killed him.

He added, “Likewise, the Son of Man will suffer greatly and be rejected.” The disciples did not yet understand that they too would face suffering. Later, they recalled Jesus’ warnings not to trust the religious leaders blindly, as they were like wolves in sheep’s clothing. He had told them that these leaders would drag them to court, flog them, and mistreat them. Jesus advised them to be as wise as serpents but as innocent as doves. The apostles wandered without a permanent home and endured great hardship, but Jesus had already prepared them through His teachings.

Even today, we are warned through the Scriptures to be prepared so that we are not caught off guard and miss entering heaven. Jesus is at the door—His return is near! Trials and persecutions will come for those who love God, but Jesus has promised to give us strength and help.

Walking through life is a great privilege. Moses led the Israelites for 120 years through intense hardship because of their stubborn hearts. Elijah lived 700 years after Moses during a time when Israel worshiped many false gods. Unlike others, Elijah did not die but was taken to heaven. The apostles on the mountain were still on their earthly journey, and they would continue to face hardships after Jesus’ death. Jesus was blessed to hear the voice of His Father, which assured Him of His identity and mission.

He did not need to prove to anyone that He was the Son of God—His Father had already affirmed and comforted Him. Similarly, if you are doing God's will and treating others with love and respect, do not worry when people speak ill of you or falsely accuse you. It is common for people to gossip, hold meetings to criticize you, or even physically harm you. Bring your concerns to God. Every person faces such trials in life. I, too, have experienced ridicule, scorn, and humiliation on many occasions. If you still enjoy religious freedom and peace where you are, give thanks to God for His protection, goodness, and mercy.

Even today, as a child, you do not need to prove to anyone that you are created by God and that He is your Father. If people question you, and you know you are a child of God, you will not be afraid. Instead, seek to please God and find comfort in Him more than in people, because people are inconsistent—even those close to us. But God never changes—He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Only God has the ultimate authority and knows everything. All human beings are temporary travelers on this earth—we are not qualified to judge anyone's worth. No matter how successful or accomplished someone is, they eventually retire and die. Our true value lies in God—He is the Almighty One, eternal in the past and future. The only thing God cannot do is sin—and no one wants Him to!

Prayer is opening your heart to God as you would to a friend. With the eye of faith, you will recognize how near God is, and through prayer, you will experience the deep love and care of God.

Questions:

1. In what ways can you carry your cross?

2. How did Jesus appear on the mountain?

3. Why do you think Elijah and Moses were sent to Jesus?

4. Why did Peter want to build three shelters?

5. Why was it wrong to fall asleep instead of praying, as Peter did?

6. Why do you think Moses was happy to stand on the land of Canaan when he was on the mountain with Jesus?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 17:5-7.

[5-7] Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters—one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You so much because even today You tell us that we are Your beloved children, and You are pleased with us. Help us to respond to Your love. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of the mountain where Jesus was transfigured and shone. What words do you think Moses and Elijah told the Messiah? Why do you think Enoch did not come here?

DAY 247 (September 3rd)

TOPIC: The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon

(Mark 9, Matthew 17)



A crowd approached the nine disciples who had remained below, in the valley, seeking their help to cast out a demon from a possessed person while Jesus and three other disciples were on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured in glory. The crowd was discussing with the scribes and Pharisees, debating among themselves. When they saw Jesus approaching, they were amazed, ran to Him, and greeted Him.

Jesus asked them, "What are you arguing about?" A man from the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought my son to You. He has a mute spirit, and whenever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

The disciples had weaknesses, just like today. They were caught up in discussions about their favorite topic—seeking positions of power. That was their "valley," but today we want to be on the "mountain" with Jesus to experience His power!

At times, they used the name of Jesus to cast out demons or heal diseases, desiring to claim that power for themselves. Yet others, acting in faith in Jesus, were genuine believers with a heart to help many! They had previously been sent out, like the 70 disciples who performed miracles. However, this time, when they tried to help someone, they failed.

They tried again and again, but without success. Embarrassed, they stood before the watching crowd, realizing something was missing. Perhaps they thought even those who were not Jesus' disciples did better than them that day. The disciples were puzzled—what had changed? Why was their power gone?

The question of who is the greatest still troubles us today.

The disciples were focused on how they would become ministers in Jesus' kingdom, gaining power, authority, wealth, or status. Even when Jesus told them He was going to be killed, they didn't understand. They were confused—was He speaking literally or figuratively?

Jesus continued to emphasize His death repeatedly, reminding them that whoever wants to be first must be last and a servant of all. He told them, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

The disciples wanted to hear about how they would have power and how others would serve them, but Jesus told them they needed to be servants, not masters. Today, many think that being a boss means God has blessed us, and being a servant means God has cursed us. Often, that is not true—remember Joseph? Even while in prison, the Lord was still with him.

The father of the child was distressed when Jesus arrived. The people rushed to Jesus, knowing He would easily handle the situation. With sadness, Jesus said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? Bring him to Me."

When they brought the boy to Jesus, the evil spirit immediately convulsed him, and he fell to the ground, rolling and foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has he been like this?" The father replied, "Since childhood. The spirit often throws him into the fire or water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Jesus responded, "If you can believe, all things are possible for him who believes."

This poor father did not realize who he was speaking to! He was asking Jesus—eternal life Himself—"If You can, please heal my child!" With a broken heart, the father cried out, "I believe! Help my unbelief!"

When we pray this father's prayer, we are safe. Let us continue to build our faith by hearing and practicing God's Word. Faith comes by hearing and by

reading God's Word—both are important. What you miss by hearing, you may catch by reading!

Everyone has been given a measure of faith. There is no person under the sun without faith. We sleep believing we will wake up. We sit on chairs trusting they will hold us up!

We believe in thousands of things—today, let us believe that Almighty God is the Lord of our lives. He loves us and has the power to transform our lives, helping us to love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Let us trust, obey, and depend on Him!

Sing this song:

LEANING ON THE SAVIOR

1. Leaning on the Savior,
How sweet it is for me,
Trusting in His Word,
I have joy in my heart.

Jesus, Jesus, I trust Him,
I have found Him true;
Jesus, Jesus, He is precious,
His promises are sure.

2. Leaning on the Savior,
How sweet it is for me,
Believing in His blood,
I am cleansed completely.

3. Leaning on the Savior,
How sweet it is for me,
In Him I always find,
Life and perfect peace.

4. I rejoice because,
I have trusted Him,
Jesus, my beloved Friend,
Be with me always.

This is a prayer every one of us should pray, and God will never say no—never! He wants us to have faith.

When Jesus saw the crowd rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, “Deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again!”

The spirit cried out, convulsed the boy violently, and left. The boy lay still, and many thought he was dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up, and he arose—completely healed.

Later, when they were alone, the disciples asked Jesus privately, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?”

Jesus replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.”

When life overwhelms you—whether with studies, poverty, sickness, fees, dangerous environments, sadness, death, relationships, or spiritual battles—call on Him! Pray, pray, pray!

Jesus reminded them that casting out demons and performing miracles comes not from their power but from God.

He told them that even a small amount of faith, like a mustard seed, could move mountains—not literally moving Mount Kilimanjaro, but achieving great things or performing miracles to help others and spread the Gospel.

Faith is a gift we must ask for—God respects our freedom and will not force it on us. Let us pray for stronger faith to live joyful, faithful lives and share His wonderful deeds.

Faith, prayer, and fasting are powerful weapons in the great conflict between God and Satan, bringing positive outcomes to our prayers.

After this, Jesus led them to Galilee, wanting no one to know. For the third time, He told them, “The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. After He is killed, He will rise again on the third day.”

They still did not understand but were afraid to ask Him.

Prayer is the life of the soul—whether in family prayers, public prayers, or private communion with God, it sustains the soul’s life.

Questions:

1. Where was Jesus coming from when the crowd ran to Him?

2. Why couldn't the disciples heal the boy?

3. Why is leadership in the church or government risky?

4. How can we avoid the dangers of leadership?

5. Why should "Help my unbelief" be every person's prayer today?

6. What kind of demon possessed the boy?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 9:23, 24.

[23-24] "'If You can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for this day. I join in the prayer of this father in today's lesson: "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Play—Jesus, the disciples, and the father whose child had a demon. And the prayer to increase his faith.

Day 248 (September 4)

LESSON: Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God?

(Mark 9)

They arrived at Capernaum, and Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent because, on the way, they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest or the boss. The disciples loved the topic of promotion and becoming great rulers. Then, Jesus sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all." He did not forbid them from taking leadership positions or becoming great, but He taught them the principle of heaven—that a leader is a servant of the people. Leadership or authority is dangerous and a great temptation for many. It often leads to pride, mistreating others, or looking down on them instead of helping and guiding them to find assistance.

It is easy to think that if we were leaders, we would be better than those we see in leadership today. However, leadership is a test or a great trial that causes many to fall into sin. Many believe that only government leadership is problematic, but if we examine history, the leadership of priests and pastors also had more conflicts than the leadership of the Romans or worldly rulers. This is a lesson for those who work in the church. Jesus did not oppose leadership but said that a leader who loves God must be a servant who loves and seeks the welfare of others—not someone who only seeks to satisfy their own desires or personal life.

Jesus saw a little child being carried by his mother among the crowd. He took the child, brought him to the center, embraced him, and said, "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me."

This child was blessed to be held by Jesus because He loves children. All the adults listened intently because they wanted to know who was the greatest. The issue of greatness troubled many people then, just as it does today. No one wants to be a servant, a nanny, a driver, or a farmhand for someone else—everyone wants to be a boss. What we must understand is that every job in life is important.



I once had a job cleaning toilets for many years while I was in college. I often thought about what would happen if schools, offices, or churches had no one to clean their toilets. What would happen if someone didn't have a nanny to care for their children? Have you ever considered how crucial these "small" jobs we often avoid are to life? The disciples were aspiring to positions like prime minister, minister, or vice president when the Romans would be overthrown.

Jesus said, "Whoever humbles themselves and has the heart of a child, the kingdom of heaven belongs to them." He warned them to be very careful not to despise or harm a child through abuse or oppression because every child has angels who continually see the face of the Father in heaven. He said it is not God's will for any child to be lost or to miss heaven.

Jesus further stated that if any adult or person causes a child to sin, it would be better for that person to have a millstone tied around their neck and be thrown into the sea. These are serious words. Truly, Jesus loves children, and nothing happens to a child without His knowledge—He and the angels of heaven are watching. If anyone oppresses a child or tempts them in any way, they are doing it directly to Jesus Himself.

You can imagine how happy the children were when they heard these words—they were ready to obey and follow Jesus. Many mothers lined up to bring their children to Him so that He might bless them and lay His hands on their heads. I can picture the laughter and joy of the children filling that place.

Jesus called the children by name, laid His hands on them, blessed them, and embraced them. He likely advised the parents to raise their children in the way they should go, guiding them to trust and obey their Heavenly Father. When some people tried to tell Jesus that He was too busy, He still took the time to bless the children and speak with them.

Research shows that 75% of children accept Jesus as their Savior before the age of 10, and 90% before the age of 15. However, only 3% accept Him after the age of 51! Children are just as capable of being Jesus' disciples as adults. They are born as pagans, but when they hear about Jesus and we share His message with them, they choose to follow Him.

Parents, let us avoid driving our children away with harsh words and insults. Children have feelings and intelligence—they are complete human beings. Would we like it if someone said the hurtful things we say to them to us? Remember that these children, when we get to heaven, will be our brothers and sisters, not our children. Parents, take time to bless your children and

speak words of blessing over them.

Jewish parents regularly laid their hands on their children's heads and blessed them. Words of blessing spoken to children have a long-lasting impact. One day, you will rejoice over the blessings you spoke as a parent because a parent has the authority to bless or curse their child through their actions.

Children must also listen to and obey God's ways and honor their parents. There are also people in the church who are weak in faith—like children, though they are adults. We must treat them carefully, just as we would treat children, to avoid hurting them.

What did Jesus mean when He said the kingdom of heaven belongs to children? Did He mean that all children will go to heaven? No, absolutely not! Some children are disobedient, use foul language, watch inappropriate content, sing immoral songs, and have impure thoughts and actions. If such children entered heaven, they would turn it into a place of sadness and destruction.

Jesus was referring to children who are obedient, whose minds are uncorrupted, and who are quick to ask for forgiveness when they make mistakes. These are children who are willing to help their parents, are selfless, and humble themselves. Heaven will be filled with such people. If we do not have these qualities now, God gives us time to change so that we are not left behind.

After this, John told Jesus that they had seen someone casting out demons in His name and had tried to stop him because he was not following them. They believed they had exclusive rights to Jesus' power. But Jesus told them not to stop him, for "whoever is not against us is for us."

Jesus said that anyone who gives even a cup of water in His name will not lose their reward. However, anyone who causes a child who believes in Him to sin would be better off having a millstone tied around their neck and being thrown into the sea.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better to enter heaven with one hand than to go to hell with both. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Jesus was emphasizing the seriousness of sin and the need for radical measures to avoid it.

Salt is good, but if it loses its flavor, it is worthless. Jesus urged His followers to have salt in themselves and live in peace with one another. He knows everything about us—our lives, our homes, and everything we face.

Questions:

1. How can a person be both a leader and a servant?

2. What did Jesus mean when He spoke about cutting off a hand or foot?

3. What should we do to focus on Jesus rather than sinful leadership?

4. Why did the disciples stop the man from casting out demons?

5. What did Jesus mean by plucking out an eye?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 9:34-37.

[34-37] But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." He took a little child whom He placed among them. Taking the child in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name welcomes Me; and whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me but the One who sent Me."

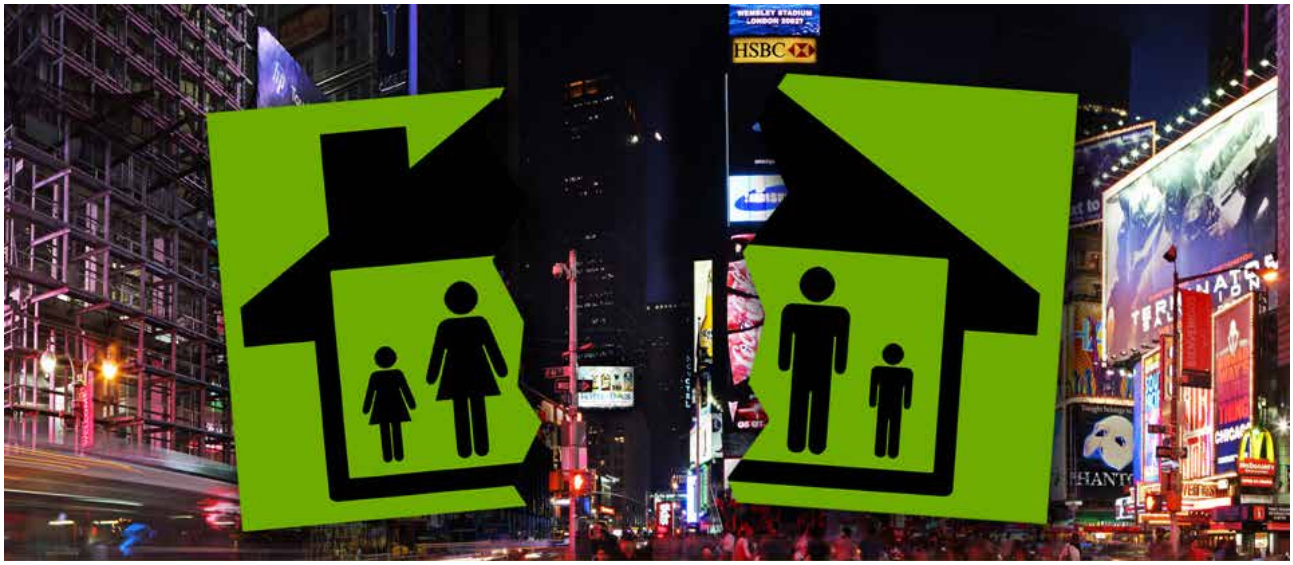
Prayer: Father, we pray that we may receive those who are younger than us in Your name. Help us to defend those who are bullied in class. May we not add to their trouble by siding with the cruel children. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Act out a competition about who is the greatest among us!

DAY 249 (September 5)

TOPIC: Is it lawful to divorce or separate?

(Mark 10)



The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked Him a question to trap Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" At that time, it was the man who gave his wife a certificate of divorce, but today, women also give their husbands divorce. Many left their wives to marry others whom they thought were better suited or younger. This saddened the LORD because marriage is a covenant between a husband, a wife, and Almighty God. God created Adam and Eve, not Adam, Eve, Amina, and Rehema. The Pharisees focused on following the written law rather than showing love to their wives.

Jesus asked them, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and send his wife away." Jesus said, "Moses allowed this because of the hardness of your hearts. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What God has joined together, let no one separate." These are God's amazing calculations, and just as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, so should a husband and wife be united.

People were surprised because they had thought that marrying and divorcing was an easy thing, not realizing that it is God who joins a husband and wife

together. Marriage is one of the first institutions God established. Even though a husband or wife chooses their spouse, each has a responsibility before God to care for, protect, and remain with their spouse forever. That is why Swahili people call marriage a “pingu ya maisha” (a lifelong bond). It should not be a bond of sorrow but of joy, and spouses should not look elsewhere for another partner. Even today, many who divorce end up marrying someone else, but Jesus said doing so is committing adultery. If someone divorces, they should remain single unless the cause is adultery or death. However, many remarry because they leave a marriage not because they dislike marriage itself, but because they want to replace their spouse. This practice is known as serial polygamy or polyandry.

During the time of Malachi, people desired younger wives. They did not want wives of their own age but preferred those who were much younger—sometimes as young as their children’s or grandchildren’s age—thinking they would remain youthful forever. This issue is especially challenging today because it is harder for people to live together in harmony, as society is no longer as interdependent as it once was. A husband should love his wife as Christ loves the Church, even to the point of giving His life for it. Similarly, a wife should submit to her husband, as the Bible commands. The husband is the head of the wife, and the wife is his helper.

Being a helper is an important role. The Holy Spirit is also called a Helper, but that does not mean He is of lesser status. Today, many people want to do whatever they please—marry when they want, divorce when they want, or even live together without marrying. However, God, who established marriage, knows that we need it, though patience seems to be in short supply. This has caused sorrow for husbands, wives, and children alike. Modern alternatives to marriage, including those legalized by governments, should be evaluated against the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. If they are not supported by Scripture, we should avoid these practices and relationships.

Anyone considering marriage must be cautious because divorce is not God’s plan. It is essential to pray and ask God to lead you to a God-fearing person with good character and compatible personality traits. Seeking counsel from the Bible and from mature, God-fearing people is crucial because they can see what young people, blinded by romantic feelings, often cannot. This is especially important because meeting a spouse in places like bars, nightclubs, occult gatherings, or secretive settings can lead to heartbreak for those who love God.

One author wrote:
“If there is any topic that requires thoughtful consideration and calm

decision-making without emotional impulses, it is the subject of marriage. If the Bible is needed as a guide, it is before taking the step that binds two people—husband and wife—for life. However, in most cases, intense romantic emotions, or even infatuation, take control and lead to disaster. In this matter, young people often display less wisdom than in any other. They refuse advice and guidance from those who are wise, as if marriage has an enchantment over them. They refuse to surrender to God, and their emotions bind them in chains as they move forward secretly, fearing someone might interfere with their plans." (FE 103.1)

Courtship should not be driven by foolish, overly emotional, or irrational feelings that lead to secrecy and fear of interference. Instead, young people should seek guidance from wise and God-fearing adults.

Life is about mutual tolerance. Everyone tolerates something in others, whether it's within families, among siblings, or in friendships. The reality of this is reflected in the news, which often reports conflicts and violence among relatives, including cousins, aunts, parents, and grandparents. Since married couples share more of their lives together than with anyone else, they are more likely to notice each other's flaws. This is why it is crucial to understand that marriage is a divine institution. When Satan destroys a marriage, he also disrupts the family, society, and even the nation. Ancient empires like Greece, mentioned in Daniel 2, fell due to domestic problems. Understanding this, Satan tirelessly wages war against marriage. As God's children, we must remain vigilant.

When Jesus returned to His disciples, they asked Him again about what He had said. He told them, "Anyone who divorces their spouse and marries another commits adultery. And if a wife divorces her husband and marries another, she also commits adultery." We need God's power to live faithfully in our families and to pray for our parents' marriages, ensuring that we do not cause trouble within them. We should not gossip about other people's marital issues, but it is the responsibility of mature believers to help those who have fallen, with love and care.

The disciples said, "If this is how serious marriage is, then it is better not to marry!" Jesus responded, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given." He explained that some people are eunuchs because they were born that way, others have been made eunuchs by others (such as the Babylonian servants of the king), and some have chosen celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God. "Let anyone who can accept this teaching accept it," Jesus said.

We should understand that choosing not to marry does not mean living with someone as if they are your spouse without being legally married. Such behavior is fornication and is displeasing to God. Although some governments recognize cohabitation as marriage after a couple lives together for two years, God's standard remains unchanged.

Jesus experienced constant scrutiny and criticism from those seeking to trap Him, but they never found any fault in Him because His life was perfect. Similarly, the heavens are open to receive our prayers, and we are invited to approach the Throne of Grace with confidence to receive mercy and grace in times of need.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why does God dislike divorce?

2. What problems do spouses and children face after divorce?

3. Why should humans not separate what God has joined together?

4. Who are the people who can live without marrying?

5. Why is marriage such an important institution?

May God bless you, child and young person of Jesus!

Key Text: Mark 10:7-9.

[7-9] "'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for the gift of marriage. We pray for the marriages of parents, relatives, and neighbors. Sustain love in these marriages. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss marriage. What is its meaning, and who is its founder? Draw wedding pictures, etc.

DAY 250 (September 6)

TOPIC: Let the Little Children Come to Me

(Matthew 13, Mark 10)



Parents, especially mothers, brought their children to Jesus so that He could place His hands on them, bless them, and pray for them. These parents were certain that Jesus would make a difference in their children's lives; they wanted Him to bless them to bring value and blessings to their lives and to the entire community. Even today, many parents wish the best for their children and bring them to places of worship or to spiritual leaders to be blessed.

The disciples, like other adults, saw their Lord surrounded by many people and thought He was too busy to be bothered by small children. They rebuked the parents for bringing their children. However, Jesus was very displeased with this and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you,

anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." He embraced the children, placed His hands on them, and blessed them.

Wouldn't you want to be one of those children who were blessed by the Lord Himself? I like to think that these children became the best in their villages—people whose lives reflected goodness, helped others, led others to love God, and engaged in various ministries.

As the gospel is being preached worldwide to prepare for Jesus' return, many children are involved in this mission. In Brazil, a young girl named Victoria, aged nine, was seen using oars and a small canoe to visit her peers in a neighboring village to study the Bible with them. Children are quick to believe and trust in God without overthinking the evils of the world because their hearts are still pure and innocent.

In the customs and traditions of those days, Jewish children were fortunate. Other nations, like the Ammonites, sacrificed their children to their gods, believing it would appease them and bring wealth or status. In many places, children have been subjected to harsh labor, working long hours in the fields—often more than adults—and their basic human rights are ignored. It is hard to believe that there are adults who subject children to cruelty and extreme violence.

Most cases of child abuse are committed by people close to the children. We must protect our children and those in our communities as people who love God. Millions of children are abused through physical violence, sexual exploitation, neglect, and abandonment—in their homes, orphanages, schools, or communities. Many cases go unreported because such acts are committed in secret.

Child abuse involves the intentional use of physical force that threatens or causes psychological harm, death, exploitation for commercial purposes, sexual abuse, or violation of their basic rights as human beings. Many children are neglected and lack care and support from their families or communities, leading to developmental challenges. This neglect has resulted in incurable diseases, stunted growth, and other heartbreaking conditions.

The main perpetrators of abuse are parents, guardians, teachers, employers, and even fellow students. Statistics indicate that 20% to 65% of children experience abuse in schools from peers or teachers without receiving help. Data from the past decade reveals that 150 million girls and 73 million boys have been sexually abused worldwide.

Why does society and the family neglect children in such a manner? This grieves God, and as people who love Him, we must advocate for these children because there will be a day of judgment, and we will have to account for our actions.

A child's character is formed by the age of three and solidified by seven. Therefore, what we do during these formative years is crucial. A writer once said, "Everything I needed to know about life, I learned before finishing kindergarten." Children learn the most during the first seven years of life, so parents should take time to set goals and show love during this critical period.

A child's diet also plays a significant role in shaping their character. Simple, natural foods are best—avoiding processed and refined foods, which can negatively impact both a child's physical and mental health. Every family should consider having a garden, as working with the soil helps a child develop a love for work and healthy eating. Agriculture forms the foundation of education.

A child should not be idle or spend their time in harmful activities. Regular mealtimes—every four to five hours—are crucial. Even a nursing baby should be fed on a schedule, about every three hours. Snacking constantly throughout the day disrupts self-control and discipline. Certain foods, like those high in sugar, fat, or salt, can create unhealthy cravings and addictions. Remember, it was food that led to the fall of humanity through Eve and caused Esau to sell his birthright.

During the reign of evil kings like Manasseh, children were sacrificed, causing great sorrow to the God of heaven. Children should be well-educated in the Holy Scriptures and provided with practical knowledge, resources, and land to become self-sufficient. The best gift a parent can give their child is the ability to live independently.

Essential lessons for every child include obedience to God and adults, self-denial, a love for work, organization, serving others, discipline, honesty, and cleanliness of both body and heart. Time and love are the greatest gifts parents can give—not material things. Parents must actively seek to learn better parenting techniques and apply them consistently.

Fathers play a crucial role in raising children and should not abandon this responsibility. On the day of judgment, parents will be asked, "Where is the little flock I entrusted to you?" God praised Abraham because He knew Abraham would guide his household well—shouldn't we strive to do the same?

One of the greatest gifts father can give his child is to love the child's mother, and vice versa. This includes speaking kindly to and about each other and avoiding conflict in front of the children. Words are powerful, and parents must avoid using harsh or careless language that can damage a child's spirit.

Parents should never discipline their children in anger. Instead, love must always outweigh punishment. Many children have been harmed or even killed by uncontrolled parental rage, which grieves their Creator. If we cannot discipline in love, we should not discipline at all.

Jesus gave a stern warning to adults who cause children to stumble, saying it would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around their necks. Let us not misrepresent heaven through harshness and cruelty, but instead, let us cherish these little ones as heirs of God's promises.

Every promise in God's Word carries with it a call to prayer. Through Jesus, we are invited to present our needs—both spiritual and physical—before our Heavenly Father, who knows all that we need and will provide for us through His abundant grace.

Questions:

1. What did Jesus do to show the value of children?

2. What actions today demonstrate that adults do not value children?

3. Why is it important to bring children to church to be blessed?

4. Why is it significant to offer a dedication to God when a child is born, just as it is to celebrate birthdays?

5. In what way can we say that those who are new to the faith are also like children?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 19:14.

[14] Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the children You have given us. Bless them to grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. Help us adults to be like children in faith and humility. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A play of parents bringing children to Jesus, the disciples preventing them, and Jesus welcoming them. Or draw children sitting on Jesus' lap.

DAY 251 – (September 7)

TOPIC: The Rich Young Ruler

(Mark 10, Matthew 13)



As Jesus was going along the road, a man came running up to Him, fell on his knees, and bowed down. This man was young, rich, and a ruler. He was different from other leaders who were spies looking for ways to trap Jesus. The crowd wondered what serious message this well-dressed, wealthy man had brought. While still catching his breath, he asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

This young man believed that his good works alone could grant him entrance into heaven. Jesus responded by asking, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone." He then asked if the man knew the commandments that define human relationships—specifically the fifth through the tenth commandments: "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Clearly, the commandments are important, or else Jesus would not have mentioned them. However, keeping the commandments is only the beginning of the journey. Jesus focused on the commandments dealing with interpersonal relationships because He knew that was where the young man struggled. The young man replied, "Teacher, I have kept all these since I was a boy."

Jesus looked at him intently and loved him. He saw many good qualities in the young man and desired him to be His disciple. Jesus loved him because He was about to die for him. He knew that if the young man fully surrendered,

he could achieve great things in spreading the message and serving others. Jesus told him, “You lack one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”

This wealthy young man, dressed in fine clothes, kneeling respectfully and earnestly seeking eternal life, faced an internal struggle. What he lacked was a big thing—his wealth was his god. He loved the gifts more than the Giver. Obeying God means more than just being polite; it means living a self-denying life like Jesus did. The young man left in sorrow, possibly thinking, “I asked about eternal life, and now You’re talking about my possessions! I didn’t ask about my things.”

Jesus, the true physician, knows the disease of each of us and the perfect cure for it. For the rich young ruler, the disease was being a half-hearted believer—he loved his wealth more than God. Many of us today share this same problem. We should pray for God to reveal our weaknesses and give us the right “medicine” to heal us, as only He knows our hearts, motives, and thoughts better than we do. Each person has a different spiritual illness and needs a specific treatment.

God does not ask everyone to sell everything they own. But if He did, would we be willing to obey? Only those willing to surrender everything—both their possessions and their lives—are true children of God. Clinging to material things shows that our hearts are in those things. Someone once said, “Show me how you spend your money, time, and leisure, and I will tell you where your heart is.”

God’s way of saving us is by cutting off anything that weakens our character and draws us away from Him. When we return to God what He has given us, we store up treasures in heaven. The joy of seeing others saved and brought into God’s kingdom is a unique gift from Jesus. We follow in His footsteps when we live in obedience, for He said, “Follow Me.”

God is not unjust—He knows your needs, and if you trust Him completely, He will provide. No one who gives for the work of the Lord or to help others has ever been left in poverty. Even the disciples had all their needs met throughout their lives. If God owes us anything, He will repay it! He provides in many ways—through wealth, health, happiness, and more.

The young man thought he would become poor like the disciples, who often had no homes and depended on others for food. He likely wondered, “Will I live like this until I am old?” As the disciples and Jesus watched silently, the young man slowly stood up and walked away. The Bible says, “At this, the

man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth."

He thought about his fields, horses, gold, luxurious houses, servants, and livestock. Was he really supposed to give all these up? Perhaps Jesus instructed him to sell everything before giving to the poor to prevent him from reclaiming his belongings later. If the Messiah Himself said the man was rich, he must have been extremely wealthy!

The young man failed the test. Despite his moral living, he knew something was missing. Many young people today pursue education for a better future, and that is good—money itself is not evil. The danger lies in loving money, seeking it in ungodly ways, and using it improperly. It is wrong to rely on wealth for security because many have pierced themselves with grief through their love of money.

The disciples wondered, "If this rich man who keeps the commandments cannot enter heaven, who can?" The young man lost the opportunity to become an apostle. His name could have been remembered for generations and written on the foundations of the New Jerusalem. Yet, he chose to prioritize his wealth over following the King of kings.

Even today, we may not possess great wealth, but we may hold onto other things that we are unwilling to surrender to God. The journey to heaven requires ongoing self-examination. Have we let go of envy, pride, or any idols in our lives? Before we judge this young man, we should ask God to reveal what is lacking in our own lives—and address it.

If you feel weak or unwilling to obey, pray that God will supply what you lack and make you whole. Let us not walk away from Jesus in sorrow, unwilling to obey Him. Heaven holds treasures far greater than anything we cling to on earth.

Jesus told His disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." Amazed, they asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible."

Peter asked what they would receive for leaving everything to follow Jesus. He promised that everyone who sacrifices for His sake will receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. "But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

The goal of life is to be with Jesus forever in heaven. Keep that goal in your

heart every day. Life is full of noise and distractions, and important things can get lost in the chaos. Stay focused on God's light. Reflect on His character daily. His love will lift you up and empower you to do more than you ever imagined possible.

Questions:

1. Why did the rich young ruler run to Jesus?

2. Why is the love of money dangerous?

3. How can someone who seems good still miss heaven?

4. How can a rich person be saved?

5. Why does the journey to heaven require complete surrender?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 19:23, 24.

[23,24] Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, 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."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, who intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Help us to enter Your kingdom by Your grace and mercy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A drama of the rich young man.

DAY 252 (September 8)

TOPIC: The Early and Late Workers Paid Equally

(Matthew 20)



Jesus continued teaching using parables because they made people listen attentively. People loved His captivating stories and became curious to understand their meanings, which led them to discover the truth for themselves. After saying, "The first will be last," He shared a parable:

The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them to work in his vineyard. Around the third hour (9 a.m.), he saw others standing idle in the marketplace and said to them, "Why are you standing here doing nothing?" They replied, "No one has hired us." So, he sent them to work in his vineyard and promised to pay them a fair wage.

He did the same around the sixth hour (12 p.m.), the ninth hour (3 p.m.), and even the eleventh hour (5 p.m.), when he found others still standing idle. When asked why, they answered, "No one has hired us." He sent them as well, even though only an hour remained before the workday ended.

At evening, the landowner instructed his foreman to call the workers and pay them, beginning with the last ones hired and ending with the first. Each worker, whether they had worked the entire day or only the last hour, received a denarius.

Those who had worked from early morning expected to receive more, so when they were paid the same amount as those who came last, they grumbled against the landowner. They said, "These last men worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."

But the landowner replied, “Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?”

Jesus concluded, “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Through this parable, Jesus wanted His disciples to understand that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is based on grace, not on works. Forgiveness of sins and salvation are gifts from God. We should not feel jealous when God extends His mercy to others because His grace is His to give as He pleases.

If someone has been with Jesus from the early days, they experience the joy of walking with the Lord and hearing His voice daily—this itself is a blessing. In contrast, those who come at the last minute may have suffered under the burdens of the world before finding salvation.

Some people think they can wait until old age to follow the Lord, assuming that they will receive the same reward as those who have served Him faithfully from their youth. This is a mistake because no one knows when their life will end. Moreover, living without God can bring pain and sorrow that could have been avoided.

When you hear God’s voice calling you, respond immediately and work joyfully in His vineyard. Don’t compare yourself to others or be envious of those who come later. Remember, the thief on the cross believed in Jesus just before his death and was saved, but that is an exception—not a model to follow.

Those who delay coming to the Lord often endure hardships and pain caused by their sinful lives. We should not envy them because they carry wounds from the world. It is far better to follow Jesus now, enjoy His presence, and live in the light of His love.

Lay your needs, joys, sorrows, worries, and fears before God. You cannot burden Him, and He will never grow weary of you. The One who counts the hairs on your head cares deeply about your life. “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy” (James 5:11). His loving heart is touched by our troubles, and He invites us to bring every concern to Him. Nothing is too big or too small for Him to handle—He holds the universe in His hands.

Questions:

1. What does the wage in this parable represent?

2. Who do the workers hired in the morning represent?

3. Why will the first be last and the last be first?

4. Why do people become envious when God blesses others?

5. How can we overcome jealousy when others succeed?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 20:13-16.

But he answered one of them and said, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?" So the last will be first, and the first last.

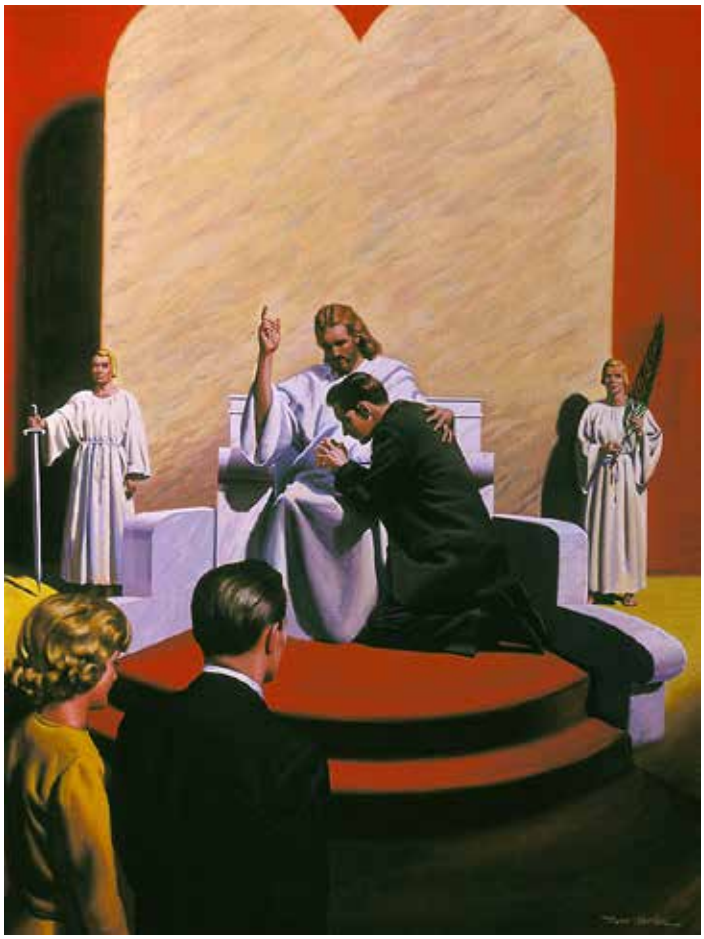
Prayer: Thank You, Lord, because You are generous. Help us not to envy others. Their gain is not our loss. Remove jealousy and hatred from us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: God's gifts are not given by merit, but by grace. Clothespins or stones can represent wages, etc.

DAY 253 (September 9)

TOPIC: Sitting at the Right or Left Hand in Heaven

(Matthew 20, Mark 10)



Jesus predicted His death for the third time, saying, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered to the Gentiles, the chief priests, and the scribes. They will mock Him, insult Him, and spit on Him. They will flog Him and kill Him, and on the third day, He will rise again." However, the disciples did not understand these words at all, and the meaning was hidden from them. They were still thinking about how they would become ministers or vice presidents after overthrowing the Romans and how Jesus would establish His kingdom, allowing them to live comfortably.

Right after Jesus told them about His impending suffering and death, they continued their favorite discussion about the greatness and positions they would soon acquire. They did not realize that if Jesus died as He predicted, it would mark a difficult time for them to witness to others, endure great tribulations, and even face persecution. They discussed the matter with their mother—Salome Zebedee, or Mrs. Zebedee—perhaps thinking that Jesus would respect her and grant their request. This mother had also dedicated herself to Jesus, supporting Him financially.

First, she had two strong and ambitious sons who were passionate about following Jesus. This woman and her husband likely supported Jesus and His disciples with their resources because their sons loved Jesus so much that they left everything behind to follow Him. She allowed her sons to walk with Jesus, leaving her without help at home—a significant sacrifice. Now,

she wanted Jesus to reward her sons by giving them prominent positions. Wouldn't you also want your child to be honored by the Messiah?

Indeed, they loved Jesus, supported Him, and enjoyed listening to Him. Moreover, according to the customs of that time—just like in many African cultures—a disciple's mother was also considered a mother to their teacher, Jesus. It is possible that these young men planned for their mother to speak to Jesus on their behalf, or perhaps it was her own heartfelt desire. After all, every mother wants her children to succeed or hold positions of power, not realizing that the authority in heaven is different from that of the world.

So, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus, knelt before Him, and asked for a favor. Jesus asked her, "What do you want?" She requested that Jesus grant her two sons the honor of sitting on His right and left sides in His kingdom. Jesus, with a serious face, responded, "You do not know what you are asking. Can your sons drink the cup I am going to drink or endure the suffering I will face?" They confidently answered, "We can."

Jesus then said, "You will indeed drink from My cup, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father."

I doubt that anyone can truly drink from the cup of Jesus, as no one can endure what He went through. While we may face suffering as humans, if we had divine power, we would avoid it. Imagine being nailed to a cross—if you had God's power, wouldn't you free yourself and leave everyone in awe? We might even perform miracles to paralyze those crucifying us. However, Jesus' burden was unique—it was in His heart. He carried the sins and sorrows of the entire world, more than 10 billion people who have ever lived over the 6,000 years of earth's history. This burden could only be carried by the Lamb of God. For this reason, only He is worthy to sit at the right hand of the Father.

We, as humans, cannot even bear the sorrows of those close to us, and when we do, we often try to avoid them.

When the other disciples heard what James, John, and their mother had asked for, they became indignant. Although they too desired these positions and had probably thought about it themselves, they lacked the courage to speak up or bring their parents.

Jesus then told them, "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Jesus did not oppose having authority, but He clarified that in the kingdom of heaven, leaders are servants of the people, not masters over them. Anyone who wants to be great must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave.

Many parents need the wisdom to guide their children through life's challenges. If Mrs. Zebedee had such wisdom, she would have given her sons better advice instead of requesting positions of power.

Authority, no matter how small, often corrupts people's character. This is what led to Satan's fall in heaven. Even though he already held a high position, he wanted to overthrow others and elevate himself further. Many people in positions of power become arrogant, desiring worship, praise, and constant attention, forgetting where God brought them from when they had nothing.

Jesus has given us the formula for true greatness: if you want to be great, be a servant. If you want to be first, be a slave.

If you deliberately aim to be elevated for selfish reasons, you will lose your true purpose. God sees the heart.

Jesus came to give His life as a ransom for us, not to seek greatness. We should adopt the same attitude described in Philippians chapter 2—please read that chapter!

From childhood, we are trained to compete—in academics, sports, and the pursuit of wealth. But if we always strive to be first with a competitive spirit, thinking only of ourselves, we deceive ourselves. This attitude has no place in heaven.

Heaven is a place where we think of and love others, not a place for those who seek to exploit others for personal gain. Even in sports, the focus should be on exercise, friendship, and problem-solving—not on rivalry, hatred, or prioritizing games over spiritual matters.

Pray in Faith; Then Receive

There is power from God. He can help, provide grace, and give heavenly wisdom. If you pray in faith, you will receive—but you must be vigilant in prayer. Let your motto be: "Watch, pray, and work."

Questions to Ponder:

1. What did the mother of James and John ask from Jesus?

2. How did Jesus respond to her request?

3. What is the formula for true greatness?

4. Could the disciples really drink from Jesus' cup?

5. What happens if someone serves others while secretly seeking power?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 20:26-28.

[26-28] "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for teaching us humility and how to live Your life. Help us to be servants to others, and to care for people. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Jesus speaking to His disciples that the Scriptures were about to be fulfilled concerning His death. Discuss the meaning of Jesus' death.

DAY 254 (September 10)

TOPIC: Blind Bartimaeus

(Matthew 17, Luke 19)



Time was running out, and Jesus knew it. While He was alone with His disciples, He tried to remind them that the joyful life they had shared was nearing its end. Unfortunately, they did not believe Him when He said that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, be killed, and rise again on the third day. To them, this seemed impossible. Why would a 33-year-old young man risk His life, especially when even older disciples wanted to live longer? Why not escape and help other towns or countries facing problems? Even Peter had rebuked Him, saying that such a thing could never happen.

Everything had been going well, and His miracles had drawn many people to Him; they had been fed, and they were happy and satisfied. Would the priests

really ruin all this when Jesus was ready to establish His kingdom on earth and drive out the Romans? They could not comprehend that if Jesus was the Lamb of God, as John had proclaimed, then He had to be sacrificed. It would have been easy for Jesus to hide if He had wanted to. He could have gone to India, Australia, or even returned to Africa as He did when He went to Egypt. But Jesus did not flee from the suffering He knew was coming. Do you know why Jesus did not run away?

As they journeyed toward Jerusalem, evening came while they were in a Samaritan village. Jesus sent James and John, the two brothers, ahead to ask for a place to stay for the night. The disciples did not expect any problems, as Jesus had previously stayed in Samaria, helping and preaching to many people. They assumed the Samaritans would gladly host Him again. After all, they knew Jesus loved the Samaritans just as He loved the Jews. However, when they asked for accommodation, they were refused. When they inquired why, they were told, “Because your Master is heading to Jerusalem.”

This was similar to how a president cannot combine a visit to a friendly nation with one to an enemy nation during the same trip. He must return home first before proceeding to the enemy country.

The disciples were furious. The two brothers, known as the “Sons of Thunder,” asked Jesus, “Do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy these Samaritans, as Elijah did to the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel?” Jesus was surprised by their spirit of anger and revenge. Have you ever been so angry at someone who wronged you that you wished they would disappear forever? Even today, many people struggle with anger, believing they have the right to be righteously angry—but that is wrong. Anger is a powerful force within us, and everyone experiences it. We should ask God to deliver us from the spirit of anger. Both children and adults must learn to overcome anger because it is a sin.

Jesus rebuked His disciples, saying, “The Son of Man did not come to destroy lives but to save them.” Wishing harm on those who disagree with your beliefs is the work of the devil. Never harm someone who opposes your faith—leave it to God to handle them.

Jesus looked at the village that rejected Him with compassion, knowing that He was on His way to Jerusalem to die for them and all humanity, even though they were unaware of the events unfolding. Prejudice, arguments, tribalism, religious bias, and jealousy consumed them. Even today, do you harbor prejudice based on your tribe or religion? If so, Jesus calls you to welcome Him and His people into your heart.

Later, after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Samaritans welcomed Philip to preach to them. Perhaps at that time, they realized the precious opportunity they had missed to welcome the Son of God and comfort His heart before His great suffering. Jesus did not get angry but simply moved on to another village, and wherever He was welcomed, blessings followed.

Jesus tried hard to explain what was about to happen, but the disciples took time to understand. Although they were shocked by the Samaritans' rejection, they did not realize that the Jews in Jerusalem were about to kill Him that same week. They still thought the Samaritans had greater issues. They had misinterpreted the prophecies, were unwilling to learn, and refused to change. They did not understand that Jesus' and humanity's victory would come through His death and resurrection. For them, death meant final defeat. This week marked the climax of the battle between Satan and God. Satan was about to suffer his greatest defeat.

Jesus reminded His disciples, "You have the Light for a little while longer—use the Light while you have it, so darkness does not overtake you."

As they left the home of James and John's mother, a large crowd followed Jesus. Two blind beggars, one named Bartimaeus, were sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out loudly, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

The crowd was irritated by their noise because they could already see and did not understand the blind men's desperation. Despite being rebuked, the blind men cried even louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" Jesus stopped and called them over. The people said to the blind men, "Take heart! Jesus is calling you." They threw off their cloaks, jumped up, and went to Jesus. He asked them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Even though He knew their need, He wanted them to express it themselves.

They said, "Lord, we want our sight." Jesus, filled with compassion, touched their eyes, and immediately they could see. He told them, "Go, your faith has healed you." Their sight was restored at once, and they followed Him, glorifying and praising God.

These blind men began to travel around, exploring things they had only heard about before. Their lives changed completely.

The blind men were like children because they knew they could not rely on themselves. They fully trusted God, believing He was the only One who could deliver them from their blindness. Anyone who trusts God like a child

is considered the greatest in His kingdom.

Do not lose heart if you do not receive an immediate answer. Your faith should not let go of God's promises, even when you do not see or feel a quick response to your prayers. Do not be afraid to trust God. Rely on His true promises: "Ask, and it will be given to you." God is too wise to make mistakes and too kind to withhold any good thing from His faithful ones who walk in integrity.

Questions:

1. How did the Jews misinterpret the prophecy of the Messiah?

2. Why didn't Jesus hide or escape to Greece?

3. Why did the Samaritan village refuse to host Jesus?

4. What does Bartimaeus' courage teach us?

May God bless you greatly, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 1:29.

[29] The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for taking away my sin. Today I come to You, asking to live a holy life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Bartimaeus and his fellow blind man stopping Jesus, or John the Baptist pointing to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

DAY 255 (September 11)

TOPIC: Paying Taxes is Lawful

(Matthew 22 and 24)

According to the Law of Moses, every man over the age of 20 was required to pay a special half-shekel tax called the drachma. This currency could be exchanged or obtained at the temple to pay the tax. When Jesus and His disciples arrived in Jerusalem, those who collected the half-shekel approached Peter and asked, "Does your teacher not pay the half-shekel?" Peter replied, "Yes, He does," without carefully considering the Jewish trap.

When Peter entered the house, Jesus asked him, "What do you think, Simon Peter? From whom do the kings of the earth collect duties and taxes—from their own children or from others?" Peter answered, "From others." Jesus said to him, "Then the children are exempt. However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. When you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take it and give it to them for you and Me."

The Jews wanted to trap Jesus with this tax issue. If He did not pay, they would accuse Him before the authorities, claiming He was not a prophet. If He did pay, they would argue that He was not above ordinary people. Interestingly, Jesus faced more opposition from the religious authorities than from the Roman government. We never read about the Roman authorities trying to trap Him in this way. Even when He overturned tables, He did so in the temple, not in government offices, because corruption was rampant in the temple. Jesus knew that if the religious leaders repented, even the ruling government would be blessed and more likely to accept Him.

When Peter realized the trap, he probably thought it would have been better to say, "My Master does not pay because He is the Son of God." Yet, Jesus knew exactly how to find the temple coin, and He knew which fish would have it. This example is relevant to us today—rather than wasting time arguing over small matters, it is better to focus on sharing the gospel and helping those in need.

On another occasion, the Pharisees, seeking to trap Jesus, sent their disciples along with Herodians to ask, "Teacher, we know You are truthful and teach the way of God truthfully, and You do not care about anyone's opinion, for



You are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Jesus, knowing their malice, asked, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the coin used for the tax." They brought Him a denarius, and He asked, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They replied, "Caesar's." Jesus then said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they marveled, left Him, and went away.

Governments need taxes to fund essential services like building roads, maintaining hospitals, paying teachers, and other development projects. Fair governments use tax revenue responsibly, while corrupt governments exploit it for personal gain. Nonetheless, citizens play a crucial role in supporting the government. Rather than asking what the government will do for us, we should also consider how we can contribute to its success.

Another vital responsibility is to pray for the government and its leaders, so there may be peace and freedom to worship without persecution. Remember, those who love God are citizens of two kingdoms—earthly and heavenly.

Offering tithes and giving to God are also essential. Compared to the abundance God provides—family, health, and resources—what we give back is very little. God does not force us to give, but failing to do so robs us of blessings. If you think you are giving God too much, remember that He is no oppressor; He will always reward you beyond what you give.

It is our privilege to pray boldly, as the Spirit leads our prayers. With humility, we should present our needs to the Lord and claim His promises.

God does not answer unprayed prayers. Faith and prayer can achieve what no earthly power can. Each new day brings unique challenges that cannot be solved by past experiences alone. We need continuous guidance from God. Christ always sends messages to those who listen to His voice.

Questions:

1. How did Jesus pay the tax?
2. Why did Jesus pay the tax?
3. Who tried to trap Jesus with questions?
4. How did Jesus respond to them?
5. Why are paying taxes and giving tithes important today?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Mark 12:16, 17.

[16,17] So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him.

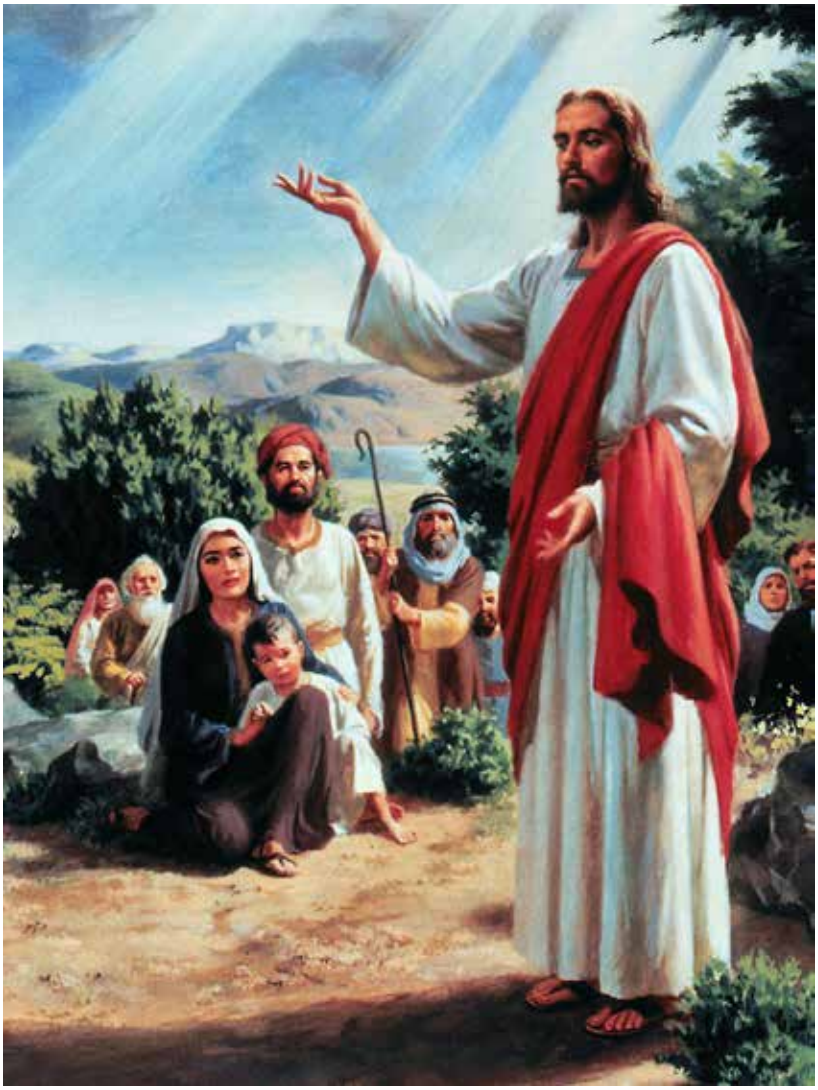
Prayer: Dear Father, we pray that we do not rely on our own ways of solving issues, but instead take guidance from Your Word. Grant us favor with people as we go outside our homes today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A coin with the president of the country. Then discuss the example of how Jesus spoke that day.

DAY 256 (September 12)

TOPIC: We Must Forgive Others as God Forgives Us

(Matthew 18)



Do your siblings or friends sometimes irritate you, making it hard to forgive them? Do you ever feel like gossiping about them so others will know how wrong they are? Have you wondered, "Why can't I hold a grudge against someone who has deeply wronged me?" You are not alone—everyone struggles to forgive when hurt.

When Peter approached Jesus, he asked, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Peter thought seven times was a reasonable limit. Jesus surprised him by saying, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven"—which equals 490 times!

Jesus knew no one could keep such detailed records. Who could remember being wronged 490 times by the same person in a day? If someone wrongs you once a day, it would take over a year to reach 490 offenses.

Have you been wronged 490 times by one person? If not, make a list of everyone you are angry with and what they did. Pray and ask God to help you forgive them. Likely, by the time you reach 20 offenses, you will have forgotten most of the wrongs and be ready to reconcile.

Jesus told a parable about a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. One servant owed him 10,000 talents, a debt he could not pay. The king ordered him, his family, and his possessions to be sold to settle the debt. The servant begged for mercy, and the king, moved with compassion, forgave the entire debt.

However, this same servant found a fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii. Instead of showing mercy, he seized and imprisoned him until the debt was paid. Other servants reported this injustice to the king, who, outraged, revoked his forgiveness and handed him over to the jailers until he repaid everything.

Jesus concluded by warning that God will treat us the same way if we do not forgive others from the heart.

Forgiveness frees us from the burden of anger and bitterness. Without it, we become prisoners of our own resentment. God, like the compassionate king, forgives us and expects us to do the same for others.

If someone repeatedly wrongs you, forgive them without limit. This does not mean enabling harmful behavior but maintaining a heart free of resentment.

Questions:

1. Why did the forgiven servant refuse to forgive his fellow servant?

2. What question did Peter ask Jesus?

3. How many times did Jesus say we should forgive?

4. Why does refusing to forgive enslave us?

5. What lesson do we learn from the unforgiving servant?

6. Who does the shepherd who seeks the lost sheep represent?

7. Is there a limit to how many times we should forgive?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 18:15-17.

[15-17] "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. 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.' 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."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord. Help me to forgive those who offend me, and to know which conflicts I should share with my parents. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A skit on conflict resolution or forgiveness. Or discuss the meaning of forgiveness, with a skit showing forgiveness.

DAY 257 (September 13)

TOPIC: Hosanna, Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the LORD

(Matthew 21)



A summary of the last week of Jesus before His death:

Sunday: He rode a donkey and entered Jerusalem.

Monday: He cleansed the temple and cursed the fig tree.

Tuesday: He taught in the temple.

Wednesday: Judas planned to betray Him. Mary anointed Him with oil.

Thursday: They ate bread and drank wine together, Jesus gave His final teachings, and prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Friday: Jesus was arrested, accused by the Sanhedrin, and sentenced to death by Pilate.

Friday: Jesus was crucified and buried.

Saturday: Jesus rested in the tomb.

Sunday: Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to Mary, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and His other disciples.

During Jesus' final week on earth, He traveled from Ephraim toward Jerusalem and reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. There, Jesus paused and sent two of His disciples ahead, saying, "Go to the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone asks you what you are doing, tell them, 'The Lord needs them,' and they will let you go right away."

The disciples were a little surprised because it was unusual that Jesus knew even the age of the donkey! All of this happened to fulfill the prophecy spoken by Zechariah, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" The disciples thought about this. The King of Kings was humble—without banners or royal decorations. Some governments, like the United Kingdom, spend $50 million to maintain and decorate the royal family. Yet, Jesus worked with His own hands and did not ride in luxurious chariots but walked on foot. Wealthy people passed by in their fine chariots, leaving dust behind them, but Jesus remained focused, saying He must preach before night falls when no one can work.

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions. Perhaps the donkey's owner was also a follower of Jesus, so they brought the donkey and her colt. The disciples may have thought that their days of walking were over now that they had a donkey.

Jesus rode the donkey while the people laid their clothes on it, and He sat on them. The donkey began to move forward. It was the time of the Passover, and many people from different regions had gathered to celebrate. Suddenly, there was a great shout of joy. When the crowd saw Jesus, they spread their clothes on the road while others cut palm branches and laid them on the path or waved them. This was like rolling out the red carpet for a president. The crowd grew larger, and the joyful shouts increased, filling the air with praise—freely given without pressure from the government or religious leaders.

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" The Pharisees and chief priests were angry, but they could do nothing. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred, and people asked, "Who is this?" The crowd answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet

from Nazareth in Galilee." Indeed, He was more than a prophet—He was the Son of God.

The next day, Jesus entered the temple for the second time. The temple had become like a marketplace or a livestock yard. Jesus drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers—who exchanged regular currency for the temple tax coin called a drachma—and the benches of those selling doves. The people stood still in shock, unable to act. Jesus said to them, "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

The blind and the lame came to Him, and He healed them. The children also continued to praise Him joyfully. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did and heard the children shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. They asked Jesus, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" Quoting Psalm 8, Jesus replied, "Yes. Have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants, You, LORD, have called forth Your praise'?" He added, "If these children keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

The disciples had a day of joy before the week's sorrow arrived. Perhaps even the young donkey felt honored to carry his Creator, thinking how special he was to be chosen instead of a horse or an elephant.

Jesus was humble; He did not choose luxurious vehicles or expensive means of travel. Today, we learn not to chase after costly or extravagant things. Just as the donkey was needed by the Lord, today, the Lord needs each one of us to share the final message of eternal good news with a world heading toward destruction. A vital prayer is, "Lord, if You need me, show me where, when, and how to serve You. Help me to do what You want with all the strength You give me until that day when I will be with You forever in heaven."

Jesus was a King without soldiers or weapons to protect Him. All who followed Him did so out of love—no one was forced. Many who followed Him had been healed by Him, and they showed their gratitude sincerely.

However, the crowd was surprised when Jesus suddenly stopped near Jerusalem. Many rushed closer to hear what He would say. When Jesus saw the city, He wept over it. The King of Kings cried, saying, "If only you had known this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes." People were puzzled—what kind of King cries when being praised and celebrated? But Jesus was not crying for Himself—He was crying for them and for us. That city could have received blessings and peace, but they rejected

His warnings.

Jesus predicted, “The days will come when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you, hemming you in on every side. They will crush you and your children, leaving no stone on another because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.” This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Roman General Titus besieged Jerusalem. Such events will occur again in the last days.

The people were proud of their magnificent temple and buildings, but Jesus did not weep for the buildings—He wept for the people, knowing many would reject Him and be lost forever. What Jesus foretold happened 50 years later when Jerusalem was destroyed, leaving only one remaining wall of the old temple.

In many places today, the beginning of the Passover week is called Palm Sunday, and people use palm branches in worship. Many thought Jesus would become an earthly king, unaware of the suffering He would endure to save us from sin.

How much more could Jesus have done for Jerusalem if its leaders and people had accepted Him? After cleansing the temple, Jesus left for Bethany and spent the night there.

Prayers of faith never go unanswered—even if they are not answered in the way or at the time we expect.

Questions:

1. What did the disciples tell the donkey’s owner?

2. What did Zechariah’s prophecy say?

3. Why is Jesus more than a prophet?

4. What did Jesus say would happen if the children did not praise Him?

5. Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem?

6. How do radio and television fulfill the prophecy that “stones will cry out”?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 21:21, 22.

[21,22] So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for answering our prayers. Remove all doubt from us. Help us not to grieve You, since You love us and do not want us to suffer destruction and painful judgment because of our deeds. Forgive our sins and help us receive the Holy Spirit to convict us of sins of the eyes, lust, and pride of this life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

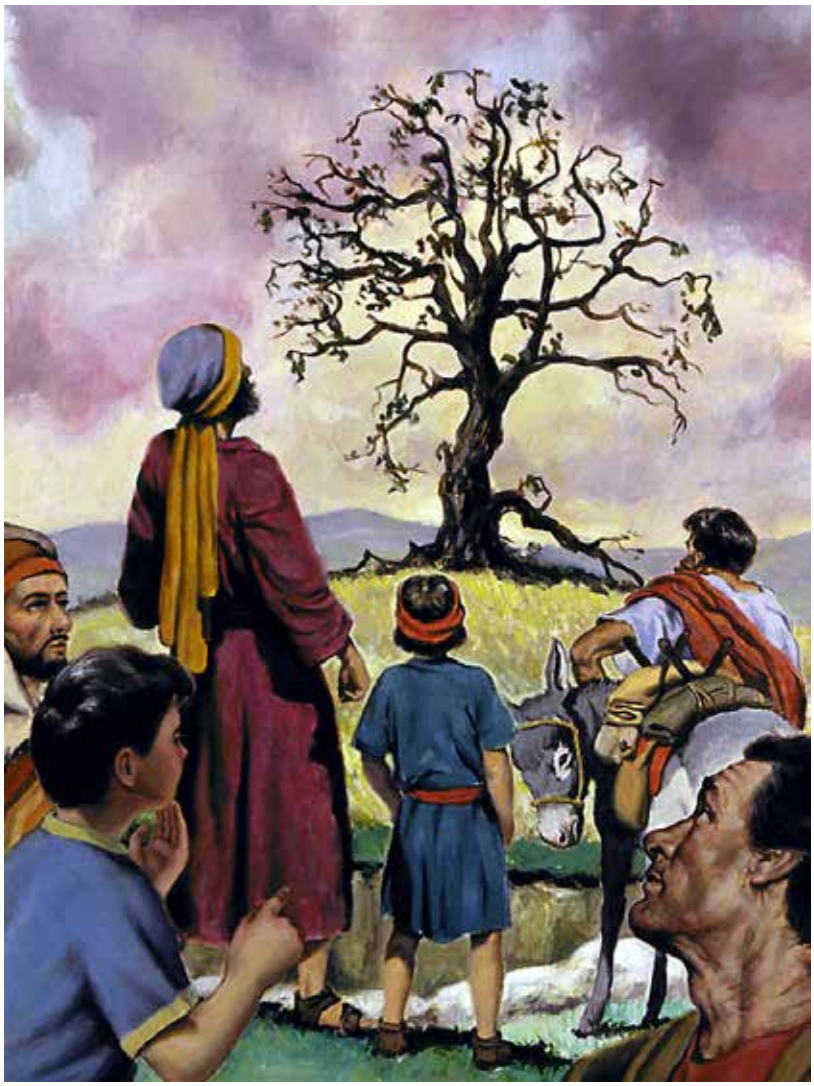
Activity: Reflect on Luke 19:41-44, about Jesus' sorrow and tears. How does His sorrow concern me?

Private Prayer: Find a quiet place, and each one spend three minutes in prayer. Ask God to increase your understanding of Jesus' sorrow. Reflect on the brokenness and pain in the world and consider how you can open your heart to grieve injustice, racism, and violence.

DAY 258 (September 14)

TOPIC: Learn from the Fig Tree

(Matthew 21, Luke 20)



Early in the morning, before breakfast, Jesus left for the city, and He was hungry. He saw a fig tree by the roadside. He approached it to pick some fruit to eat, but found nothing except lush leaves, as if it had fruit. He said to the tree, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately, the tree began to wither. The next day, as the disciples passed by, they saw the tree had dried up from the leaves to the roots. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed and said, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?"

Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. And whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive. And when you stand praying, forgive others; do not hold grudges, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins. But if you do not forgive others, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins either."

The withered tree represented the Jewish religion and their temple, which appeared beautiful on the outside with priests dressed in ornate robes and with lovely hymns of worship, but God was not at the center. They displayed an outward appearance of religious devotion, but their hearts and minds were

far from God. In other words, they were religious but lost. This scenario has repeated itself in many faith communities. Often, the first generation of a community believes in God sincerely, the second generation gains education because of that faith, and the third generation acquires wealth due to that education and faith—but the fourth generation abandons the faith altogether and must begin the journey of spiritual rebirth again.

Jesus did not place importance on outward appearances if the inner heart lacked genuine love for God or others. Those ceremonies and external forms of worship were meaningless without true devotion. Through this example, Jesus reminds us that living for human approval—being seen as spiritual or religious—is not enough to get us into heaven. A day will come when people will see the emptiness if we do not bear fruit. As the Swahili proverb says, "The beauty of a container is just on the outside; inside, it's a piece of wood."

We may appear successful in our studies, have many friends, and be famous where we are, but our character should reflect our faith and the love of God for others. A person living without God's love inside them will eventually lack true joy and will not bear fruit in the community. Let us pray to God to live authentic lives because by living falsely, we only deceive ourselves, not others.

Jesus had been working for three years, preaching in the temple without being stopped, though the leaders often sought to trap Him. They knew of the thousands He had healed and those He had freed from demons. They knew He had power over nature, as He walked on water and performed many miracles no ordinary human could do. Indeed, no one who has ever lived on earth has done the wonders that He did!

When He entered the temple, the chief priests and elders came to Him and asked, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus answered them with a question: "If you answer my question, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. John's baptism—was it from heaven or from men?"

They debated among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will ask, 'Why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." And Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Then He told them a parable: "A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' He answered, 'I will, sir,' but

did not go. Then the father went to the second son and said the same. The son answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. Which of the two did what his father wanted?"
They replied, "The second one."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him."

This lesson teaches us to approach the temple with reverence and humility, not to engage in arguments or quarrels there. God values our actions more than our words. This does not mean that when our parents give us work, we should first refuse and then later go; rather, we should obey immediately. But if we initially refuse, we should repent and then do as asked.

When the Holy Spirit speaks to us—through our thoughts or conscience—we should be willing to change. Tax collectors and prostitutes changed their ways when they heard Jesus' call and left their sinful past behind. However, those who knew God's Word—the Pharisees, scribes, elders, and priests—professed willingness to follow God, but their words were empty without action.

Those who truly love and fear God should not pursue worldly pleasures or follow their own desires. The kingdom of heaven is not just a kingdom of love, but also of truth, sincerity, goodness, and faithfulness in both words and actions. If we want to be part of this kingdom, we must follow His plans and laws. It does not matter how rebellious or disobedient we were in the past—we must repent, turn away from our old ways, and do God's will.

When your parents ask you to do something, do you refuse? When God tells you to follow His commandments, do you obey, or do you reject His commands? When God asks for your heart, do you deny Him? If so, remember that Jesus loves you deeply. Like a loving Father, He is waiting for you to turn back and say, "I was wrong, forgive me—I am now ready to do what You ask." He is waiting for you today in His vineyard.

Angels Carry Our Prayers to the Heavenly Sanctuary
Angels hear our prayers of praise and faith and carry them to the One who ministers in the Heavenly Sanctuary on behalf of His people. They present His righteousness and merits for us. True prayer relies on Him who is supreme and grants us victory. On our knees before Him, the Christian gains strength to resist temptation.

Questions:

1. Who does the son who said “Yes” but did not go represent?

2. Who does the son who said “No” but later went represent?

3. Who does the withered fig tree represent?

Key Text: Matthew 21:42.

**[42] Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?”**

Prayer: Thank You, our Father in heaven. Help us to believe in You, the chief cornerstone. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: A play of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32. What is the lesson of these two sons?

DAY 259 (September 15)

TOPIC: The Vineyard Owner and the Wicked Workers

(Matthew 21, Luke 20)

Jesus told a parable about a man who owned a vineyard. He planted vines and took good care of the vineyard—he built a fence around it, dug a winepress, and constructed a watchtower. He then rented the vineyard to some tenants and traveled to another country.

When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to collect his share of the produce from the tenants. However, the tenants seized the servants, beat some, and sent them away empty-handed; others they even killed. The owner sent more servants, more than the first group, but the tenants treated them in the same cruel way—beating them, humiliating them, injuring their heads, and throwing them out of the vineyard.



Finally, the owner sent his beloved son, thinking, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they conspired among themselves, saying, "This is the heir—let's kill him and take his inheritance." They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

Jesus then asked, "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" The people replied, "He will destroy those wicked men and rent the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the harvest at the proper time."

Jesus used this parable to symbolize Israel as the vineyard. God had cared for and protected the nation, expecting it to bear good fruit. However, when He sent His prophets to guide them toward His kingdom, the people rejected them—some were stoned, others were mistreated as enemies, and some were even killed. Finally, God

sent His Son, Jesus Christ, but they would also kill Him. Judgment was coming, and the wicked would receive their due punishment.

At the time Jesus told this parable, His death had not yet occurred—but the religious leaders were already planning to kill Him. When they heard the parable, they understood its meaning and said, "May this never happen!"

Jesus responded, "Have you not read the Scriptures? 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'" He explained that since they rejected the cornerstone—Jesus Himself—the kingdom of God would be taken away from them and given to a nation that would bear its fruit. This prophecy has come true, as the gospel has spread to people worldwide, not just the Jews.

Jesus warned that anyone who falls on this stone (meaning those who submit to Him) will be broken and humbled—but those on whom the stone falls (those who reject Him) will be crushed completely.

When the chief priests and Pharisees heard this parable, they realized Jesus was speaking about them. They knew they were not following God's ways but were consumed by their own selfish interests. Feeling guilty, they wanted to arrest Him but feared the crowds who considered Jesus a prophet and respected Him deeply.

The religious leaders continued to set traps for Jesus, hoping to catch Him in His words and hand Him over to the authorities for execution—just like the wicked tenants in the parable. They asked if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, and Jesus wisely answered, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

In contrast to the wicked tenants, faithful workers in God's vineyard—like the apostles—shared the message of His kingdom. Even today, many continue to work faithfully, bringing forth the fruits of love, truth, kindness, patience, joy, and peace.

You, too, have a choice—to be a faithful worker in God's vineyard or to be like the wicked tenants. Which side will you choose?

Jesus gave many agricultural parables, including the story of a fruitless tree. This tree was given time to be nurtured with fertilizer, but if it still did not bear fruit, it would be cut down. Similarly, God gives us time to change our ways—but if we refuse to bear good spiritual fruit, we face judgment.

Serving God requires effort, patience, and perseverance. You will face struggles, carry burdens, offer counsel, and plan strategies—but always seek God's guidance and strength. Pray and work—work and pray. As students in the school of Christ, learn continually about Jesus.

Questions:

Who do the tenants who killed the owner's servants represent?

Who are the tenants that killed the son compared to?

What does the fruitless tree symbolize?

What is the cornerstone that the builders rejected?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 20:42-45.

[42-45] "Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:
'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'
Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?"

Prayer: Thank You, my Father, my God, my Rock, and my salvation. In the Name of Your beloved Son, Amen.

Activity: Take examples of Jesus' parables in Luke 20 about the farmer, etc., and explain their meaning for today.

DAY 260 (September 16)

TOPIC: The Sadducees, Marriage, and the Resurrection

(Luke 20)



The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, tried to challenge Jesus with a tricky question. They were wealthy, held high-ranking priestly positions, and had some alliance with the Romans. Although they knew the Pharisees had failed to trap Jesus with a question about taxes, they believed their question about marriage and the resurrection would succeed.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spiritual matters. This disbelief made them like pagans because anyone who denies heavenly things or the resurrection cannot truly believe in God. They led the religious institutions of the time but were hypocritical in their practices.

The Sadducees referred to Moses' law, which stated that if a man died without children, his brother should marry the widow to continue the family line.

They posed a scenario: seven brothers, one after another, married the same woman after each preceding brother died childless. Eventually, the woman also died. They asked, “In the resurrection, whose wife will she be since all seven married her?”

Jesus answered that in the resurrection, people do not marry but are like the angels in heaven. They can no longer die because they are children of God and share in the resurrection. Jesus also pointed to Moses’ writings, where God identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since God is not the God of the dead but of the living, these patriarchs must be alive in Him.

Some of the scribes—who believed in the resurrection—praised Jesus’ answer, saying, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” From that point on, no one dared to question Him further.

Jesus also clarified that marriage is a sacred institution between one man and one woman, established by God. Divorce and infidelity violate God’s seventh commandment. Those who are married should uphold their vows, seek forgiveness, and nurture their relationship. Christian marriages that reflect love and unity preach a powerful message of God’s goodness.
Jesus further asked, “Why do people say that Christ is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, called Him ‘Lord.’” This meant that the Messiah, though a descendant of David, was also divine and preexistence.

He warned His disciples to beware of the scribes and Pharisees who loved public recognition but were hypocritical, exploiting widows while pretending to be pious. Despite their long public prayers, their actions showed their true motives.

Questions:

What did the Sadducees believe?

Why is their belief a sin?

What question did the Pharisees use to test Jesus?

How did Jesus respond?

Why did the Pharisees sit in the front seats and offer long prayers?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Luke 20:22-25.

[22-25] "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

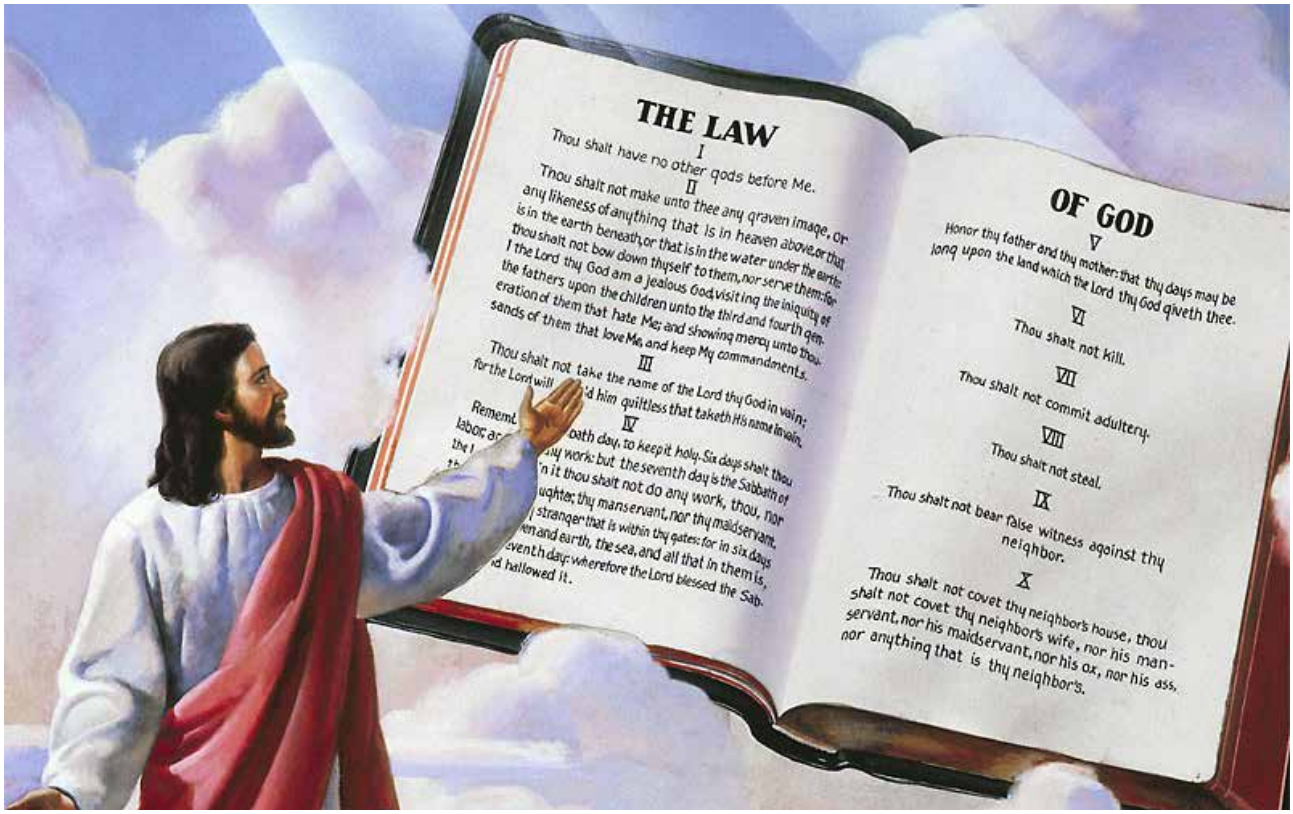
Prayer: Thank You, Lord. Help us to be faithful stewards of time, health, the gospel, possessions, talents, and in imitating Your character. Keep us from false teachings. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A play of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

DAY 261 (September 17)

TOPIC: Which Commandment is the Greatest?

(Matthew 22)



When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

We cannot touch heaven without touching our fellow human beings. As we draw closer to God, we also draw closer to others. We cannot live as hermits and avoid people. It is necessary for all of us to remember to pray to God. Private prayers are the secret to strength and victory. We should understand what He tells us and put it into practice.

When another woman saw Jesus, she became envious and said, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you.” But Jesus replied,

“Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.” We must always pursue what is good and do it because we are often tempted to do evil. There is a day when everything done in darkness will be revealed and brought to light by God.

Another man came to Jesus seeking a judgment regarding an inheritance dispute with his brother. Jesus asked him, “Who appointed Me to be a judge or an arbitrator between you?” Then He said, “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” He told the parable of a rich man who harvested so much that his barns were full, and he planned to tear them down and build bigger ones, not knowing he would die that very night without having decided to follow Jesus.

Sometimes, people rely on themselves and make plans without involving God, unaware of what tomorrow holds. Accumulating wealth without realizing that life is fleeting, without considering helping the community or supporting the work of the Gospel, is pointless because one day, all worldly riches will turn to ashes.

Jesus also spoke of two people who built houses—one on sand and the other on a rock. When storms came, the house on the sand collapsed, but the house on the rock stood firm. A person who believes in God is likened to someone who builds their house on a rock. In the Scriptures, the Rock represents Jesus Christ. Today, we are advised to build on this Rock, to love Him with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The words of Jesus cannot be explained scientifically or by human wisdom and philosophy but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Earthly knowledge alone is insufficient to understand our salvation—only the Holy Spirit helps us comprehend. Therefore, we should not read the Scriptures without asking God to give us the light to understand them.

Our character is always under construction; if we build our character on the Rock—Jesus—life’s troubles and challenges will not consume our thoughts to the point of falling into Satan’s traps. Our lives must be founded on the solid teachings of Jesus. He is the unshakable Rock, our refuge, and a firm foundation. We should not base our beliefs on whether many people agree with us but on whether our faith aligns with God’s Word and is rooted in the Rock.

When children listened to Jesus, they understood His words and accepted them without worrying about whether others followed them or not. A child who loves Jesus and desires to follow His instructions can be a better worker

for God than an adult. Because a child knows their weakness, they seek and depend on God more. Such a child will build a stronger foundation than adults with vast knowledge and talents if they follow and rely on God.

If we fully commit ourselves, we will know whether we are building on the Rock or the sand. We will discern whether the teachings we follow are the Truth or human traditions.

Our prayers should be earnest, sincere, and persistent, like the poor friend who went to ask for bread at midnight. The more we pray with determination, the closer our spiritual union with Christ will become. We will receive increased blessings as our faith grows.

Questions:

1. What is the greatest commandment?

2. Who did Jesus say is more blessed than His mother?

3. What does building on the Rock mean?

4. How can you tell if you are building on the sand?

5. What was Jesus' response to the man who wanted Him to settle an inheritance dispute?

Key Text: Matthew 22:36-40.

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"
Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment.
And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord. Please help me not to focus on wealth, but to love You with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A case of inheritance, or a house with a strong foundation and a house with a weak foundation.

DAY 262 (September 18)

TOPIC: Woe to the Pharisees

(Matthew 23)

Jesus loved people from all walks of life and sought opportunities to speak with them for their salvation. Because of this deep love, He did not remain silent and allow them to be lost. He told them what they needed to hear. We, too, should not seek peace to the extent that it causes us to forget the principles of Truth.

Jesus said we should not fear those who kill the body but the One who can destroy both body and soul. The Pharisees focused on outward appearances while neglecting the heart, thoughts, and intentions that needed transformation first.

They created 613 laws based on Moses' teachings, adding their own rules to enforce them, making thousands of regulations that became burdensome. Jesus warned the crowd and His disciples to follow the teachings but not the Pharisees' example because they did not practice what they preached. They placed heavy burdens on others but would not lift a finger to help.

Jesus called them hypocrites because they performed religious acts to be seen by others. They loved places of honor, being greeted in marketplaces, and being called "Rabbi." Jesus instructed His followers not to seek titles or positions of superiority, as true greatness comes from serving others.

Jesus declared, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" because they hindered others from entering the kingdom of heaven and did not enter themselves. They exploited widows and made lengthy prayers for show. They would travel extensively to convert one person but then make them twice as much a child of hell.

Jesus wanted people to understand that outward appearance is not as important as the condition of the heart. Despite their knowledge of Scripture, the Pharisees' hearts were filled with wickedness.

Jesus' words were a final effort to help them repent. His desire was for them to love God and others sincerely, not to live for selfish gain.



Even today, we must examine our lives and ask whether we follow Jesus' teachings sincerely or if we merely put on a religious show.

Questions:

1. Why is it unwise to lead others to hell?

2. What does it mean to cleanse the inside of the cup first?

3. Why did Jesus rebuke religious leaders publicly?

4. What behaviors today resemble those of the Pharisees?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 23:11-13.

[11-13] "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."

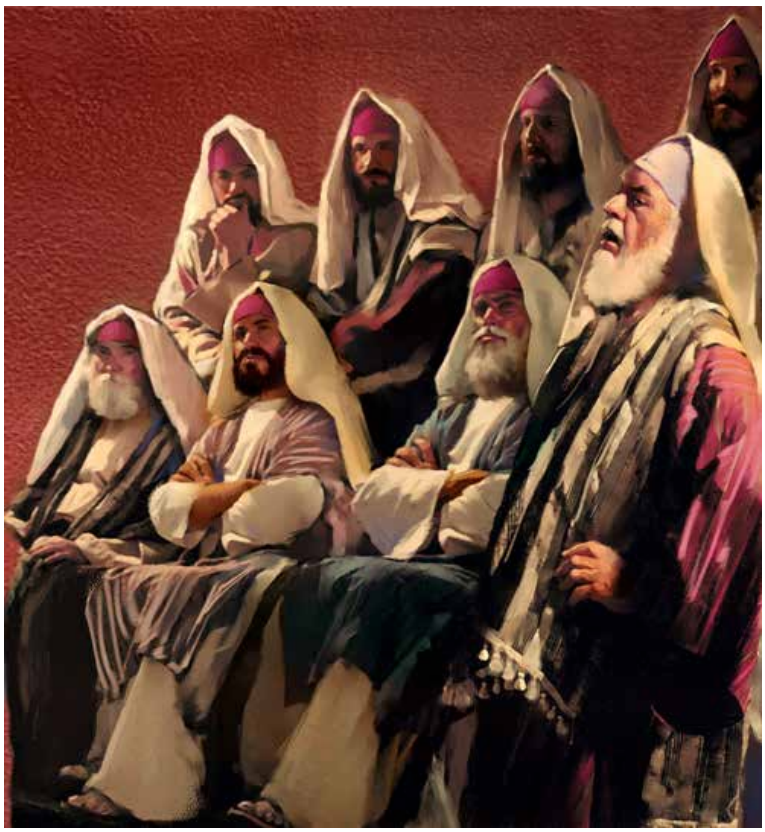
Prayer: Thank You, Father in heaven. Help us not to shut people out of the kingdom of heaven. Keep us from hypocrisy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Look for a vegetable and begin counting its leaves. Explain further—Pharisees, hypocrites, you pay tithe of mint, dill, cumin, and tiny herbs, yet you neglect the weightier matters of the law, namely justice and mercy.

DAY 263 (September 19)

TOPIC: The Pharisees – Part Two

(Matthew 23)



Jesus continued to give warnings, saying, "Woe to you, Pharisees!" He had compassion but rebuked the scribes and Pharisees who displayed outward acts of righteousness. They loved to sit in the front seats at synagogues and banquets, exploited widows, took food from the poor, and burdened others with heavy rules while refusing to lift a finger themselves. They enjoyed being called grand titles like "Father" or "Teacher," which should only be reserved for God. They loved receiving honor and being worshiped by people.

During Jesus' time on earth, there were four kinds of laws: the Law of Moses, the laws of the rabbis, the Roman laws, and the Ten Commandments of God. The Pharisees counted 613 laws from Moses and added their own interpretations, multiplying them into thousands of rules. The scribes, whose job was to copy the Scriptures manually since there were no printing machines, also taught people to know God. Although they occupied the seat of authority like Moses, they failed to fulfill their duties toward God and people. They were given time to correct themselves but refused to change. This is the problem with hypocrisy—deceiving others until eventually, you believe your own lies and deceive yourself.

Jesus said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which appear beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. In the same way, on the outside, you

appear righteous to people, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." These people spent large sums of money building monuments for the dead instead of helping the sick and needy while they were still alive. They prioritized things people didn't need and denied them what they truly needed.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You decorate the tombs of the prophets and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have joined them in killing the prophets.' By saying this, you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. You are doing exactly as your fathers did, even now planning to kill Me and fill up the measure of your forefathers' sins. You serpents, brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

Jesus warned that His death would not end their hatred and wickedness. He said, "I will send you prophets, wise men, and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town." He accused them of persecuting righteous people from the beginning of the world, from Abel to Zechariah, who was murdered in the temple. The scribes and Pharisees had taken away the key to knowledge—they did not enter God's kingdom themselves and prevented others from entering. When they heard Jesus' words, they became furious and began to question Him aggressively, seeking a reason to accuse and kill Him.

With sorrow, Jesus lamented, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling! Look, your house is left to you desolate, for you rejected the presence of God's Spirit. You will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'" After these words, Jesus left the temple.

Jesus wanted everyone to understand how deeply He cared for them. Like a mother hen protecting her chicks from hawks and storms, He wanted to shield them from spiritual danger—but they refused His help. Jesus did not want to embarrass them, but their sin and rebellion had gone too far, and He offered them one last chance to repent. Even today, Jesus warns us to be careful. Do we read His Word? Do we obey it? Whether young or old, we must examine where we have gone wrong and repent so that we do not become hypocrites.

Jesus was speaking to religious people—churchgoers—not to political leaders, government officials, or pagan outsiders. Someone once said that many believers live like actors, telling the story of Jesus' crucifixion as if it were

a performance, while their hearts are not truly engaged. Interestingly, professional actors pretend to live in a reality, yet they know it is fiction. We must seek Jesus and know Him personally so that when we tell others about Him, we are not just acting—we are sharing the truth that changes lives. Today, everyone in the church must be on guard.

The desires of the eyes, the desires of the flesh, and the pride of life are stronger temptations today than they were in Jesus' time. We cannot be saved unless we humble ourselves before Jesus and surrender to Him. The priests and scribes were obsessed with wealth and human praise, and they oppressed others.

These warnings were not just for the Pharisees—they are for us today. The Pharisees received these rebukes through Jesus' words because the Scriptures had not yet been written. But we have the Bible, and it is our responsibility to stay vigilant and pray against false religion—even within the church. A person can be lost while attending church if they are like the Pharisees. If we burden others with unnecessary rules, we may drive them away from the faith. While the Law and Scriptures are important—even Jesus did not break the Law—it is crucial that we are not hypocrites.

One day, my seven-year-old child called me a hypocrite because I always insisted we be on time for church, but I was running late. He got into the car and waited for me, even though we had to drive 25 miles to church. Does this happen in your home? Do you try to do the right thing, but your parents hold you back—even though they introduced you to faith?

You cannot justify being a hypocrite just because others around you are. If others are hypocritical, you must take responsibility for your own actions and be an example of righteousness. Pray, "Lord, I live among hypocrites who show bad examples. Help me to take responsibility for my actions and to be a positive example to others so that those who watch my life may choose truth over hypocrisy."

It is easy to become a hypocrite like the Pharisees. Small children are not hypocrites—they speak the truth and live sincerely. That is why the Bible says the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like little children. As children grow older, they are more prone to hypocrisy. Every adult has struggled with this sin.

Our lives follow three parallel paths: the center path is the Gospel and the love of Jesus—it is the path to eternal life that God wants us to follow. The left path represents hypocrisy—knowing the Bible but living differently. The

right path represents worldly living—seeking pleasure and denying God.

Everyone slips toward either worldly living or hypocrisy. It is easy to become extreme—either allowing everything or being overly strict. Only Jesus can keep us on the right path if we surrender to Him and ask for His grace. By looking to Jesus on the cross, we receive life. When parents maintain a close relationship with God, the Holy Spirit helps shape their children's character and protects them from hypocrisy or worldliness.

Earnest and sincere prayer is powerful. God may not always answer our prayers as we expect because we do not always ask for what is best. But in His infinite love and wisdom, He provides what we truly need.

Questions:

1. What was inside the beautifully decorated tombs?

2. What does the example of the hen and chicks teach us?

3. Why did the Jews kill the prophets?

4. What hypocritical behavior do you need to change?

5. What practices in your church today resemble the Pharisees?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 23:23, 24.

[23,24] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence."

Prayer: Thank You, Father. Help us to be merciful people. Keep us from hypocrisy and fake lives.

Activity: How many woes are there? Go through them. Draw a picture of a hen gathering her chicks.

DAY 264 (September 20)

TOPIC: Jesus Is Coming Soon

(Matthew 24)

Do you know that this world is at the edge of its history? Almost every prophecy has been fulfilled. The remaining prophecies will happen in a short time. Do you know how one can prepare so that when Jesus returns, they can go with Him to heaven?

When Jesus left the temple, His disciples came to Him to show Him the temple buildings. Many Jews took pride in their temple, which took 46 years to build and was the economic center of their nation due to the sacrifices offered there. However, they forgot that those sacrifices were only symbols or shadows—the true sacrifice was Jesus Himself, the Lamb of God, who would be slain for the sins of humanity. The blood of lambs could not save anyone; it was merely a picture or representation.

Jesus told them that not a single stone of those buildings would be left upon another without being thrown down. While sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him privately, asking, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?" Jesus responded with an answer that applies to us all. Knowing His disciples were fearful and confused, He described the deceptions that would occur as signs of His coming; however, they were to live with hope, always looking forward to His return.

Many will come to deceive others—false prophets claiming to be Christ—and they will mislead many, even those who seem strong in faith, if they do not fully depend on God.

Today, we must also take this warning as the first sign of Jesus' coming or the end of the world. Many people have already emerged, claiming to be prophets. A missionary friend of mine in Congo told me that when they arrived at a certain village and entered a house, there was a man claiming to be God the Father, and his son claimed to be God the Son. He gained thousands of followers who worshiped him. However, one day, he fell ill with severe diarrhea and died at about the age of forty. Out of fear, his son stopped claiming to be God the Son.

Nowadays, even women have emerged claiming to be God—something that never happened before. In the past, some women claimed to be prophets (false prophets) or pastors, but they never declared themselves to be God, unlike some Eastern and Western religions that have female deities.



Other signs include wars and rumors of wars. Nations will rise against nations, and there will be famines, earthquakes everywhere, and the stars will fall from the sky. Two hundred years ago, earthquakes were rare, but now their frequency has increased to hundreds each year. As the return of Jesus draws closer, disasters like fires, floods, piracy, murders, and other calamities continue to increase worldwide. These are just the beginning of birth pains—similar to a mother experiencing labor pains before giving birth.

At that time, people will betray you and cause you to suffer and even be killed. Some of those who will betray you will surprise you because you thought they were fellow believers, but they are actually the chaff or weeds. You will be hated by all nations because of My name. Then, many—especially church members who seemed strong—will fall away, betray one another, and hate each other. False preachers and prophets will arise everywhere, deceiving people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of many will grow cold. People will not understand the true meaning of love because evil will dominate their lives. Many will speak of love with their mouths but harbor evil intentions in their hearts.

Although most signs seem troubling, one positive sign remains—the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Today, people are seeking spiritual matters day and night. In 2013, spiritual books outsold all others. This shows that people are earnestly searching for spiritual truth. The most purchased book was the Bible, followed by the Quran, and third was the "Little Red Book" of Mao Zedong. All these books address spiritual matters.

Jesus said that when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, then let the reader understand that difficult times have come. This prophecy had a dual meaning: the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the end of the world with the second coming of Jesus in the last days. Since we are living in the last days, let us read these things, meditate on them, and live according to them.

He told them that when these things happen, those on the rooftop should not go down to retrieve anything from their houses, and those in the fields should not return home to pack their belongings, because there will be no time, and doing so could lead to their capture. It will be especially difficult for pregnant women and nursing mothers during that time of emergency.

He urged us to pray that our flight to the mountains would not occur during winter or on the Sabbath, as it would be distressing for such chaos to happen on a holy day or during the harshness of winter. If God does not intervene and shorten those days, no one will survive.



Jesus told us that before He returns, the Good News will be preached to the ends of the earth. Today, we have media that did not exist in the past to spread the Gospel, such as loudspeakers, projectors, printing presses, and books. The Scriptures have been translated into over 2,000 languages, and there are inventions like radios, televisions, computers, and phones. Jesus did not say everyone who hears will believe, but that each person will have the opportunity to hear and decide for themselves whether to follow Him or not—removing any excuse.

Jesus will not return secretly; His coming will be as visible as lightning flashing from the east to the west. Everyone will hear and see Him—people of every language, nation, and tribe, whether they are Australians, Kenyans, Ugandans, Rwandans, Chinese, Indians, Americans, Peruvians, Kurds, Swiss, Tanzanians, or Filipinos.

The book of Thessalonians tells us that it will not be a secret event because there will be a loud trumpet sound, and every eye will see Him. Those who have prepared themselves will be taken to heaven, while the Antichrist will be destroyed before the journey to heaven. There will be no second chance for salvation, as some claim through the rapture theory, which is not supported by the Bible. This false teaching has spread through interpretations like the Scofield Bible and books by Tim LaHaye. Even the deaf will hear the trumpet blast. The heavens will be rolled up like a scroll, and mighty men, kings, the wealthy, and those who ignored God will seek refuge in caves, pleading for the mountains to fall on them.

Persistent and fervent prayer is essential. If the Savior of humanity, the Son of God Himself, felt the need to pray, how much more should we, as weak and sinful humans, feel the need to pray continually?

Questions:

Why does Jesus want us to know the signs of the end times?

What signs will show us that we are in the last days?

How did Jesus respond when the disciples boasted about the temple?

Why is it unwise to boast about human achievements?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 24:11-14.

[11-14] And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.

Prayer: Thank You Lord that You will come to take us and go with us to heaven.

Keep us away from deceivers, and help us to love You and love people. Help us to take the good news to the whole world. Even through our phones help us to spread the Bible.

Activity: In June of the year 2025 there were 14,000 people groups in the world, and among them 7,290 were still unreached. These represent about 42.4% of the world's population. This equals about 3.4 billion people with little or no access to the Christian gospel. Look at the 1040 Window and JoshuaProject.org or Jesus4Asia. Learn together about this matter, and what to do to reach Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Confucianists, people in Pakistan, Indonesia, China, Jews, Shintoists, etc.

DAY 265 (September 21)

TOPIC: Signs of the End Times

(Matthew 24)



For the sake of the elect who cry out to God day and night, He will shorten those days of tribulation to save those who trust and rely on Him. If someone says Christ is here or there during these days, do not believe them, for false christs and false prophets will arise. Some will even claim to be Christ, but it is a lie, and the devil will empower these deceivers to perform certain kinds of miracles to mislead people—if possible, even the elect. What is important to know is that when Christ returns the second time, He will not set foot on this earth. He will be in the sky, and believers will be caught up to meet Him in the clouds. So, if you hear someone saying Christ is in a shop or a particular place, and they are still walking on the earth, know that there is a problem—even if they perform great signs and wonders. Jesus already warned us that if people say He is in the wilderness or in a house, we should not believe them. Just as lightning flashes from the east and is seen in the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Many things will happen, but those who have surrendered to the Lord and trust Him will know that the end is very near, even though they will not know the exact day or hour. Just as when we see vultures gathering, we know there

is a carcass, so will we know that Jesus is near, at the door.

Jesus went on to tell them about things that would happen many years later. His coming will be sudden and unexpected for those who are not prepared. The sun will be darkened or eclipsed—this happened on October 27, 1780—the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky—this occurred on November 12 and 13, 1833. The powers of heaven will be shaken, as seen in earthquakes like the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. All these things have already happened and continue to happen. Then, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn when they see Him coming on the clouds with power and great glory.

He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth. All the signs in Matthew 24 have been fulfilled except one—that the gospel must be preached to the whole world. This can only happen if we allow God to enter our hearts. Since the great conflict between good and evil prevents God from taking over our hearts and minds without our consent, the completion of this mission depends on our willingness.

Jesus said to learn a lesson from the fig tree: when its leaves sprout, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that Jesus is near, at the door. Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's words will never pass away. Jesus is coming—let us encourage one another with this good news! Maranatha! No one knows the day or the hour except the Father in heaven. If people knew the exact time, they would prepare out of fear of punishment, but their hearts and minds would not be ready to be citizens of heaven. Such people would enter heaven only to steal gold from the streets, fight with others, and make heaven an unpleasant place.

As in the days of Noah, people were preoccupied with their daily lives—eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage—without realizing the impending judgment. So it is today. People are busy with everyday activities—eating, dancing, fetching water, drinking porridge, gossiping, watching TV, washing clothes, cleaning dishes, mopping floors, sweeping, going to school, working jobs, getting married—without seeking spiritual matters or preparing for God's kingdom. Such people may not commit what we call "big sins," but their thoughts are focused on people, things, and worldly matters that do not lead to salvation.

Two people will be working in the field—one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding grain—one will be taken, and the other will be left. We must stay awake and be ready because we do not know

on which day the Lord will come. If a homeowner knew when a thief was coming, he would stay awake to prevent his house from being broken into. In the same way, we must be prepared because the Son of Man will come at an unexpected time.

A faithful and wise servant who is entrusted to give others their food at the proper time will be blessed if his master finds him doing so when he returns. Our task is to tell others the message of judgment—that people should fear and glorify God because the hour of His judgment has come. Dear child, God is coming to judge the world, and we must be ready now.

Let us not be wicked servants who say, "My master is delayed," and begin to mistreat others, live selfishly, or oppress those who love God. The Lord will come unexpectedly and will punish such people severely—assigning them to the place of hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. However, we believe that those who have surrendered to God and dedicated their lives to Him will know when the end is near, even though they will not know the exact day or hour.

The apostles knew their faith had to be firm, and the same applies to us. Can you tell others about His kingdom? If we love Jesus, it will be natural for us to follow His call, obey His commands, love others, and share the good news of the kingdom. We long for Him to return soon. The event of Jesus' return to take us to heaven is the most important event in your life and mine—it is something we should wish to happen even today if possible.

May the coming of Jesus not catch us by surprise. Some people think they should finish school, get married, buy a house, or accomplish personal goals before going to heaven. But I want to tell you that heaven holds greater joys than anything we can imagine here. Just being there will bring indescribable peace and happiness. All our sorrows will disappear instantly. There will be no pain, tears, death, hatred, or any form of evil.

A mother who had struggled for years to have a child once told me, "Let Jesus delay His coming—I have just given birth after many years." But when I asked if her child would lack anything in heaven, she realized everything would be better there. Heaven is a place of perfection where no one will suffer.

Prophecies about the end times are being fulfilled daily. We must study God's Word, guided by the Holy Spirit, and share it with others. The time is short—let us prepare and help others prepare, too.

Pray with Unwavering Faith—Yes, pray with steadfast belief, knowing that

Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate, ensures our prayers are heard and accepted.

Questions to Consider:

Why didn't Jesus tell us the exact day or hour of His coming?

What can we do to ensure the day of Jesus' return does not catch us off guard?

How can we recognize false Christs?

How are our days similar to the days of Noah?

How can we distinguish between true and false miracles?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 24:35-37.

[36-38] Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Prayer: Thank You our Father in heaven, help us to tell people the good news and to be ready for Your coming. Since we do not know the time or the hour, help our love not to grow cold and help us to endure to the end, without fear of wars or earthquakes. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: "Be Ready!" Musical Chairs Game. A way of teaching the importance of being ready for the return of Jesus, which will happen when people least expect it.

Materials: Chairs, music.
What to do: Play the music and stop it suddenly (musical chairs). When the music stops, the child without a chair must say one thing they are looking forward to about Jesus' return. Do not remove chairs again, and continue the game about ten times—always with one chair less.

Conclusion: Remind the students that the return of Jesus will be a surprising event, just like the surprise of not finding a chair in the game.

DAY 266 – (September 22)

TOPIC: The Parable of the Ten Virgins is a Lesson for Us

(Matthew 25)

This end time is compared to the ten virgins who took their lamps with joy, waiting for the bridegroom who was coming to the bride at night before the wedding celebration began. Five of these virgins were wise, and five were foolish. These virgins represent all members or believers in these last days because they were all virgins, meaning they were part of the church. In those days, the bridegroom was the one being awaited for several days, and he was the center of the wedding. Today, we usually wait for the bride to come in last and rise as she enters.

All the virgins fell asleep, but the five wise ones woke up and, although they had fallen behind, they realized their mistake and started anew. They had enough oil in their lamps, while the foolish ones had lamps but forgot to bring enough oil. At midnight, there was a loud cry of celebration announcing that the bridegroom had arrived and they should go to meet him. All the virgins trimmed their lamps, but the foolish ones asked the wise ones to share their oil because their lamps were going out. The wise virgins refused, saying there would not be enough for both and advised them to go and buy more oil.

I doubt that stores were open at midnight like some 24-hour shops today. As the foolish virgins rushed out in fear to find oil, perhaps from friends with private shops, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. When the foolish virgins returned, they begged to be let in, but it was too late—the bridegroom said he did not know them.

It is crucial for everyone to be watchful because we do not know the day or hour when Jesus will return. We must prepare ourselves for the coming of the Son of Man. If we are too occupied with the worries and affairs of this world, we will not be ready when Jesus appears in the clouds. The apostles wanted to understand the meaning of this parable, and they were told that the oil represents the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is the Light of the world. The Holy Spirit is the extra oil that helps believers wait for Jesus' return, just as the bridegroom was awaited. In the Scriptures, Jesus is portrayed as the Bridegroom, while the church or believers are the bride.



The ten virgins represent those waiting for Jesus' second coming to earth. Since it has been a long time without Jesus returning, some people are falling back and becoming spiritually asleep. They forget that they must remain vigilant as their Lord commanded and share the love of Jesus with others. They should tell their neighbors and also prepare themselves.

Faithful servants waiting for the Bridegroom will be ready to open the door when He comes, and they will rejoice at the banquet He has prepared for all humanity. We must be prepared because we do not know the day or hour. If Jesus told us the exact time, many would live recklessly, while others would act out of fear just to enter heaven, but their hearts would lack true love.

Throughout history, some people have claimed that although no one knows the day or hour, we can know the year of Jesus' return. These people have left school, quit their jobs, and sold their possessions to wait for Jesus. This is a mistake. Jesus told us to continue our daily activities and make plans whether He comes today or tomorrow. He never said we should stop our daily work or stop telling others about His return. If our activities are not sinful, why should we stop them? We are human beings—we must plant, harvest, and eat.

Those who have oil are those with faith. The oil represents the Holy Spirit, who helps us develop a heavenly character—an experience no one else can share on our behalf. The Holy Spirit helps believers have enough faith to wait for Jesus while witnessing to others. When Jesus comes, the faithful will enter the Kingdom of God.

The main lesson here is that we must always be ready for Jesus' second coming by watching and praying because we do not know when He will return. We should observe the signs and indications He mentioned so that we are not like the foolish virgins. No one can enter heaven based on another person's preparation. The wise virgins could not share the Holy Spirit working in their lives or their faith and character experience. Total surrender to Jesus is the key to entering heaven.

You are invited to come, pray, seek, and knock, and you are assured that you will not be turned away empty-handed. Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

Questions:

1. The five foolish virgins were all church members and believers today—what is their difference from the wise ones?

2. Who do the five wise virgins represent today?

3. What does the oil represent today?

4. Who is the Bridegroom who prepared the banquet?

5. What should a person do to enter the banquet?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 25:1, 2, 13.

[1, 2, 13] Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise … Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, come and speak with us, have mercy on us we pray, that we may not be like the foolish virgins. Help us to watch in prayer and to tell others to be ready for Your Return, You who are the Bridegroom. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity:
Wise Virgins: Each one should have a torch or a small container of extra oil.
Foolish Virgins (5): Each one should have a torch or lamp but no extra oil.
Bridegroom: A special role, possibly taken by the teacher or an adult.
Setting: Prepare a darkened room.

Steps:

1. Preparation and waiting for the Bridegroom's arrival: Explain that the children are like virgins waiting for the bridegroom.

2. Waiting: Let everyone sit and wait for a short time. You may say the bridegroom is delayed.

3. Arrival: Announce the arrival of the bridegroom with a signal.

4. Wise Virgins: Light their lamps or torches, shining brightly.

5. Foolish Virgins: Their lamps go out because they have no extra oil.
6. Impossible Request: The foolish virgins ask the wise for extra oil, but this is not possible.
7. Sad Refusal: The wise virgins explain they do not have enough oil for everyone.
8. The Door Closes: The wise virgins and the bridegroom enter the wedding feast, and the door is shut.
9. Lesson in Preparation: The foolish virgins return too late and find the door closed.

DAY 267 – (September 23)

TOPIC: Using Our Talents to Be Fruitful

(Matthew 25)



Jesus, knowing He would soon leave, continued to give His disciples guidance so they would know what to do when He was no longer with them. He gave the parable of a businessman preparing to travel who entrusted his property to his servants as stewards. To one, he gave five talents of silver, to another two, and to another one—each according to their ability—and then he left.

The servant who received five talents immediately went and traded with them, earning five more. The one with two talents also gained two more. But the one who received one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time, the master returned and settled accounts with them. The servant who had received five talents reported that he had gained five more. The master praised him, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master." The servant with two talents received the same praise.

However, the servant with one talent returned it without any profit, blaming the master for being a harsh man. The master called him wicked and lazy, saying he should have at least deposited the money with bankers to earn interest. The master ordered the one talent to be taken from him and given to the servant with ten talents.

Jesus is the businessman in this parable, and the talents represent the gifts and abilities God gives each of us. We must use them wisely and faithfully to bear fruit for His Kingdom.

Questions:

1. Why were the servants with five and two talents praised?

2. List the talents you are using or hiding.

3. Who does the businessman represent?

4. Why should we continue to prepare for Jesus' return even if it seems delayed?

5. Which talents are you hiding, and which are you using today?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 25:21.

[21] His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Prayer: Thank You Holy Father, I want to be a good and faithful servant, and one day rejoice to hear Your voice saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Enable me to do this with joy and completely. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Find three people and give them—one talent, two talents, and five talents. They go away, and two return with ten and four, and the one with one returns with that one. See Matthew 25:14-30: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents."

DAY 268 (September 24)

TOPIC: Passport to Heaven

(Matthew 25)

Jesus continued to speak in parables, using stories or everyday examples to explain spiritual matters or the kingdom of heaven. These parables captured the audience's attention because they painted vivid mental pictures of the narratives. The parables related to the daily lives of people, were easy to understand for both children and the elderly, and contained teachings for everyone.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, accompanied by all the holy angels, and sits on His glorious throne, He will gather all nations before Him. He will separate the people who truly belong to Him, those who obey and trust Him, just as a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

He will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed Me; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to see Me."

The righteous will be surprised and ask, "Lord, when did we do these things for You?" He will answer, "Truly, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me."

Those who gave food to the hungry, sheltered the homeless, clothed the naked, and cared for the sick and imprisoned were, in fact, serving Jesus Himself.

Then He will turn to those on His left and say, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not welcome Me; I was naked, and you did not clothe Me; I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me."

They will also ask, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison and did not help You?"



He will answer, “Truly, I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.”

Since they did not care for others, it shows that they could not care for Jesus either. Because His kingdom is about compassion and service, they will be sent away into eternal punishment, while the righteous will enter eternal life.

In Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Jesus’ final teachings emphasize that judgment will be based not on what people believe but on what they do. Jesus is the ultimate Judge, and neither you nor I have our own heavens to send people to. As the Lord of all love and authority, He teaches that our judgment depends on how we treat the vulnerable—the poor, orphans, widows, strangers, and those who are marginalized.

He says there will only be two groups—those on the right and those on the left. Those on the right will be saved because of their visible love through their actions. May God help us, and let us pray for one another!

If we claim to believe in Jesus yet hoard our belongings while others lack basic needs, we fail to embody His teachings. The kingdom of God is not about self-centeredness or accumulating possessions, but about sharing and caring for others.

This parable emphasizes that our actions toward others determine our eternal destiny. Those commended by Jesus were unaware they were serving Him. They may not have known theology or Bible doctrines, but they understood and practiced God’s principles of love.

Even today, there are people who may not know the Bible or who Christ is, but they show kindness, love, and compassion. In regions where many have never encountered a Christian—like the remote areas of Nepal, Burma, or Tibet—people can still respond to the Holy Spirit’s prompting.

Although they may not know God’s laws or the Scriptures, they allow the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts, and their actions reflect His presence. Such people will be surprised to hear that they are also children of God.

Just as angels serve and assist in people’s salvation, we, too, must be committed to acts of compassion. When God gives us opportunities, resources, or talents, they are meant to bless those in need—not for self-indulgence or hoarding.

Instead of spending lavishly on unnecessary things, we should use our resources

to uplift others. It is not about giving leftovers, worn-out clothes, or spare change to those in need—such an attitude dishonors God.

In urban areas where the homeless, prisoners, and hospitalized individuals live, there are countless opportunities to bring hope and assistance. Caring for others is crucial, and statistics show that 80% of the world's wealth is in the hands of Christians (from "Rich Christians in the World of Hunger" by Ron Sider).

When giving, it's important to do so generously and thoughtfully. Some people accumulate many possessions they never use while others go without basic needs. As I write this, I am reminded that none of us have "arrived"—we are all on a journey of growth.

When Jesus returns in glory, money and worldly possessions will lose all value. Wealth will be discarded in the streets because heavenly treasures are far greater. Even the streets of heaven are made of gold, and perhaps diamonds will be as common as the soles of our shoes.

Those on the left—the condemned group—are those who neglected to share their time, resources, and love. Maybe they heard of someone who needed urgent help but did nothing because it was not their concern. This lack of compassion will cost them dearly.

Our neighbors are anyone in need—whether or not they are related to us.

Do you visit the sick? Is there a child in school who is lonely and needs a friend? Is there someone who goes hungry whom you could share your meal with? Does your family know people in prison or in pain whom you could comfort? Do you have clothes to share with those who have none?

When we do these things, we do them for Jesus Himself.

This parable teaches us that people will be judged based on how they treated others or neglected those in need.

I remember when my mother first taught us to share our clothes with the less fortunate when I was six years old. It was hard at first—we wanted to keep everything for ourselves! But her lesson showed us the importance of giving and having a generous heart.

Let nothing distract you from Bible study and sincere prayer. Stay vigilant and devoted to prayer. Live out your faith through action.

Questions:

1. Explain which group is on the left and which is on the right.

2. Why didn't people realize they were serving or neglecting Jesus?

3. What can you do this week to help someone in need?

4. What reasons might prevent people from helping others despite having the ability?

5. Who truly reflects God's kingdom—those who attend church regularly or those who show love through their actions?

6. Is there a child who is bullied or excluded whom you can help?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Matthew 25:34-36.

[34-36] Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Prayer: We thank You our beloved King. Give us a heart of generosity for those who are hungry, thirsty, without clothes, strangers, the sick, and those in prison. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Go to a place where people in need are helped, for example beggars on the street. Take them water and food. Visit prisoners, the elderly, orphans, widows, etc.

DAY 269 (September 25)

TOPIC: Jesus Raises Lazarus

(John 10 and 11)



Jesus continued preaching, and many believed in Him. In Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, there lived three siblings—Martha, Mary, and Lazarus—who welcomed Jesus and His disciples to stay with them. Mary was the one who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume to prepare Him for His burial about a week before His death, and Jesus said she did all she could.

Their brother Lazarus became seriously ill, and the two sisters sent a message to Jesus while He was preaching in Perea, saying, "Lord, the one you love is sick; come quickly." When Jesus heard this, He continued His preaching and told His disciples, "This sickness will not end in death, but it is for God's glory, so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, He stayed where He was for two more days after hearing about Lazarus's illness. Then He told His disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." The disciples were concerned and said, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." By this, He meant that His ministry had a set time, and the "night" of His crucifixion was approaching.

He then said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up." The disciples misunderstood and thought He meant natural sleep, so Jesus clarified, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake, I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, called Didymus (the Twin), courageously said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Many Jews from Jerusalem, only about a half-hour's walk away, had come to comfort Martha and Mary. In those times, it was customary to hire professional mourners to weep loudly and show how much the deceased was loved. Amid the noise and grief, Martha heard that Jesus was coming and went to meet Him, while Mary stayed in the house.

When Martha met Jesus, she said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus assured her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha replied, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She believed in the final resurrection when all the dead would be raised to eternal life. The Bible teaches that death is like sleep until the resurrection.

Jesus then declared, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" Martha responded with unwavering faith, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

This declaration angered the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection or in angels. Although they were more tolerant of Jesus than the Pharisees, their disbelief in the resurrection undermined the very foundation of faith. As Paul later wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, if there is no resurrection, our faith is in vain.

After this, Martha returned to the house and quietly told her sister, “The Teacher is here and is asking for you.” Mary quickly went to meet Jesus. When the mourners saw her leave, they followed, thinking she was going to the tomb to weep. When Mary reached Jesus, she fell at His feet and echoed Martha’s words, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Seeing Mary and the others weeping, Jesus was deeply moved and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” He asked. When they showed Him, “Jesus wept.”

This verse, “Jesus wept,” is the shortest in the entire Bible. Even though He knew He would raise Lazarus, His compassion for the pain of those mourning moved Him to tears. His tears show us that expressing grief is natural and that Jesus understands our sorrows.

Some people questioned, “Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” Their doubt pained Jesus. He approached the tomb—a cave with a stone covering the entrance—and said, “Take away the stone.” Though He could have moved the stone by divine power, Jesus involved others in the miracle, just as He involves us in His work today.

Martha hesitated, saying, “Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” But Jesus reminded her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

They removed the stone, and Jesus prayed, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent Me.” After praying, He called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

To everyone’s amazement, Lazarus emerged from the tomb, still wrapped in grave clothes. Jesus instructed, “Unbind him and let him go.” The sorrow of death turned into joy as Lazarus reunited with his sisters and friends.

Lazarus had not gone to heaven when he died—he had simply been asleep in the grave. If he had been in heaven, being called back to this world would have been sorrowful, no matter how much his sisters loved him.

This miracle spread quickly, even among the Jewish leaders. The Sadducees, who did not believe in resurrection, were especially troubled. They called a meeting and decided that Jesus must die to prevent the Romans from taking away their privileges. Caiaphas, the high priest, unknowingly prophesied, “It is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to perish.”

In reality, Jesus' death was God's plan for the salvation of humanity. Despite His love and miracles, the religious leaders plotted to kill Him—proving how deceitful the human heart can be.

GOD Answers Sincere Prayers
It is only when we pray with sincerity that God grants the desires of our hearts.

Questions:

1. What message did the two sisters send to Jesus?

2. How did Thomas show courage?

3. Did Jesus have close friends besides His disciples?

4. Why did Jesus weep, even though He knew He would raise Lazarus?

5. Why did Lazarus rise from the grave and not from heaven?

6. What do you think Lazarus said to Jesus when he came out of the tomb?

7. What prophecy did Caiaphas make?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: John 10:14, 15.

[14,15] I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for being our good shepherd. We pray that we may recognize Your voice through reading the Scriptures and praying, so that we may not be deceived. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity:

- Preparation: Put children in pairs. One child in each pair is the "sheep," and the other is the "shepherd."

- Blindfold the “sheep” and place them in the middle of the room. Scatter the “shepherds” around the edges.
- Instructions: Tell the sheep to turn around three times. The shepherds then call their sheep.
- Goal: The sheep must walk to their shepherd, guided by the voice. No running allowed.
- Winner: The first pair to reunite wins.
- Repeat: Swap roles and repeat the activity.
- Discussion: After the game, discuss how we recognize the voice of Jesus as His sheep and follow Him.

DAY 270 (September 26)

TOPIC: Plans to Kill Jesus

(John 11 and 12)



Many Jews who had come to the funeral and witnessed what happened—specifically, the raising of Lazarus—believed in Jesus. This was significant because some believed that those Jesus had previously raised had only fainted and that the soul left the body after three days. However, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days, proving beyond doubt that he had truly died.

Some people went to the Pharisees and reported what Jesus had done, stirring up hatred against Him. As a result, the Pharisees and the chief priests convened a council, asking, "What shall we do? This man performs many signs and miracles. If we let Him continue, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year—having taken over from his father-in-law Annas, who had retired—spoke up. Without realizing the significance of his words, he prophesied during the meeting, saying, "You do not realize that it is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to perish." Although he spoke from a political perspective, his words fulfilled what was written in Scripture—that Jesus would die not only for the nation of Israel but for all people who believe in Him worldwide, to unite God's scattered children.

We must understand that Jesus' death was not the end of His life. He came to die as a sacrifice for us so that our sins could be forgiven. It is through His death and resurrection that He could save humanity. Jesus' death is the core of the gospel. If Jesus had died and remained in the grave, it would not

have helped us. Praise be to God—He is alive today, interceding for us and reconciling us to the Father!

From that day on, the Pharisees and the chief priests plotted to kill Jesus and carefully planned their strategy. As a result, Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews but withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, where He stayed with His disciples.

The Jewish Passover was approaching—a festival commemorating their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It was no coincidence that Jesus died during the Passover; it was God's plan to reveal that He is our Passover Lamb, who takes away our sins so that we may escape eternal death.

It is important to note that the scribes, Pharisees, elders, and chief priests were spiritual leaders. Today, they would be equivalent to pastors and bishops in our churches or places of worship. Ironically, these were the people who led the effort to kill the Son of God. This teaches us that being religious does not guarantee eternal life or a relationship with God. Many people call themselves servants of God, yet they are far from His will.

What is God's will? These leaders knew the Scriptures better than ordinary people. What did they do wrong that we should avoid? Their hypocrisy and pride prevented them from accepting the gospel.

Today, we are more privileged than they were because we have the Holy Scriptures. In those days, few people had access to them, and fewer still could read. Today, every child should own a Bible. If you do not have one, pray and ask God to provide it for you—He is able. The Bible is relatively affordable, and if you seek God sincerely, He will make a way.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you understanding because His teachings lead to eternal life. How can you know God if you do not read His Word? The Bible is not an ordinary book—it is a life-transforming message. Believe in it, value it, and live by it. The Word of God answers life's most profound questions. Through it, God reveals Himself and His relationship with humanity throughout history.

Pray for genuine love for God and for others. The human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked—only God truly understands it.

While there are many godly spiritual leaders who provide valuable guidance, teachings, and counseling, your relationship with God and His Word should come first. Acts 5:29 says, "We must obey God rather than men." Always

prioritize God's Word above human traditions or religious customs. If you do not understand something, pray for insight and obey what is written.

Do not follow human traditions blindly—such as family rituals or ancestral worship. Always ask yourself, "What does the Word of God say?" Read Matthew 23 to understand how religious leaders of Jesus' time misled many. Each person will bear their own burden on the day of judgment. You cannot claim ignorance as an excuse because the life of Jesus clearly shows that we should listen to Him first, then to spiritual leaders like pastors, teachers, or prophets. Your denomination or religion is secondary—God and His Word come first.

Many people traveled from the countryside to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the festival. The chief priests and Pharisees discussed among themselves, wondering if Jesus would attend the feast. They had issued a public notice asking anyone who knew where Jesus was to report Him so that they could arrest Him.

Even Jesus' brothers pressured Him to show Himself publicly if He wanted people to believe that He was the Messiah. Perhaps they hoped that if Jesus claimed kingship, they would share in His earthly glory.

When people heard that Jesus would be at Simon the Leper's house, many gathered there. It was during this visit that Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume. The chief priests planned not only to kill Jesus but also Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, to eliminate the evidence of resurrection. Because of Lazarus, many Jews began to believe in Jesus and distanced themselves from the corrupt religious leaders.

At this point, it was less than a week until Jesus would die for our sins. John 20 says that the Word of God was written so that we may believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing, we may have eternal life through His name. Not through the names of family members or religious leaders—only through the name of Jesus can we be saved.

After the visit to Simon the Leper, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and the people welcomed Him, shouting "Hosanna!"

Focus your mind on spiritual matters. Avoid relying on your own understanding. Cultivate a spirit of contentment and joy. Many people talk excessively about unimportant things. If the time spent on idle conversations were devoted to prayer, you would receive spiritual strength and find songs of praise filling your heart.

Questions:

1. Why did the Jews want to kill Lazarus, whom Jesus raised?

2. What did Caiaphas prophesy?

3. How did the Passover festival originate?

4. Why did Jesus go to stay in the hills of Ephraim?

5. Why must we obey God rather than men?

6. How can you recognize if your pastor is leading you astray?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 12:24, 25.

[24,25] Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your Word. Help us to grow spiritually by letting go of things that are not important, to "hate" the life of this world, and to surrender selfish desires to follow Christ, who will finally lead us to "eternal life," so that we do not lose our lives. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A dramatization. Find palm branches for waving and mats or rugs to spread on the ground. Have someone walk on the mat as if riding a donkey, as in: "They took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat thereon; as it is written."

DAY 271 (September 27)

TOPIC: The Greeks Seek Jesus

(John 11 and 12)



There were even Greeks (from Greece) who went up during the Passover feast in Jerusalem along with others to worship the true God of Abraham. These Greeks approached Philip, a disciple of Jesus, and said, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." They had heard about the Messiah and believed, even though they were Gentiles. Philip went to tell Andrew, and then Andrew told Jesus, who was teaching in the temple.

When they asked Jesus if He would like to see these people, He gladly went out to meet them, as Gentiles were not allowed inside the temple. Jesus was happy to speak with them because He had no favoritism—all people were His children. Many Jews thought others were unimportant. On another occasion, they said Jesus had gone to hide among the Gentiles, and some even called Him a demon-possessed Samaritan. They did not realize that, although they were Jews, they were filled with many evils and had rejected the very God they claimed to worship.

Jesus welcomed those who accepted Him as their Savior. These Greeks likely came from cities like Corinth, Athens, or Thessalonica. They were overjoyed to see Jesus, and after meeting them, Jesus said to His disciples, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a

grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds and a great harvest."

If Jesus had not died, there would be no fruits of salvation. Anyone who lives only for themselves will lose the kingdom of God. But if someone sacrifices their life and lives for others, they will produce a bountiful harvest and receive eternal life. Jesus said, "Whoever loves their life will lose it, but whoever hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Anyone who wants to serve God must follow Him wherever He goes, and those who serve Jesus will be honored by the Father in heaven.

Jesus continued, "What shall I say now? My soul is troubled—should I say, 'Father, save me from this hour'? No! For this purpose, I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Immediately, a voice from heaven responded, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Everyone in the crowd heard the voice of God from heaven like thunder, and some said an angel had spoken to Him. But Jesus told them, "This voice was not for My sake but for yours."

The voice of God was heard three times: during His baptism, during His transfiguration on the mountain, and now in the temple. The Greeks fully understood these signs and the words spoken by the Father, and they left feeling blessed.

Jesus declared that the ruler of this world (Satan) was about to be cast out. He also said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." He was speaking of His death on the cross and how His sacrifice would draw people to salvation. Jesus, the magnet of the world, has been lifted up, and people from every nation, language, tribe, and people are being drawn to Him.

Some in the crowd were confused because their Scriptures led them to believe the Messiah would live forever. Jesus explained, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness will not overtake you. Whoever walks in darkness does not know where they are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light." Jesus, the Word of God, is the light.

Despite witnessing many miracles, some did not believe, as the prophet Isaiah had predicted, saying, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they cannot see, understand, and turn to Me to be healed."

Many leaders believed in Jesus but were afraid to confess Him publicly for fear of being expelled from the synagogue. They loved the praise of men

more than the praise of God. Jesus said, “Whoever believes in Me does not believe only in Me but in the One who sent Me.” He emphasized that He came to save the world, not to judge it. Jesus loved His people on earth deeply, to the very end.

Child, do not be afraid—Jesus is coming again to take us home. He loves us and is eager to return for us. Let us read His Word, believe in it, and place our hope in Him. The Greeks represent all of us from different nations today—let us also say, “We want to see Jesus.” Jesus saw the vision of all who would accept Him until the end of time, and He found joy in facing the cross and enduring its shame for our salvation.

The greatest blessing God can give to a person is a sincere spirit of prayer. All of heaven is open to those who pray. Christ’s ambassadors will have power with people after they have first sought God with heartfelt prayer.

Questions:

1. Why did the Greeks approach Philip?

2. What did Jesus say about the Greeks?

3. Who do the Greeks represent today?

4. What did the voice of God say?

5. What does it mean for the Son of Man to be lifted up?

6. What does the falling and dying of a seed represent?

7. Do you want to see Jesus today?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 12:25, 26.

[25,26] He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.

Prayer: Thank You Lord because You are the Resurrection and the Life and the

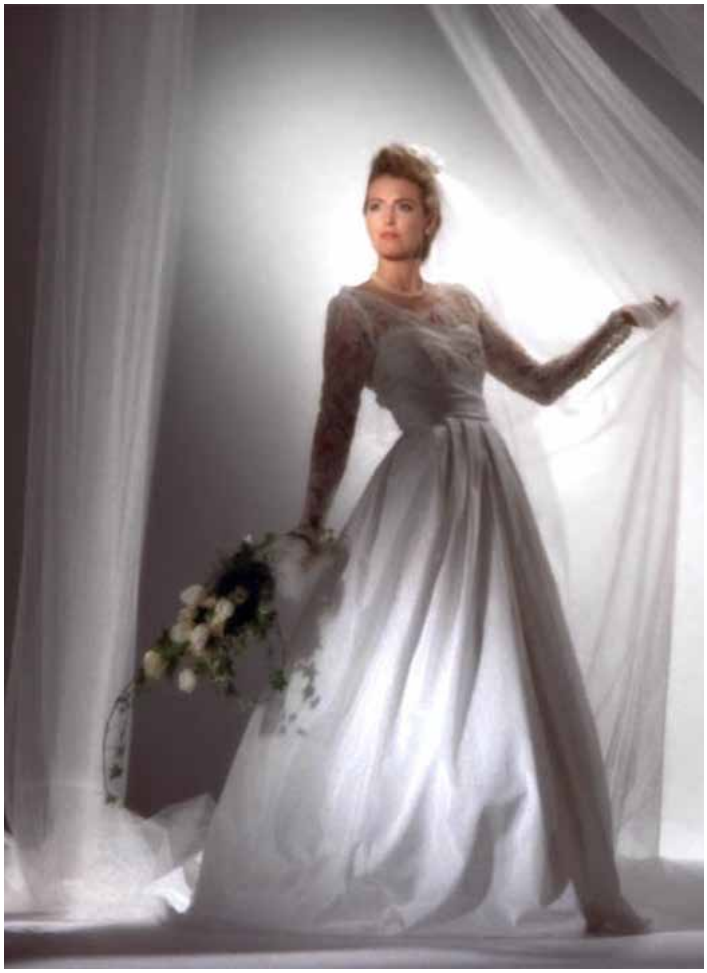
Light of the world, and because You are touched with sorrow when people die and suffer. Father, I want to serve You so that You will honor me, for being honored by You is better than anything else in the world. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: "Jesus Wept." Children can discuss why people cry, and then use toilet paper rolls to act out Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. These activities teach children that Jesus had human feelings and understands their sorrow. He also has power over death and grief.

DAY 272 (September 28)

TOPIC: Invited to the Wedding

(Matthew 22, Luke 16)



Jesus gave a parable about the kingdom of heaven, comparing it to a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to invite the esteemed guests, but they refused to come. He sent other servants with the message, "Tell those who are invited that I have prepared my banquet—my oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

Some guests ignored the invitation and went about their business—one to his field, another to his trade. Others mistreated and even killed the king's servants. The king was furious and sent his army to destroy those murderers and burn their city.

He then told his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited were not worthy. Go to the street corners and invite everyone you find." The servants gathered all they could—both good and bad—and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

When the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man not wearing wedding clothes. The king asked, "Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?" The man was speechless. The king commanded, "Tie him hand and foot and throw him outside, into the darkness."

This parable represents God's invitation to the heavenly banquet. The king is God, who invites everyone to salvation. The first guests represent those who

reject His message. The wedding garment symbolizes the righteousness of Christ, which must be worn by everyone who enters the kingdom of heaven.

Questions:

1. How do people today reject God's invitation?

2. Who is the king in the parable?

3. Discuss: We are the bride awaiting Jesus' return.

4. What is the wedding garment?

5. How can we recognize if we are rejecting God's invitation and how can we accept it?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 22:36-40.

[36-40] "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law of Moses?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Prayer: Father, thank You so much. I pray that I may love You with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind, and love my neighbor as I love myself. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A dramatization of Lazarus and the rich man. One dresses in rich clothes and the other in poor clothes. See Luke 16.

DAY 273 (September 29)

TOPIC: The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

(Luke 14)



Jesus said, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple.

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will mock you, saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be My disciples,” said Jesus. “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

People murmured, saying that Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors. Then He gave them a parable, saying, “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Everyone understood the parable because they would do the same for their livestock—or had already done so. A lost sheep was valuable to a shepherd. Shepherds understood this language; they would sound the alarm and ask others to help search—even in the middle of the night. Many who raised livestock loved their animals and knew them by name. They sought out pastures and water for them. They recognized when a sheep was in distress, happy, or sad.

They traveled great distances to find lost sheep. They risked their lives against wild animals and braved rain, snow, and storms. They climbed mountains and went down into valleys and even asked neighbors for help when their animals were in danger. Some livestock were loved as much as household children.

Likewise, every boy and girl is precious to their God. There is no one like you. To God, you are worth more than a lost sheep. You were created in His image. There is great joy in heaven when you ask for forgiveness after you sin—more than over those who are righteous and do not need to repent.

God knows you by name, and He does everything possible for you to receive eternal life. Jesus spoke about God's love and His willingness to forgive. Even those who had committed great sins found comfort in His words. Many sinners came to listen to Him—thieves, fraudsters, liars, the envious, gossips, and those who took other people's spouses. Deep inside, these people wanted to live better lives, but they did not know how.

They thought it was impossible to return to the right path after falling into sin—until Jesus reached them. They flocked to hear Him, and their hearts were comforted. But the Pharisees, priests, and scribes were astonished. Thinking themselves perfect, they wondered, "What kind of man is this who welcomes sinners and eats with them?" They criticized, mocked, and scorned Him.

Unknowingly, their insults highlighted Jesus' true character, and many people paid attention to Him because the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost, giving everyone hope.

Jesus continued, "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together

and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

These two parables show two types of lost people—some, like the lost sheep, know they are lost but do not know how to return. These people need our help as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Others, like the lost coin, do not even realize they are lost and need to be found.

Then Jesus told the story of the prodigal son, who knew he was lost and knew how to return to his father.

Ezekiel 34 says that today we are the shepherds of our brothers and sisters, though sometimes shepherds make mistakes. “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool, and slaughter the fattened animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.”

The food is the Word of God—the bread of life. Anyone who brings traditions and false teachings outside of the Scriptures is a thief of Jesus’ sheep. Jesus will lead us today to where the lost sheep are, and we must bring them back with love.

A servant of God must not care more about consuming the flock’s wealth than feeding them with the Word of life. Jesus became known as a friend of sinners. He sat with them and gave them hope. Even those who had strayed far from the flock realized someone cared for them.

The angels in heaven rejoiced greatly because Jesus assured them that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents and returns to the flock. Love is a powerful magnet. The love of Jesus drew many hearts, freeing them from Satan’s chains and bringing them to God.

Jesus knew people would mock, spit on, ridicule, beat, and kill Him, yet He did not turn back. In the great cosmic battle that began in heaven with Satan’s

rebellion, human beings must understand that the real enemy is Satan—not other people or God—and must put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6).

When Jesus passed by, no sickness remained. They did not need hospitals, surgeries, or money—yet they killed Him. If someone like Him were among us today and people killed him, wouldn't we think they were insane?

Such is the battle between good and evil. Evil has no reason to exist—if it did, it would cease to be evil.

Questions:

1. Who does the lost sheep represent?

2. What are the qualities of the Good Shepherd?

3. When people complained that Jesus ate with sinners, what parable did He give?

4. Why were the shepherds of Israel condemned?

5. Who does the woman with ten coins represent?

6. Why did Jesus not turn back from loving us?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 14:10,11.

"But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father. Help me to be kind and to invite people on our journey to heaven. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Involve children in inviting people from house to house to come to church for a grace event. This activity encourages children to think about inviting and including others, reflecting the themes of this chapter.

DAY 274 – (September 30)

TOPIC: The Child Who Ran Away from Home

(Luke 15)

Among the remarkable parables that Jesus gave, this one is among the most touching. He told a parable about a man who had two sons. The elder son was diligent and responsible, always obeying his father's instructions. The younger son, however, was lazy, wasteful, and loved pleasures. One day, the younger son said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the inheritance." This was a serious request because asking for an inheritance while the father was still alive was like wishing for his father's death.

This young man wanted to be free, to explore distant lands and hide his sins from his father, as he knew his father's principles. He was afraid to commit sins under his father's watchful eyes or in front of the community he lived in. So, the father divided his wealth and gave the young man his portion. Not long after, the younger son gathered his belongings and traveled to a distant country—some might call it "abroad." There, he squandered his wealth on wild living and reckless pleasures.



He enjoyed himself thoroughly, exploring every enticing place and indulging in all kinds of food. He did not value the money because he had not worked for it—it was an inheritance. Wherever he went, people welcomed him because they wanted to enjoy his wealth with him. It is easy to have friends when you have money, especially on payday. He bought drinks and other luxuries for his friends, living a lavish lifestyle.

But as time passed, his money dwindled until it was completely gone. When his wealth ran out, his friends abandoned him. At the same time, a severe famine struck that country. Food became scarce, his

clothes became tattered, and he found himself broke and in desperate need. With no one to help him and no one to advise him—since he had ignored those who tried—he sought work from a local resident. The man sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

As he fed the pigs, he became so hungry that he longed to eat the pods the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. Feeling weak and dizzy from hunger, he began to reflect on his life. He thought, "How many of my father's servants have more than enough food, and here I am starving to death? I will go back to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

His laziness left him—he realized that nothing comes for free without effort. He acknowledged the wrong he had done in disregarding God and his father's love. He had not considered how much pain he caused his father; instead, he had been selfish. Alone and abandoned, he realized that people only cared about him when he had money. Jesus shared this sad story to warn young people against believing the world has only good things to offer because it can lead to both physical and spiritual destruction.

Once he had prepared his apology speech, the young man set off for home. Hungry and weak, he walked slowly, worrying about how he would be received. Would they reject him? While he was still far off, his father saw him. Every day, his father had been watching the horizon, hoping that his beloved son would realize his mistake and return home. Filled with compassion, the father ran to meet his son.

The son, wondering who was running toward him, soon realized it was his father. His father embraced him and kissed him repeatedly—he did not hold back despite the son's filthy clothes and the stench of pigs. The son began his prepared speech, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father did not let him finish his speech. Instead, he turned to his servants and said, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and slaughter it. Let us have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

The young man was overjoyed—he had not expected such a warm welcome. He had been prepared to live as a servant but instead was restored to his former position. He was given fine clothes, new shoes, and even the family ring—a symbol of authority and belonging. After bathing and removing the stench of pigs, he joined the celebration. Laughter and music filled the air



as guests arrived to rejoice with the family.

The father, overcome with joy, repeated, “My son was dead but is alive again; he was lost but is now found!” This reflects how our Heavenly Father responds when a sinner repents—He is full of love, compassion, and mercy. No matter how far we stray, if we return to Him sincerely, He is ready to welcome us with open arms.

Meanwhile, the older son was coming home from the fields, exhausted from working. He had faithfully performed tasks like cleaning the stables since his younger brother left. When he heard the music and celebration, he called one of the servants and asked what was happening. The servant excitedly replied, “Your brother has returned, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he is safe and sound!”

The older brother was furious. He felt it was unfair for his reckless brother to be celebrated after wasting the family’s wealth. Refusing to join the celebration, he sulked outside. When his father came out to encourage him to enter, he complained, “I have served you all these years and never disobeyed your commands, yet you never gave me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours, who squandered your property with prostitutes, returns, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

The father lovingly responded, “My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because your brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

The older son did not understand his father’s love. He viewed himself as a servant rather than an heir. The father reassured him that nothing would be taken from him, and his brother’s return did not diminish his own inheritance.

This parable shows that God rejoices when a sinner repents. Some people, like the older brother, resent seeing others receive mercy, but God's love is boundless. Jesus told this story to rebuke the Pharisees, who were angry when He welcomed sinners. Just as the father celebrated his lost son's return, God welcomes all who come back to Him with sincere hearts.

Questions:

1. What did the prodigal son ask his father for?

2. Why did the prodigal son return home?

3. How does the father in the parable represent God?

4. How do our actions resemble those of the prodigal son?

5. In what way was the older brother also lost?

6. Do you think the older brother ever repented?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 15:4-7.

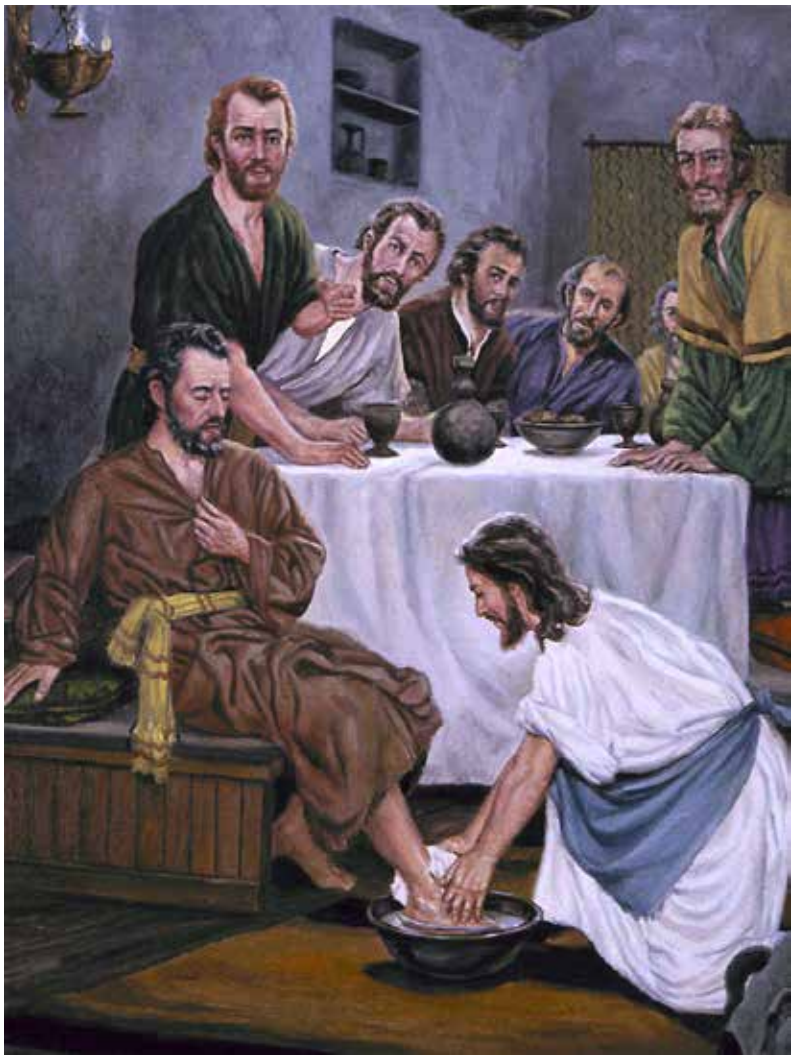
[4-7] "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for seeking us when we are lost. You give us great joy because when we go astray, You follow after us and bring us back to the path of righteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 275 (October 1)

TOPIC: Foot Washing

(Matthew 26, John 13)



When Jesus finished speaking with His disciples, He told them that the Son of Man was going to be crucified. At that time, the chief priests gathered the elders, the scribes, and the Pharisees to decide how they would arrest and kill Jesus. However, they said it should not happen during the Passover festival to prevent causing a riot among the people and failing to achieve their goal.

On the first day of the Passover week, which began on Thursday evening, His disciples came to Him and asked, "Where do You want us to prepare the Passover meal for You?" He told them to go into the city, where they would meet a certain man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him and say, "The Teacher says, 'My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" He instructed them to prepare a large upper room for the meal.

The Passover festival began when the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt. They were instructed to slaughter a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts so that when the angel passed through to strike down the firstborn of the Egyptians, he would pass over the doors marked with blood without harming them.

The Passover symbolized that God is the Redeemer who delivers from both the slavery of Egypt and the bondage of sin. The blood on the doorposts represented the blood of Jesus, which would be shed on the cross and bring true forgiveness of sins. The blood of the lamb could not bring salvation—only the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, could and is worthy to redeem humanity. The sacrificed lambs were a foreshadowing of Jesus, who is the true sacrifice for the entire world.

The disciples followed Jesus' instructions and prepared the Passover meal. Despite being with Jesus, the disciples were still full of jealousy, selfishness, and pride. They did not fully understand what was happening, even though Jesus had repeatedly told them that He was going to die. Jesus wanted to share many things with them, but they were not ready. After His resurrection and ascension, they worked with great dedication, often wishing they had asked Him more questions while He was still with them. Even today, we should not waste time when we hear God's Word.

During this meal, Jesus demonstrated that true greatness comes from love and service to others. Knowing that the Father had placed all things under His power, and that the devil had already prompted Judas to betray Him, Jesus rose from the table. He laid aside His outer garments, took a towel, and wrapped it around His waist. He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet—a task usually performed by a servant when guests entered a house—because none of the disciples had volunteered to do it.

Perhaps some thought that John should do it because he was the youngest, while John might have believed he was too beloved to perform such a lowly task. John and Judas rushed to sit on Jesus' right and left sides.

We often see similar behavior today when people scramble to sit by the window when traveling to have the best view or easier communication with those outside. Jesus dried their feet with the towel He had wrapped around Himself. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter asked, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?" Surprised that his Master would lower Himself to such a task, he protested, but Jesus told him, "You do not understand now what I am doing, but later you will."

Peter, still unwilling to accept the act, said, "You shall never wash my feet!" But Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me." This humbled Peter, and he responded, "Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus explained that a person who has bathed only needs to have their feet

washed to be completely clean. He said the disciples were clean because they had been spiritually renewed—all except one: Judas, the betrayer.

After finishing, Jesus put on His clothes and returned to His place. He asked, "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He continued, "You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Truly, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Human nature tends toward seeking to be served rather than serving others. But Jesus teaches us humility and selfless service. This kind of humility does not come naturally; it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve others with a sincere heart.

Jesus commanded believers to wash one another's feet before the Passover as a remembrance. Foot washing symbolizes a "mini-baptism," cleansing us from the dust and impurities of life. However, if someone strays from Christ's teachings or falls into sin, they must undergo full baptism.

This act of washing feet is a renewal of our commitment to serve others in the church and the world, just as the apostles did. Many churches teach children about the meaning of the Lord's Supper (Communion) before allowing them to participate. Communion is not just about eating and drinking; it is a sacred act of dedication. It is a time for seeking forgiveness from God and from one another while praying and singing together.

The bread and wine represent Jesus' body and blood, sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins. This ritual calls for self-examination and repentance before partaking in the Lord's Supper. It is not an ordinary meal; rather, it signifies spiritual renewal and commitment to Christ.

All believers are invited to participate in this service. Foot washing served as an example for the apostles to reject selfishness and instead serve others humbly. Jesus even washed the feet of those who would deny and betray Him without exposing their faults. Today, many would retaliate or publicly shame those who wrong them, but Jesus demonstrated forgiveness and humility.

God lives not for Himself but for us, His creation. Even now, we are cleansed of all our sins—whether anger, lies, jealousy, or pride—by Jesus. His act of humility in washing the disciples' feet teaches us that we, too, must serve

and care for others.

Jesus told the disciples about Judas' betrayal before it happened, so that when it occurred, they would believe that He truly was the Messiah. Whoever receives a servant of God receives God Himself.

Pray—pray earnestly and without ceasing—but do not forget to praise God (Worship).

Questions:

1. What lesson do we learn from the Lord washing His disciples' feet?

2. Why is self-examination important before participating in the Lord's Supper?

3. Why did the disciples need to wash one another's feet?

4. Would you be willing to wash someone's feet?

5. Did Peter have good intentions when he refused to be washed?

6. Can a person sit in church while having an evil heart, like Judas Iscariot did with Jesus?

7. How does the broken bread remind us of Jesus?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Matthew 26:26-29.

[26-29] "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is My body.' Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Prayer: Thank You for being the Bread of Life, and for being the Giver. Thank You for Your blood that was shed for us. We pray to live lives of gratitude to You for all You have done for us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: In Matthew 26, an excellent class activity is "eating bread and juice together," where students spend time learning the meaning of the bread and

body of Jesus. Afterwards, they may go outside singing: “But I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

DAY 276 (October 2)

TOPIC: The Last Passover

(John 13)

The Passover did not fall during the time of Jesus' death by mere coincidence—No! The Passover, a major feast that began when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt, symbolized freedom from the bondage of sin. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was about to die for all humanity to save us. This was the year 31 AD. That evening, Jesus and His twelve disciples sat down together for a meal. While they were there, Jesus repeated again, "Truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The Lord's Supper is also called the Last Supper, the farewell meal, or Communion.

The disciples were sorrowful and could not believe it; they began to ask one by one, "Is it I, Lord?" John, who was the youngest of them all, loved to sit close to Jesus. Although others were also loved, he felt particularly close to Jesus. Responding to the question, Jesus said, "No, not for those who will not betray me." But when He gave a piece of bread to Judas, He said, "It is he to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish who will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him; but woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man! It would have been better for him if he had not been born than to bring upon himself such destruction."

The disciples were astonished—how could it be true? Who would dare do such evil to their good Teacher who loved them? Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Him, despite knowing he was the one, also asked, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said it, or yes, it is you." Then Jesus told Judas, "What you are about to do, do quickly." However, the disciples did not understand why He said this to him. Some thought, since Judas was the group's treasurer, He was instructing him to buy what was needed for the feast or to give something to the poor.

It is possible that Judas, as the treasurer, had handled purchasing the lamb and the bread, but his heart was far from Jesus. He sat close to Jesus to give the impression that he was on His side, continuing his deception. Upon receiving the piece of bread, Satan entered into him, and immediately he left to carry out his plans. Perhaps Judas did not intend for Jesus to be killed but wanted to hasten His declaration as King so that he could secure a high position. He thought Jesus was taking too long, so he decided to push things



forward to avoid missing out on privileges.

Do we today love wealth, possessions, or other things that make us willing to betray Jesus?

All the disciples came to the Passover or the Lord's Table with sins or jealousy, but they confessed to one another—except for Judas, who refused to confess. We are instructed to examine and confess our own hearts even today before participating in this sacred service. We are not told to examine or judge others. This service reminds us of God's love because He was willing to wash the feet of the one who would betray Him.

Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He added, "Little children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for Me, but as I told the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"

John devoted about five chapters to writing what Jesus said that night. Jesus then said, "A new commandment I give you: LOVE one another as I have loved you. By this, everyone will know that you are My disciples if you love one another." Jesus did not say that people would know His disciples by their offerings or by refraining from violence, but by how they love one another. Love covers a multitude of sins. A person who loves will fear to do evil against God or others.

Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." Peter insisted, "Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You." Peter genuinely intended to keep this promise because he truly loved Jesus. However, he thought he could defend Jesus and even die for Him by relying on his own strength. He did not understand that such strength comes only through grace when we depend on God to empower us. That is when Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed twice that night.

Jesus said, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat, to test your faithfulness to Me. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” Even today, Jesus prays for us.

He instructed them to prepare themselves because things would change—they would need a purse, a bag, and even a sword to sustain themselves.

While they were eating, Jesus took the unleavened bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and said, “Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

To drink His blood and eat His body means to accept His words and live as He commanded us.

Jesus said He would not drink from the fruit of the vine again until the day He drinks it anew with us all in His Father’s kingdom. Research confirms that the wine used was grape juice, not fermented wine. The Greek word “oinos” can mean either fresh grape juice or fermented wine. Context determines which is meant. When Jesus said “new,” He referred to unfermented juice. We know that rotting fruits produce alcoholic wine, rotting grains produce beer, and rotting potatoes produce rum—these are all forms of alcohol. The blood of Jesus cannot be represented by anything fermented or decayed!

Satan Cannot Overcome a Praying Person – The enemy cannot overcome a humble disciple of Christ who walks in prayer before the Lord. Christ Himself intervenes as a protector and refuge against the attacks of the evil one. The promise is given, “When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.” No power in all of Satan’s schemes can defeat a soul that relies on God’s wisdom with simple, confident faith.

Questions:

1. What did Jesus say about the bread and wine?

2. Why should one avoid alcohol?

3. Why did Jesus want us to partake of the bread and wine?

4. Which disciple insisted he would never deny Jesus?

5. What did Jesus' new commandment mean?

6. How can someone recognize a disciple of Jesus?

7. Can someone be a church member without being a Christian?

8. What do the bread and wine represent?

9. Why is it important to attend church or fellowship according to the Bible?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 13:34,35.

[34,35] "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

Prayer: Thank You so much, Heavenly Father. Help us to love one another as You have loved us.

Activity: For John 13, a great classroom activity is "washing one another's feet," where students use their resources and time to serve each other, followed by a discussion on the meaning of serving others. Or, wear aprons and put this lesson into practice. See John 13:1-17.

DAY 277 (October 3)

TOPIC: Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

(John 14)

Jesus did not call His disciples to the Lord's Table or the Last Supper just to eat the Passover meal. He wanted to sit and talk with them one last time while they were together. When Judas was given a piece of bread, he left to go to the chief priests and soldiers to betray Jesus. Jesus called His disciples "little children." Why do you think He did that? The disciples knew that Jesus was more than a prophet or a friend, and on this day, He revealed it to them completely. The words in this chapter have comforted many believers who have lost loved ones, faced hardship or sickness, poverty, or abandonment by family or close friends.

While sitting at the table, Jesus told His disciples not to let their hearts be troubled. These words apply to us as well. We should not be troubled but should trust in God and also trust in Him. He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." There is plenty of room in heaven, unlike when we go on a journey and people say, "There are only five spots left!" Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for us. While Jesus is building a home for us in heaven, we should build our characters here on earth to mature spiritually for the sinless life in heaven. Our character is the only thing we will take with us to heaven, along with the people we have invited to follow Jesus. Everything we think, do, or say is like a brick building that heavenly home.

When we go to heaven, no one will carry suitcases, computers, cars, houses, planes, or food because heaven offers far more beautiful things—things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has imagined. When moving to a new city, we do not go to the trash heap to pick up broken or worn-out items to take with us!

The disciples were filled with joy because many of them had no permanent home; they slept here and there. We do not know if new homes are being built in heaven or if the angels who were cast out left many empty places. We do not know that, but we do know there is plenty of room for everyone to enter and stay. Jesus promised to come back and take us to be with Him so that where He is, we may also be. He said, "You know the way to where I am going, and one day you will come too."

Jesus had not stopped being God; He was still God, and His works and miracles testified to that. Thomas, one of His disciples, was honest and did not want to remain in the dark. He said, “Lord, we don’t know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” Thomas was courageous because even today, many people do not know the way to heaven, but they do not ask; they are afraid, hesitant, or too busy, thinking they will ask tomorrow.



Jesus answered Thomas, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the only way to the Father and the truth of who God is. No one can reach the Father without the grace of Jesus leading them on that path. If we know Jesus, we know the Father. Jesus told Philip, “From now on, you can say you know and have seen the Father.”

Philip repeated his request, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus was saddened because He had been with them for three and a half years, day and night. He said, “Philip, have I been with you all this time, and you still do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father living in Me does His work.”

When the disciples believed these truths, they grew closer to one another, and heaven felt very near. Let us learn from Jesus’ patience and endurance. We should not be quick to give up when friends do not trust us or when we face tough situations. Instead, we should pray to God to guide us through. We may have parents, teachers, or close people who make our lives difficult. Let us look at Jesus as our example and our heavenly parent.

Jesus said that anyone who believes in Him as the Messiah will also do the works He does—and even greater works—because they will spread His message worldwide. He promised, “Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it, so that

the Father may be glorified in the Son." Jesus said that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments, and He will ask the Father to send us a Helper—the Holy Spirit. Though we cannot see the Holy Spirit, when we receive Him, He lives within us and comforts us, so we are not left as orphans without guidance or support until Jesus returns to take us home. Today, Jesus lives in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Because Jesus rose from the dead and is alive, we too will live one day and will be with Him forever. The Holy Spirit was sent to teach us all things, to show us what is sin, what is righteousness, and to guide us into all truth. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential and form the core of a Christian's life. A new Christian is born through the Holy Spirit and is led by Him. The Holy Spirit is our Helper.

Jesus said that He loves His Father and does everything He commands. He also said that the evidence that we are His followers is that we love others. If we do not love our brothers, sisters, parents, or fellow humans, we have no part in Him. Do you love people? If we love others, love God, and keep His commandments, He will make our hearts His dwelling place. Do you want to make your heart His home and be used by the Holy Spirit?

When Jesus was in human form, He could not be everywhere at once, but the Holy Spirit is present with everyone at all times. Whether we are imprisoned or isolated, the Holy Spirit is there with us. Even when we face evil surroundings or difficult parents, God will help us overcome and shape our character to reflect Him. We must surrender our hearts and minds to the Spirit of God for Him to work in us.

The human mind is limited in understanding, but the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus, helps us grasp His Word and reminds us of what we have read. Jesus told His disciples that the key to victory is praying in His powerful and authoritative name. Even when our prayers seem weak or lack the right words, the Holy Spirit presents them to the Father, perfected by Jesus' righteousness.

Jesus has promised that if we ask in His name, He will answer our prayers for the sake of His righteousness. He intercedes for us with deep, unspoken groans. If we ask Jesus to help us be obedient to Him, He will guide our hearts and minds to do His will.

Who holds your heart? What occupies your thoughts? Do you love talking about Jesus? If you are on the Lord's side, your thoughts, time, and resources will be dedicated to His service.

Is it not evidence of God's great love that He gave His only Son to save us? He loves when we ask for big things, so we can rejoice and glorify Him when He answers our prayers. Let us come to Him with any burden or concern, and He will guide us and give us the strength to overcome.

Satan Cannot Defeat a Praying Person
The enemy cannot overcome a humble follower of Christ who walks in prayer before the Lord. Jesus Himself intervenes as a refuge and shield against the attacks of the evil one. The promise is given: "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift a standard against him."

Questions:

Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to be troubled?

What kinds of things can we ask God for?

Why is it important to keep God's commandments?

How would your parents react if you told them you no longer care about their rules?

Why is Jesus different from other religious leaders like Buddha or the Dalai Lama?

Why are believers never truly orphans?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 14:6,7.

[6,7] "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you really know Me, you will know My Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him.'"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your words that whatever we ask in Your name, You will give us. We pray to love You and to keep Your law of joy. We are grateful for Your peace and for the Holy Spirit who reminds us of all You have said. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: For students in class, John 14 activities may include art and the significance of a compass, since He is "The Way." Children can decorate a

compass drawing on paper to symbolize Jesus guiding them. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

DAY 278 (October 4)

TOPIC: Jesus, the True Vine

(John 15, 16)



Jesus gave an illustration, saying He is the True Vine, and His Father is the gardener. This brought to mind the image of how a tree with branches works. The illustration meant that every branch that does not bear fruit is removed, and every branch that bears fruit is pruned or trimmed so that it may sprout more branches and bear even more fruit—just as we prune fruit trees like orange trees to make them more productive. He said that the Word of God is the only thing that makes the children of God clean, and the disciples were already clean because of the Word of God.

He said, "Abide in Me, and I in you," for just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can we bear fruit unless we remain in the Lord. Whoever abides in Jesus and Jesus in them bears much fruit because without Him, we can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in Him dries up and is thrown out into the fire, like withered branches that are burned. Branches that do not bear the fruit of the Spirit—such as gentleness, love, joy, and patience—will be cast away.

If we remain in Him, we will produce good fruit. Branches do not struggle to

bear fruit—it is a natural process from being connected to the vine. Similarly, followers of Jesus who build their faith in Him and rely on Him will naturally bear fruit due to the spiritual nourishment they receive from Jesus—just as a tree bears fruit because of the nutrients it draws from good soil.

He said that if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we may ask whatever we desire, and it will be done for us. Abiding in Him also means obeying His commands. True obedience comes from the heart, and when we ask in His Name, He will help us obey and surrender completely. He will give us the wisdom to do what is right. God is glorified when we remain in Him, and we cannot bear fruit by separating ourselves and living independently. We must abide in Him to be His disciples.

God loves us, and we should remain in His love by keeping His commandments. Anyone who breaks or rejects God's commandments is a liar and does not love God. God has given us His commandments because He loves us. His commandments teach us to love Him and to love one another. Jesus loved us so much that He died for us. We become friends of God when we follow His instructions and obey Him, and whatever we ask the Father in Jesus' Name, He will give us.

It is easy to be attached to other people instead of remaining in Jesus. Ask yourself today—are you in Jesus, or are you attached to other people? In other words, do you follow the teachings of the Scriptures and seek to please God, or do you follow human teachings?

Jesus warned His disciples about the persecution they would face as believers. The world may hate us because it hated the Lord Jesus first. A servant is not greater than their master. If they persecuted Him, how can we escape it? He warned all believers that those who hate God would persecute them—even in religious places like synagogues—thinking they are serving God, while in reality, it is Satan who is driving them. Saul, who later became Paul, was an example of this—he thought that by killing Christians, he was serving God, but he was completely misguided.

Jesus told His disciples that if He did not go away, the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—could not come. The Holy Spirit would guide them and lead them into all truth. After this, Jesus no longer spoke to them in parables. He told them clearly that He had come from heaven and was returning to the Father. The disciples said, "Now you speak plainly and do not use figurative language. We believe that you came from God."

Jesus, rejoicing at their faith, asked, "Do you now believe?" He then said,

“The time is coming, and in fact, has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home, and you will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for My Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In this world, you will have tribulation and many troubles, but take heart—I have overcome the world.”

Let us remember the final words of Jesus—He is our way to heaven. Without the Savior, we cannot be saved. He is the Truth—those who do not receive Him do not have the truth. He is the Life—no one can have eternal life without Him. It is crucial that today, when we hear this good news, we accept Him. By following His teachings and obeying His new commandment—to love one another as He has loved us—we will always be joyful.

Jesus gave His disciples His final words: “In a little while, you will not see Me, and then after a little while, you will see Me again because I am going to the Father.” He told them that they would grieve, but their grief would turn to joy. Even today, we should ask to receive the Holy Spirit and ask the Father in heaven for anything in Jesus’ Name so that our joy may be complete.

Jesus consistently emphasized the Holy Spirit in His teachings. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and His works are worth exploring today. We cannot do anything good without His inspiration. He is now our Helper. The word “Helper” does not suggest weakness but rather a rich and profound resource. Jesus was inspired by the Holy Spirit daily to accomplish His mission, and we see the Holy Spirit descend like a dove when Jesus was baptized. We cannot do anything without the Holy Spirit. Let us, like Jesus, focus our thoughts on the Holy Spirit today.

Prayer Brings Power to Overcome Temptation
If we do not pray continuously and vigilantly, we risk becoming lazy and straying from the right path. Our enemy constantly seeks to block the way to the Throne of Grace so that we do not receive the mercy and strength needed to overcome temptation through sincere prayer and faith.

Satan Trembles When We Pray
There is great power in prayer. Our chief enemy is always seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. The humble prayer of even the weakest saint is more terrifying to Satan than the decrees of councils or the commands of kings.

Questions:

Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to be troubled?

What kinds of things can we ask from God?

Why is it important to keep God's commandments?

What would your parents say if you told them their rules don't matter?

Why is Jesus different from other religious leaders, like Buddha or the Dalai Lama?

Believers sometimes feel alone—why are they not orphans?

Who did Jesus say He is?

What does it mean to abide in Jesus?

What does "Take heart—I have overcome the world" mean to you today?

How can we become friends of God?

Why was Jesus pleased when the disciples said they believed?

List ten works of the Holy Spirit.

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Young Person of Jesus.

Key Text: John 16:12-14.

[12-14] "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify Me because it is from Me that He will receive what He will make known to you."

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth. We pray to allow the Holy Spirit to continue convicting us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: John 15 – “I am the True Vine.” Use a real vine branch or a fruit-bearing tree branch, such as pumpkin, to show how a branch depends on its tree for life and nourishment. You can explain that, just like branches, believers must remain connected to Jesus, the True Vine, to grow and “bear much fruit.”

DAY 279 (October 5)

TOPIC: Jesus' Prayer for All of Us

(John 17, Luke 22)

On that night, Jesus made a beautiful and amazing prayer for you and me. All the other disciples forgot to write it down, except John. You can read this prayer for yourself in John 17. Jesus said that He wanted all of us who love Him and believe in Him to be one, just as He and His Father are united. Have you realized that only you and I can answer or fulfill this prayer? He cannot do it for us! Let us give Him our choice and our will. Even today, Africans say, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together!"

Many people think that only people from specific tribes, religions, ages, races, cultures, or social statuses are prejudiced while others love unity. This is not true. Every human being has some form of prejudice! If you sit and reflect, you will realize this. However, the important thing is to repent and determine that God's Word is the compass and shield against prejudice. Only then will we be filled with love and have the unity that allows us to love our neighbors as ourselves, feeling compassion when they are in trouble, even if we are not related by blood.

I have asked God to help me love others as I love myself. This will make the Holy Spirit's work of sharing the Good News of the Kingdom easier because we will feel sorrow knowing that others will face punishment in the lake of fire and will be lost forever if we do not tell them the Truth. Never should we wish even the worst enemy to suffer the torment of the lake of fire.

Christ did not point out their weaknesses, ignorance, or jealousy. He told them that their sorrow would be turned into joy. He said that joy would fill their hearts and minds so much that their lives would never be the same again. Even though their faith wavered and they scattered, Jesus knew their weaknesses and did not give up on them. He gathered them again and sent them to the ends of the earth, where they did great things in His Name. He told them to be joyful because He had already overcome and would share His victory with them. Even today, if our faith is weak, we should not lose hope—Jesus does not abandon us. He knows our struggles, and even when we stumble, He will lift us up. Let us confess Him again and move forward, asking for the strength to overcome. He has already given us His victory when we pray to have His mindset, as mentioned in Philippians chapter two.

As He spoke to His Father, He only mentioned the good things about His friends. He asked His Father to keep and protect them always. He said, “All those You have given Me may have eternal life.” And this is eternal life—that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. What a joy it is to know that this prayer was not only for the eleven disciples but for everyone who loves Jesus. He was praying for all of us—you and me—that we may be protected from the evil one, that our hearts may be set right and filled with love, and that one day we may be with Him forever in Heaven.



Jesus lifted His eyes to Heaven and said, “The hour has come. I have glorified You on earth and finished the work You gave Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You.” He told His Father that He had completed the work He was sent to do—the work of revealing God’s character to humanity. The words He gave to the disciples had been accepted, and they knew for certain that He had come from Heaven. He prayed for His disciples and for all of us until the end of the world, that we might be protected from the evil one. He prayed for unity among all who love Him on earth, just as He was united with His Father in Heaven. He pleaded, “Do not take them out of the world, but protect them from the evil one.” Then He spoke powerful and sweet words for us all: “Father, those You have given Me (which means you

and me), I want them to be with Me where I am, to see My glory which You have given Me." Jesus revealed that He is Emmanuel—God with us.

When they arrived at the Garden of Olives, He told His disciples, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation," knowing they would soon face difficulties. He wanted them to seek help from the Lord. He went a little further, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." Jesus knew what was going to happen that night—the suffering and crucifixion—yet He felt alone, carrying this burden. He, who had never sinned, was condemned by sinners.

Jesus prayed so earnestly that His sweat became like drops of blood. Being treated unjustly is no small matter. Have you ever been falsely accused of something, even a small thing, that you did not do? How did you feel? Jesus was about to be blamed and accused of great and terrible things He had never done. All the sins ever committed, from Eve in the Garden of Eden to today, were placed on Him. It was not only the physical pain that crushed His heart but the weight of the world's sins.

If Jesus had lost heart and given up at that moment, we would have been lost forever. He was severely tempted because He could have escaped by performing a miracle, just as He had done before when people in Nazareth wanted to kill Him. He was about to take on all the shame associated with sin—God laid the sins of the entire world on Him. That is why the Savior was deeply sorrowful. At that moment, an angel from Heaven appeared to strengthen Him.

When He returned to His disciples, He found them asleep and was saddened. He was exhausted and needed comfort and prayer support, but they were asleep. He told them again, "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." Even today, we should pray to avoid falling into temptation, even as children. We should not go to school or sleep without praying. We need to pray in the morning, at night, and even during the day. Someone once said, "A single hour without prayer is a loss!" Jesus felt the deep separation from His Father because of our sins. The salvation of the world was hanging in the balance during those few hours.

After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. They crossed the Kidron Valley to a garden where Jesus and His disciples often met. Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place. He came with a detachment of soldiers and officials from the chief priests and Pharisees, carrying lanterns, torches, and weapons. Knowing what was about to happen, Jesus stepped forward and asked, "Who are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." He

said, “I am He.” At this, they drew back and fell to the ground twice in awe of His divine presence.

Judas approached Jesus and gave Him a kiss—a kiss of betrayal. Jesus said, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” Although Judas loved Jesus, he loved wealth and position more. Do you have anything you love more than you love God?

Questions:

1. What problem did the servant Malchus face?

2. What was Jesus’ main prayer to His Father that night?

3. Do you think Peter would have fallen into temptation if he had stayed awake and prayed?

4. Why is the unity Jesus prayed for before His death important for us?

5. Can we have the unity Jesus prayed for if we hold teachings contrary to His Word?

6. Why did Jesus pray for His disciples to be united?

7. Why did Jesus face greater temptations than any other human being?

8. How can a person stop using bad or offensive language?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 22:47-51.

[47-51] “While He was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss Him, but Jesus asked him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, should we strike with our swords?’ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And He touched the man’s ear and healed him.”

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for loving even Your enemies and those who betrayed You. This has given us an example to be kind to our enemies. Help us not to be violent or cruel. Give us love like Yours. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Read and reflect on Jesus' prayer in John 17, sentence by sentence.

DAY 280 (October 6)

TOPIC: Jesus is Arrested

(Luke 22)

In the middle of the night, they arrested Jesus and took Him to the house of the retired high priest, Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest that year. Both of them were Sadducees, meaning they did not believe in the resurrection or heavenly beings like angels. Caiaphas was the one who had prophesied that it was better for one man to die for the people. This priest considered himself a hero, thinking he was about to save the nation of Israel by his power, but in reality, he was leading himself and others to destruction by killing the innocent out of hatred.

Titles, authority, wealth, and education have been used in the world to rule others and change their thoughts. The priests wanted to destroy the minds of ordinary people so they would not accept and love Jesus. Some believed that the priests could not be wrong and followed them blindly, which led to their spiritual downfall.

Even today, many priests follow Jesus, but the work comes with great trials. The devil loves to discourage those who serve God because those who do not serve God are already on his side. The kingdom of God is about being a servant—even angels are servants, although they are created with a higher rank than us.

What we learn here is that we should not serve God for financial gain. Be willing to serve Him wholeheartedly, trusting in God and striving to do good even when there is no payment. Lay people—those who serve God without pay—should be careful not to get involved in the politics of religious leaders, for they are not paid to engage in politics. Those who do will leave empty-handed and, more importantly, displease God and lose everything.

Jesus' trial was illegal according to Jewish law. The Sanhedrin council was not supposed to meet or judge someone at night. Additionally, it was against the law to charge, convict, and sentence someone to death on the same day. The Jews violated their own laws by condemning Jesus, but their hatred blinded them.

They were jealous of Jesus because of His love, His healing power, His



popularity, and His teachings, which exposed their falsehood and hypocrisy. If there had been children in the courtroom that night—perhaps the ones Jesus had healed—things might have turned out differently. They might have defended Him! But all the children were asleep, tucked in bed, soundly sleeping.

When we say the Jews had no right to condemn Jesus, we refer mainly to their leaders. They hated and feared Jesus because He exposed their wickedness. They rushed the trial to finish before the crowds who loved Jesus could wake up and cause unrest or witness their evil plans.

They had already decided to kill Him regardless of the trial's outcome. However, they wanted to appear as though they followed the law. Since they knew their reasons were insufficient to sentence Him to death, they began the trial early to accomplish their goal. Their strategy was to accuse Jesus of blasphemy under Jewish law and of rebellion under Roman law, which carried a death sentence.

John also followed Jesus and was known by the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the courtyard. Peter followed from a distance. It was a cold night, and people had lit a fire in the courtyard. Peter sat among them, warming himself.

A servant girl noticed Peter in the firelight, looked closely at him, and said, "This man was also with Jesus." But Peter denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

A little later, someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." Peter replied, "Man, I am not!"

About an hour later, another insisted, "Surely this man was with Him, for he is a Galilean." Peter firmly denied it, saying, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

At that moment, Peter remembered the Lord's words: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Peter went outside and wept bitterly.

Poor Peter! He loved Jesus but relied on his own strength. He had fallen asleep when he should have been praying for the strength to resist temptation. Even today, we need God's power to stand firm.

Jesus knew everything that would happen, which is why He prayed for Peter

so that his faith would not fail. Although Peter denied Him, Jesus did not want Peter to lose hope or abandon his faith.

Those who arrested Jesus mocked Him, spit on Him, and struck Him with fists and whips. They blindfolded Him and demanded, “Prophesy! Who hit You?” It is heartbreaking to think that the Creator, who came to die for us, was treated with such cruelty.

They continued the trial illegally through the night. In the morning, the elders, chief priests, and scribes assembled and brought Jesus before their council, questioning Him about His teachings and disciples.

Jesus replied that He had spoken openly in public and had nothing to hide. If they asked those who heard Him, they would know the truth. When He said this, a temple servant struck Him, asking, “Is this how You answer the high priest?” Jesus responded calmly, “If I said something wrong, testify to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why do you strike Me?”

The religious leaders asked Him directly, “Are You the Son of God?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am.” His response gave them the opportunity to know the truth and follow Him. But instead, they claimed He had spoken blasphemy and said there was no need for further testimony because they had heard it from His own lips.

The accusations against Jesus were false—not because no one had witnessed the alleged crimes, but because He had never done anything wrong. Throughout the trial, Jesus responded with patience and without anger.

Jesus was humiliated by the very people He came to save. Satan and his demons were present, urging people to commit these evil acts. Although any angel could have rescued Jesus, God the Father and Jesus had decided to offer this sacrifice so that you and I could have eternal life.

It was an agonizing time for Jesus because He foresaw all that was about to happen. The most painful part was the apparent loss of connection with His Father. This separation weighed heavier on Him than any physical suffering.

Since the Jews had no authority to execute anyone under Roman rule, they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the Roman governor’s palace (the Praetorium) at dawn. Jesus had already been awake for over 24 hours without rest.

The Jews refused to enter the Praetorium to avoid ritual defilement, as they wanted to remain “clean” for the Passover. Ironically, their actions of plotting

murder had already defiled them.

Everyone had the opportunity to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah that day—whether it was Caiaphas, Annas, Herod, Pilate, the religious leaders, or ordinary people. Yet, their rejection of the Holy Spirit and their choice to follow the spirit of darkness led them to the peak of their wickedness.

Prayers Do Not Provide New Information to God
Prayer is not about telling God things He does not already know. The Lord knows the secrets of every heart. Our prayers should not be long and loud. God sees what is done in secret and rewards us openly.

Questions:

1. If the person who struck Jesus knew who He was, what would they have done differently?
2. How can we "strike" Jesus today?
3. Why did the priests begin the trial in the middle of the night?
4. Why did the Jews lack the authority to execute someone?
5. Who was Annas?
6. Why did Peter deny Jesus even though he loved Him?
7. What can we learn from Jesus' patience during His unjust trial?
8. Discuss what you learned about these religious leaders and how it applies to your life today.

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 22:33,34.

[33,34] "But he replied, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death.' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me.'"

Prayer: Father, sometimes we are weak and deny You before our friends, even when we boast that we would defend You even to death. Help us, by looking at the example of Peter, not to rely on our own strength. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A dramatization of Peter talking to three people, followed by the rooster crowing.

DAY 281. (October 7)

TOPIC: Jesus before Pilate.

(Luke 22)

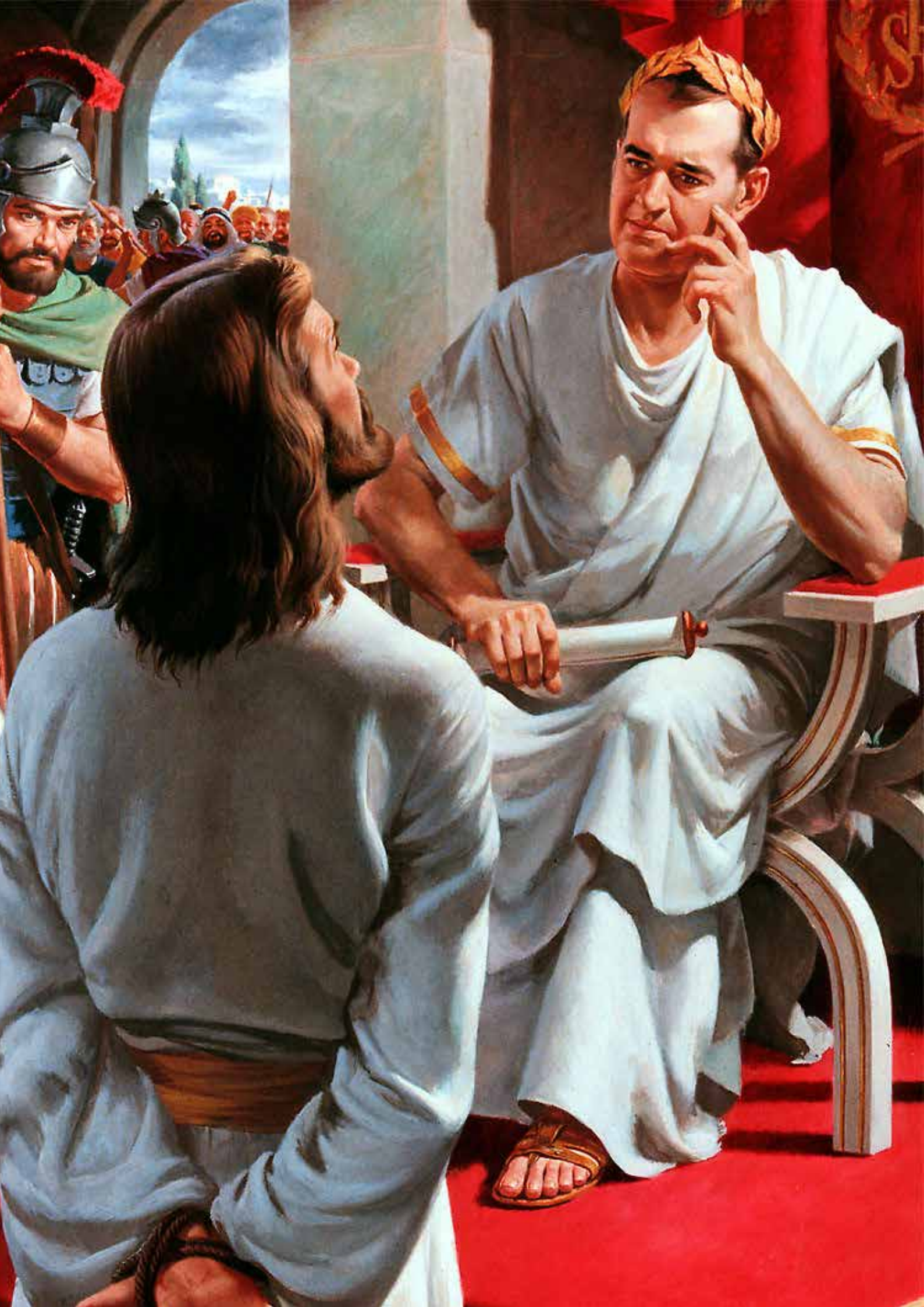
The entire assembly arose and led Jesus to Pilate, who was the Roman governor; perhaps they woke him up from his sleep. It was not lawful for them to judge someone at night, but they were in a hurry to commit their evil act, claiming that the Passover festival was approaching, and they needed to rush to fulfill their wicked plan of killing Jesus. We may wonder why they committed this evil, but even today, we do the same by crucifying Christ anew through the sins we commit. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to help us recognize our sins and turn away from them through repentance and restoration.

Herod the Jew was under Pilate's authority. The Jews could not pass the death sentence themselves under Roman law. Pilate was surprised to find Jesus to be a calm and gentle person, and he asked, "What charges do you bring against this man?" They replied, "He is guilty of many offenses; otherwise, we would not have brought him to you." They began to accuse Him falsely, claiming that He was misleading their nation, forbidding them to pay taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be the Messiah and a king. Others accused Him of saying that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, but their testimonies did not agree.

Pilate asked Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus, giving Pilate an opportunity for salvation, replied, "Yes, as you say, but are you asking this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate responded, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me."

When Pilate questioned Jesus further, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent me from being handed over to the Jews." Jesus continued to testify to Pilate, stating that He was born to testify to the truth. Pilate then asked, "What is truth?" This is a question we should ask ourselves today—what is truth? The truth is the Word of God! It is the complete and absolute truth.

Pilate then told the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." He told them to judge Jesus by their own law, but they objected, saying, "We have no right to execute anyone." The Jews insisted, saying, "This man stirs up trouble by teaching throughout Judea, starting



from Galilee."

Upon hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate asked if He was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at the time. This was the same Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist. When Herod saw Jesus, he was delighted because he had heard about Him and had wanted to see Him for a long time. He hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle as entertainment. But Jesus did not come to earth to perform magic tricks or put on a show. Herod questioned Him extensively, but Jesus gave no answer. The chief priests and teachers of the law stood there, vehemently accusing Him.

Out of malice and because he had the authority, Herod mocked Jesus and treated Him with contempt. He dressed Him in a luxurious royal robe and sent Him back to Pilate, for he also found no fault in Him. This teaches us not to mock or ridicule others. From that day, Herod and Pilate became friends—although they had previously been enemies—not because "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," but because both agreed that Jesus was innocent. Even today, some betray Jesus to make friends with people they were previously at odds with.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him a message saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered greatly today in a dream because of Him." However, this warning did not stop Pilate. He continued to please the crowd to protect his position. Pilate told the chief priests, "You brought this man to me as one who incites rebellion. I have examined Him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against Him—nothing deserving death."

Even Herod found no reason to condemn Him. Pilate then proposed to punish Jesus by flogging Him and releasing Him, as it was customary to release a prisoner during the festival. It is strange—if Jesus was innocent, why punish Him at all? However, the crowd shouted, "Release Barabbas to us!"

Barabbas, whose name means "son of the father," was in prison for insurrection and murder. He likely feared for his life, but suddenly the prison door opened. Barabbas was brought before Pilate, and perhaps he recognized Jesus or had heard of Him. Pilate again asked the crowd, "What shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?" They shouted, "Crucify Him!" Barabbas must have felt relieved. We do not know what became of him afterward, but we can hope that he realized that Jesus took his place—just as Jesus takes our place today. Through His suffering and death, we who are sinners have been redeemed.

Again, Pilate asked, “Why? What crime has He committed?” But the crowd shouted louder for His crucifixion. Wanting to satisfy the people, Pilate granted their request. He released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified. Though Pilate washed his hands and declared, “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” water could not cleanse him of his guilt. Only confession and repentance can do that. The Jews present declared, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

No one, not even Jesus’ enemies, found any fault in Him. This sets Him apart from the founders of other religions, who acknowledged their sins. This truth is clear—only God is without sin, and we all fall short of His glory.

Even today, our sins continue to crucify Jesus. Let us seek forgiveness, for Jesus is willing to forgive all sins. Despite being given the chance to know the truth, Pilate chose to please people rather than do what was right.

History records that Pilate lost his position after Jesus’ death, despite trying to appease the people. Ancient historians like Tacitus and Josephus wrote extensively, confirming these events. You can read more if you wish.

Jesus does not call us to follow Him only to abandon us. If we surrender our lives to Him, He will never leave us. In every circumstance, we have a Guide to lead us, a true Counselor in our troubles, and a compassionate Friend in our sorrow. Even when we err out of ignorance, Christ does not forsake us.

Simple prayers, offered through the Holy Spirit, ascend through the open door that Christ has declared: “I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.” These prayers, mixed with the incense of Christ’s perfection, ascend to the Father as a pleasing aroma, and answers will come.

Questions:
1. What fault did Pilate find in Jesus?
2. What warning did Pilate’s wife give him?
3. Why did the people choose Barabbas instead of Jesus?
4. How do people today choose Barabbas over Jesus?
5. Why did Herod and Pilate become friends that day?
6. Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged despite His innocence?
7. What example of patience does Jesus give when others treat us unjustly?
8. Do you seek to please people today, or to please Jesus?

May God greatly bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 22:40-43.

[40-43] "On reaching the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you will not fall into temptation.' He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him."

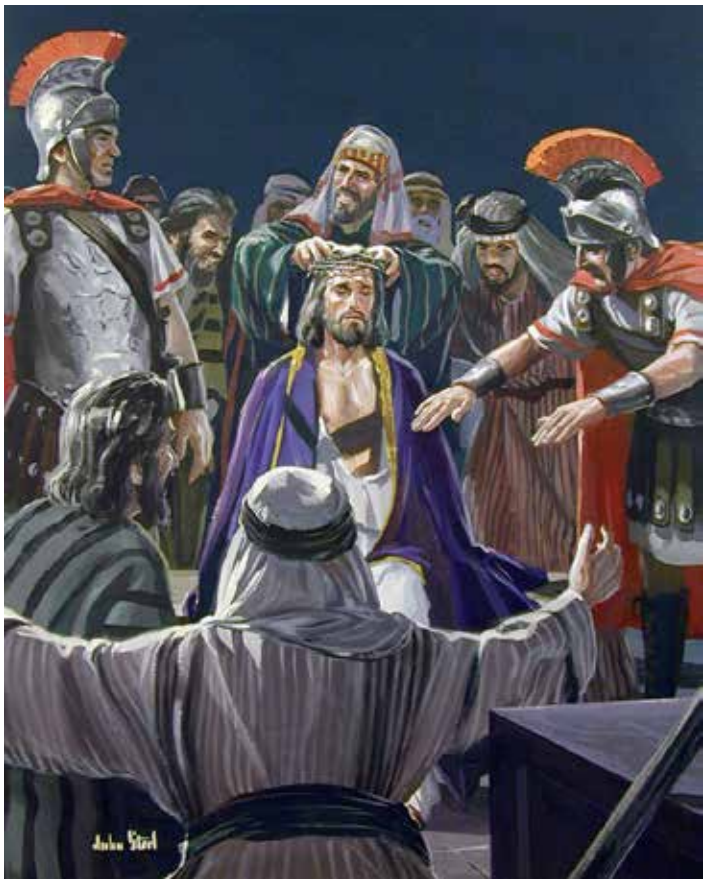
Prayer: Holy Lord, we pray that You help us not to fall into temptation, and that Your will be done and not ours. We ask that You strengthen us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: What is Truth? – A discussion. Jesus continued to testify to Pilate that He was born for this purpose, giving him the story of salvation and the Truth He came to bear witness to. Pilate then asked, "What is truth?" This is a question you and I must ask today. The truth is only the Word of God! That is the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth (absolute Truth). Pilate did not wait for Jesus to answer what truth is but instead told the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

Day 282 (October 8)

TOPIC: The Crown of Thorns

(John 19)



Pilate knew well that Jesus was innocent, but wanting to please the Jews and protect his position and job, he took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on His head. They approached Him mockingly, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They struck Him with their hands and dressed Him in a purple robe to ridicule Him. Pilate was afraid, and his conscience troubled him because he knew the Jews had delivered Jesus out of envy. Even today, if someone commits a sin that is not a crime, we cannot force them to become a believer by punishing or killing them. Faith is a personal choice; we should correct someone in the hope that they will repent and turn from their wicked ways, but we do not kill them.

In our world today, no religious leader has the authority to kill a person for sins that are not criminal acts, such as being a heretic. For instance, if someone claims to be God but does no harm to anyone, neither the church nor the government should kill them. Besides, who among us is without sin? If we were to kill every sinner, then everyone would have to die! Pilate asked Jesus, "Where are You from?" but Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate, growing frustrated, said, "Do You refuse to speak to me? Don't You realize I have the power to release You or crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above."

From that moment, Pilate sought to release Jesus but was hindered because the Jews warned him, "If you let Him go, you are not a friend of Caesar."

Desiring to protect his position, Pilate chose not to release Him. Jesus stood on the stone pavement as Pilate declared, “Behold, your King!” But the crowd shouted back, “Take Him away! Crucify Him!” Satan desired that Jesus sin at any point in His life, but he failed. Even here, Satan wanted Jesus to respond angrily or act in a way that would cause Him to fall. Despite the brutal scourging with iron-tipped whips and pieces of bone, Jesus endured everything to save us.

Pilate had the opportunity to speak with Jesus and learned the whole truth of God’s Word, which could have saved him. God even sent Pilate’s wife a dream as a warning. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Pilate would not have starved or lacked essentials if he had released Jesus—he was a Roman citizen. His primary concern was losing his status, and the Jews threatened to report him to Caesar. Many people still betray Jesus today for the sake of friends, entertainment, fear, fashion, beauty, opinions, status, benefits, reputation, school, fame, or material possessions. Each of us faces such temptations. Ask yourself: Are you betraying Jesus for the sake of friends or worldly pleasures? Watching inappropriate movies or listening to corrupt music?

We should pray earnestly because, in many public places like buses, indecent images are displayed, degrading African women while glorifying women from other nations. These images promote immorality and violate our cultural values. Jesus died to rescue us from such evil, and we should urge bus owners to play cleaner and more edifying content. One day, on a long journey from Nairobi to Mwanza, a mother with young children asked the conductor to turn off the inappropriate film. She was harshly told to make her children look down. How long could they keep their heads down on such a long trip?

On Judgment Day, which is approaching, may we stand victorious. We must guard our hearts by filtering what we see, hear, touch, and think according to Philippians 4:7-9:
“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

When Judas, who betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was filled with remorse. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they replied, “What is that to us? You bear the responsibility.” This revealed their corruption and the bribe they had given for evil to be done. Judas threw the

silver into the temple and went out to hang himself. He could have been forgiven if he had repented, but he had hardened his heart against the Holy Spirit over the years.

On that same day, Peter also denied Jesus but repented and became a bold witness for Christ. The chief priests used the thirty pieces of silver to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah. Judas died on the same day as Jesus—both on trees. Judas died as a traitor, while Jesus died as a Savior and Hero. Judas' death benefited no one, but Jesus' death brought salvation to all. Let us all say, Hallelujah!

Many people that day betrayed Jesus like Judas but later repented. Ignorance is no excuse for sin or for a clear conscience. We must educate ourselves about our salvation. Judas' example is a warning to us not to betray Jesus through our actions or words. Let us pray for one another because all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. No one is perfect!

Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning—a Roman punishment reserved for robbers and murderers. He bore His cross to Golgotha, but when He grew weak from the beatings and blood loss, the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene, an African from Libya, to carry it. This man, passing by with his sons Alexander and Rufus, likely came to know Jesus personally that day. We are also called to carry our cross daily for Christ. Are you willing?

A great crowd followed Jesus, including women who mourned for Him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and your children." His concern was for their eternal salvation rather than their human sympathy.

At the crucifixion site, Jesus was nailed to the cross, along with two criminals. Yet, instead of anger, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even in His agony, Jesus had the power to forgive sins. One thief mocked Him, but the other repented and asked, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus promised him, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise."

Reflect deeply on Christ's sacrifice. Accept Him as your Savior now—do not delay. People of all ages die unexpectedly, and Jesus may return at any time.

Pilate had a sign placed on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Though the priests objected, Pilate refused to change it. Despite the evidence before them, Pilate and the Jews did not recognize the Truth.

Historical records indicate that not long afterward, Pilate lost his position and eventually took his own life.

Questions:

1. What did Judas do when he realized Jesus was condemned?

2. What inscription did Pilate place on the cross?

3. Did Judas regret betraying Jesus, or was he disappointed his plan failed?

4. What prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled during the crucifixion?

5. What is truth?

6. Why is it wrong to mock or ridicule others like the thief on the cross did?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 19:25-27.

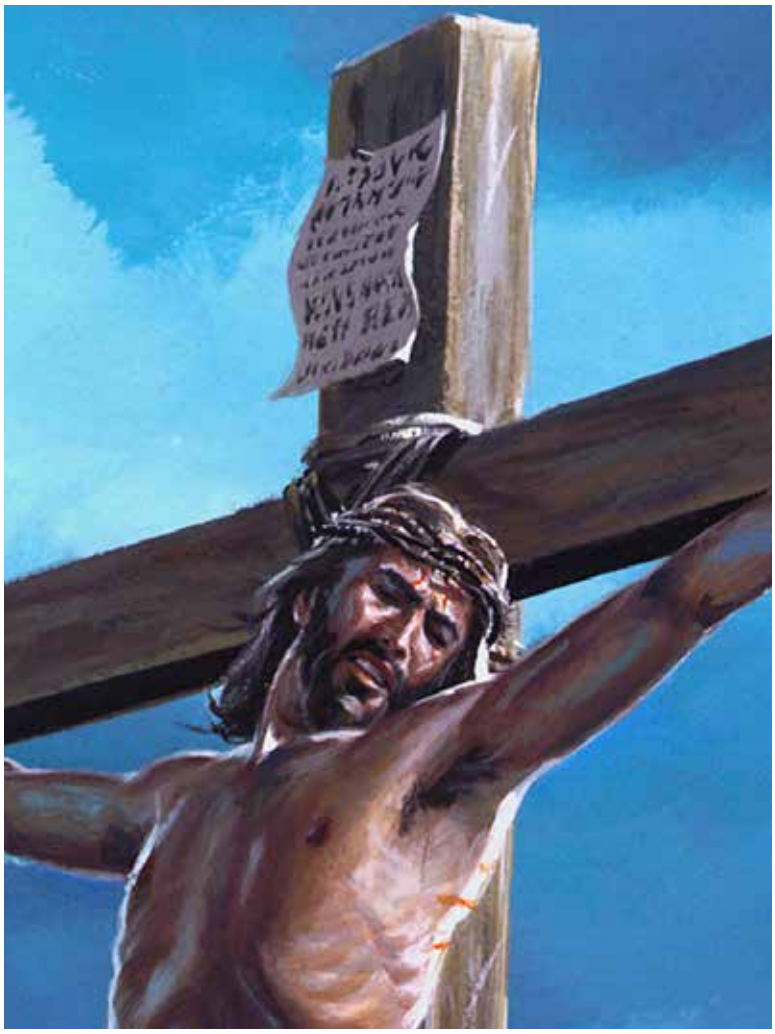
[25-27] Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Prayer: Beloved Lord, thank You for reminding us at the cross to care for our parents. Even in the midst of Your great suffering, You did not leave Your mother without help. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 283 (October 9)

TOPIC: TETELESTAI – IT IS FINISHED

(John 19, Matthew 27)



The soldiers who crucified Jesus stopped concerning themselves with the affairs of those being crucified and began to divide His garments into four parts, one for each soldier, and also took His tunic. The tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. They said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it," so that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing, they cast lots."

At the cross stood His mother, His mother's sister (Mary, the wife of Clopas), Mary Magdalene, and other women, along with John. While still hanging on the cross, Jesus said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son," referring to John, and to John, He said, "Behold your mother." Jesus was a Son who loved His mother. Knowing she was elderly, He found someone to care for her even while enduring great agony. Jesus did not have money to leave for His mother, but He entrusted her to John, His beloved disciple. For John, living with Jesus' mother was a blessing and a constant reminder of his Lord. This mother was likely already a widow.

The lesson we learn today is not to abandon our parents but to care for and honor them. Although Jesus had half-brothers like Jude and James, He perhaps did not entrust His mother to them because they had not yet fully

believed in or loved God as John did. It is also believed that John may have been related to Jesus since his mother was a relative of Mary (based on a comparison of the Synoptic Gospels).

Jesus' mother faced trials and tribulations. She remembered the angel's message, the birth of Jesus, and the sorrows of motherhood. Even the elderly priest Simeon had foretold these things to her. She recalled how kind and helpful her Son had been and felt unworthy of what was happening.

Why do you think such things happen? Sometimes, it is necessary to be separated from your father or mother, but God knows why. Jesus' suffering was not only from the nails but also from bearing the sins of the whole world—this is what caused Him to die quickly. The guilt of humanity, from Adam to the end of the world, was laid upon Him. He was separated from the face of His Father, which tore His heart in a way no human can comprehend or explain. This spiritual agony was far greater than His physical pain. Though God the Father was present, sin created a vast separation. Even today, sin hides us from seeing God's face.

One day, sin will be removed forever, and we will see God face to face. The wrath of God was upon His Son, as prophesied in Isaiah 53. Even the sun darkened, as if it could not bear to witness the suffering of its Creator.

Jesus was given vinegar mixed with gall to drink when He was thirsty on the cross. Upon tasting it, He refused it—perhaps because it contained a sedative—choosing instead to keep His mind clear until the end. At noon, darkness fell over the land for three hours. Jesus cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" meaning, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some who heard this thought He was calling Elijah.

Seven statements made by Jesus on the cross are recorded. One of them was, "I thirst." People hurled insults at Him and spat on Him, including the criminals crucified beside Him. The forces of Satan gathered to incite people to do evil, hoping to make Jesus sin by retaliating and thus fail in His mission. But thanks be to God, Jesus achieved victory. Through Him, we too can overcome, but we must pray to possess the fruit of the Spirit, especially self-control and self-denial.

The temptation Jesus faced was unparalleled. With all power and authority at His disposal, He could have come down from the cross and struck down His enemies, but He chose not to. His miracles were always for helping others, never for Himself. Even after fasting for 40 days, He did not turn stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. If Jesus had come down from the cross, we would

be eternally lost without hope.

Throughout history, God's people have endured various forms of suffering. The Old and New Testaments bear witness to this truth. After the apostles' time, many believers suffered for defending God and His Word. Some were thrown to lions, others burned at the stake, beaten, shipwrecked, or slain by swords. The Waldensians of Italy, John Huss of Czechoslovakia, Jerome, Knox, and many others faced severe persecution. You can read their stories in the book The Great Controversy and The Book of Martyrs. Even today, believers in many countries endure persecution, especially in the "10/40 Window" region—areas between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude, including countries like North Korea and Somalia. We should pray for these persecuted believers.

The darkness that fell at noon lasted three hours. Many witnessing these events at the cross chose to follow the path of life. Some trembled in fear, believing they were being punished for their sins. The temple veil, 60 feet high and 6 inches thick, was torn from top to bottom—a divine act symbolizing that the way to God was now open to all through Jesus' sacrifice.

The sacrificial system on earth was finished. Jesus, the Lamb of God, had died once for all generations. Angels, previously filled with concern, now knew without a doubt that God is love.

Jesus faced temptations to avoid the cross and to come down from it, but He overcame them all. His victory is our victory—let us rejoice and celebrate!

The disciples were filled with fear and anxiety that day. Only later, upon reflection, did they understand the significance of these events. Jesus' profound sorrow and agony teach us to trust God even during our darkest moments. When trials and suffering come, let us hold firm to our faith, regardless of our feelings.

When the Roman centurion saw what happened, he glorified God, saying, "Truly, this man was righteous." Others confessed, "Surely, He was the Son of God." The crowds who had gathered to watch these events returned home beating their breasts in sorrow. Many recognized that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

Jesus had died bearing the sins of the entire world—your sins and mine. For six hours, Satan and his hosts sought to thwart the plan of salvation, but Jesus triumphed. Hallelujah! Let us pray for one another as we journey toward our eternal home.

All who knew Jesus, including the women from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these events unfold. Some trembled in fear at the darkness and the earthquake, while others reflected deeply on their lives.

The power displayed that day caused many to fear Jesus in death more than when He was alive. Even without newspapers, news of these events spread throughout the Roman Empire and the known world.

It is for you and me that the Son of God decided to take the guilt of sin and die, to conquer the second death once and for all. It is for you and me that He opened the gates of heaven by giving His life because of His love for you and me. Let us always thank God for this amazing love and reflect often on His death. Although we have sorrow over His death, He has brought us hope and eternal life. Through His death, Jesus demonstrated another profound truth—the great love of God for humanity. God exposed Satan's claims that He is a dictator as false. Satan was left without any valid accusations against God.

Even the angels who served God after Satan's rebellion had all their questions answered and gained a complete picture of God's love that they did not have before. Now, God's character is clearly known. For all the accusations Satan made, both heaven and earth have seen them as lies, and Satan himself is revealed as the father of lies and all evil. God is served only by those who choose to serve Him. Love can only be love if there is a choice. God gives us a choice today—to serve Him or Satan. There are only two kingdoms, and no one willingly loves evil—we simply find ourselves trapped in it.

No one wants to live near an evil person, and that is why one day God will bring judgment to erase evil forever. Jesus is now our High Priest and Advocate so that we may be victorious on the day of judgment. He has never lost a case—unless we reject Him as our Defender. The summary of that day on the cross is as follows: Jesus was offered vinegar but refused it, He was crucified, He said, "Father, forgive them," the soldiers cast lots for His clothes, He was mocked by His enemies and the thieves on the cross, but one thief believed in Him and was promised eternal life. Jesus entrusted His mother to John, darkness covered the whole land, He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He said, "I thirst," then declared, "It is finished," and finally, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit," and He breathed His last.

Think about this: the all-wise and all-powerful God had no other way to save us except to come to earth, suffer, and die. Indeed, this battle between good and evil is intense. And Jesus loves us more than we can ever comprehend. He loves us more than He loves Himself and more than we love ourselves!

Perhaps this realization came first to the angels in heaven. At first, some separated and followed Satan, while others remained loyal to God but still had lingering questions about His love. When they saw Jesus being humiliated, tortured, and ultimately killed—and God did nothing to stop it—they may have pleaded, "Lord, do something! Don't let Him suffer like this!" But as they witnessed His suffering and death, they were struck with shock and awe. In their hearts, they may have marveled, "What kind of God is this? That He loves these creatures—and us—so much? That He loves these human beings more than He loves Himself?" This truth is a mystery that will be celebrated for all eternity—a sweetness and depth that will never fade!

After Satan's rebellion caused chaos, the entire universe was at risk. Yet, in His infinite wisdom, God has resolved this turmoil once and for all. No one can deny that God loves us more than He loves Himself!

God also told Moses about the services to be performed in the sanctuary and how animals were to be sacrificed. This was not because God delighted in sacrifices but to show humanity how offensive sin is to Him and that its wages are death. Thus, a sinner had to slaughter an innocent lamb, symbolizing that the sinner deserved death, but the lamb died in their place. This lamb represented Christ, who would one day die on Calvary as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Moses spent forty days on the mountain, where God instructed him in detail, even giving the names of those who would serve as priests and describing the garments they would wear. The Lord repeated these commands a second time, and after those forty days of speaking with God, He gave Moses two stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

Today, we no longer have earthly priests because the Messiah is our High Priest. We no longer need to bring a lamb to symbolize the bearing of our sins because the Lamb of God alone carries the sins of every human being, whether they acknowledge it or not. The sacrificial lamb was merely a shadow of what Jesus accomplished on the cross in the year 31 AD. He alone grants forgiveness. Our High Priest, who is in heaven interceding for us, is not a human being. Today, we do not need to go to a church or anywhere else to confess our sins to a human priest because no human serves as a priest anymore. The Messiah has already died! When Jesus declared, "It is finished" (Tetelestai), the human priesthood ceased. We may have pastors, priests, bishops, and other spiritual leaders, but they are not priests. They too must go to the Savior to confess their sins privately and personally.

When someone wrongs us, we ask for their forgiveness for that specific offense, but asking for forgiveness of sin is reserved for God alone. No human

being can forgive sins. When a person surrenders to the Messiah, their sins are placed upon Him—not upon the scapegoat as depicted in Leviticus 16. Believing that a human being can grant the forgiveness of sins is meaningless because sin is handed over only to Jesus. He presents it to the Father and the law, and only Jesus ultimately transfers it to Satan (Azazel). Evil, rebellion, and guilt are placed back on the originator of sin—Satan himself. Through repentance and confession, a person is declared righteous, and all their sins are returned to the founder of sin—Satan/Azazel.

The Israelites who were saved by the blood of the lamb during the Passover placed blood on their doorposts. That month marked the beginning of the Jewish calendar, symbolizing a new beginning. Salvation comes by grace on Mount Calvary, where Jesus embraced both the law and the sinner. This is how we are reconciled to God. He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." It is not that we must keep His commandments to love Him, but rather, our love for Him compels us to obey. Anyone who claims to love God but does not keep His commandments is a liar and does not have the truth in them.

Grace is like an ambulance that finds us broken and wounded by sin and takes us to the hospital for healing. In the spiritual sense, grace carries us to the mercy seat where our Great Physician, the Messiah, treats our sin, rebellion, and transgressions. There, we are repaired, restored, and made new. Jesus then transfers our sins back to Satan/Azazel. Today, we must surrender our guilt, sin, and rebellion to Satan—the true origin of sin—so that we can live in accordance with God's law and will. Jesus alone is the High Priest.

Read more in Leviticus 16, John 19, the related Gospel accounts, and Isaiah 53.

If, despite these promises before us, we choose to remain dry and thirsty for the living water, it is our own fault. If we approach Christ with the humility of a child going to a parent and ask for the things He has promised—believing we will receive them—we will indeed have them.

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus die?

2. To whom did Jesus entrust His mother?

3. What were the seven statements Jesus made on the cross?

4. How was Isaiah 53 fulfilled on the cross?

5. Did God kill Jesus?

6. Why was there no need to offer sacrifices anymore?

7. What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished”?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 19:6,17,18.

[6] As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw Him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take Him and crucify Him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against Him.” … Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified Him, and with Him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Prayer: Thank You, Jesus, for enduring suffering, scorn, sorrow, and pain for me. You were despised and considered as nothing. Surely You bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. By Your stripes we are healed. Each of us had gone astray, and the Lord laid on You the iniquity of us all. You were oppressed and afflicted, yet You did not open Your mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter. We thank You, Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A dramatization of this part of Jesus’ suffering—crown of thorns, scourging, etc. “Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They clothed Him in a purple robe and went up to Him again and again, saying, ‘Hail, king of the Jews!’ And they slapped Him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said, ‘Look, I am bringing Him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him.’”

DAY 284 (October 10)

TOPIC: The Burial of Jesus

(Luke 23-24, Mark 15, Matthew 27)



The faith of Jesus' disciples had been shaken, yet they still loved their Teacher and Lord deeply. Although it would have been difficult for them to be granted the body of Jesus for burial, they did not leave the cross but waited to see what would happen. Help came from an unexpected place—Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph provided his own tomb cut into the rock, while Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of spices.

Everyone has a part in God's grand plan, and you, too, have a role to play. Joseph and Nicodemus were secret disciples of Jesus. They had previously tried to protect Him when the priests sought to kill Him. Although they feared openly declaring their faith, Jesus' death changed them more profoundly than His life had. They became courageous and stepped out of hiding.

No one can remain a secret follower forever—one day, you must come out of hiding! If we confess the Messiah before others, He will also confess us before His Father and the angels.

A man named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin council—a good and righteous man—did not agree with the Jewish leaders' plans and actions. He was from the town of Arimathea and was waiting for the kingdom of God. This Joseph courageously went to Pilate and secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked for Jesus' body. Even today, we must be careful as we work for God.

Another thing to remember is that despite the wickedness around us, God still has His chosen ones, undefiled by evil, like Joseph and Nicodemus, who are ready to serve Him in special circumstances.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus died so quickly because crucifixion typically caused a slow death over several days. The soldiers broke the legs of the criminal crucified with Jesus to hasten his death, but when they came to Jesus, they found He was already dead.

According to Jewish customs, the dead were buried on the same day. Breaking the legs caused quicker death because it prevented the crucified from pushing themselves up to breathe. The Jews did not leave bodies hanging on the Sabbath or during Passover. Some thought the legs were broken to prevent the criminals from escaping.

Pilate ordered that Jesus' side be pierced with a spear, and blood and water flowed out, confirming His death. This fulfilled the prophecy from Psalms: "Not one of His bones will be broken," and "They will look on the one they pierced." John witnessed and recorded this event.

When Pilate confirmed Jesus was dead, he released the body to Joseph. It is comforting to know that Jesus had faithful friends like Joseph. He and Nicodemus, who brought the spices, worked together. They climbed ladders, removed the nails, and lowered Jesus' body. They wrapped Him in linen cloth and placed Him in a new tomb cut into the rock. This was a great honor, as criminals were usually buried in common graves.

Although many hated Jesus and crucified Him, others loved Him and removed the nails. This tomb has since been visited by millions from every nation. Perhaps Nicodemus remembered his nighttime conversation with Jesus when He said, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." This became a powerful testimony that strengthened his resolve to become an open disciple.

The poor and those who needed healing were saddened by these events. Although the priests and others tried to silence people, the death of Jesus became the most talked-about event, even more than His life. Many were fearful because they knew He never lied, and since He claimed to be the Son of God, they wondered if He might return to seek justice.

We should not fear because anyone who believes and confesses their sins is forgiven, no matter how grave their sins are.

It was Preparation Day—Friday—and the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee, including Mary, followed and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. They returned home to prepare spices and perfumes and rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment, waiting to anoint Jesus' body on Sunday.

They also celebrated the Passover feast, not realizing that the True Passover Lamb—Jesus—had already been sacrificed.

In the temple, the veil—estimated to be over six inches thick—was torn in two from top to bottom without human intervention, exposing the Most Holy Place. The sacrificial lamb, ready to be slain, escaped. This event led many to search the Scriptures to understand its meaning.

Mary, standing at the cross and during the burial, remembered all the words spoken to her since the angel first announced she would conceive by the Holy Spirit. The angel had said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Jesus is the only One born into the world completely perfect and holy. Yet, He was killed and buried without even a formal mourning ceremony. Emmanuel—God with us—fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 7.

Understanding Jesus' love, the heavenly plan, and His life of humility is a profound mystery we will continue to explore throughout eternity. We should read God's Word again and again, reflecting on the mystery of God becoming human and dying for us sinners.

Simeon's prophecy to Mary also came true: "A sword will pierce your own soul too, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed." Mary, who had already lost her husband Joseph, now experienced the deepest sorrow as she lost her Son.

Through these events—His death, burial, and ultimately His resurrection—Mary finally understood the purpose of Jesus' life. We, too, must connect these truths to strengthen our faith as God's children.

Many who wanted to follow Jesus could not because of the cost. One man asked to follow Jesus but wanted to bury his father first, although Jewish custom required immediate burial. Another, upon hearing that the Son of Man had no place to lay His head, vanished. Each person's journey with God is unique.

Joseph and Nicodemus' courage reminds us that following Jesus requires sacrifice. Are you willing to follow Him openly, even if others mock you?

Interestingly, out of the 71 Sanhedrin members, only Joseph and Nicodemus are remembered—because they chose Jesus. Most things we do in life will be forgotten, but the little we do for Jesus will be remembered forever.

Judas Iscariot had the freedom to choose but rejected Jesus despite repeated warnings. He felt remorse, not true repentance, and ended his life. Pilate valued his position and public opinion over the truth of Jesus.

Will you choose Jesus today?

My Prayer Today:
Dear Lord, help us always be attentive to Your revelations and walk faithfully with You. Amen.

Questions:

1. Who was given Jesus' body?

2. How did Nicodemus assist with the burial?

3. How do you prepare for the Day of Preparation?

4. Why did Jesus have no place to lay His head?

5. How can we ensure Jesus' sacrifice is not in vain?

6. What lessons do we learn from Joseph and Nicodemus?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Mark 15:34,39.

[34,39] At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?") … And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how He died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You allowed even separation from Your own Father, so that You might die for us. Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for his friends.

Activity: Sing a hymn that tells the story of Jesus. Example: "Tell Me the Story of Jesus."

DAY 285. (October 11)

TOPIC: The Greatest Good News in the World!

(Mark 16)

The disciples were afraid that their lives were in danger and that since they had killed Christ, it would now be their turn to be killed. They went back home and forgot what Jesus had told them would happen. Their faith had weakened significantly. They did not reflect on Jesus being the Messiah or on what the prophecy of the Messiah said. They were utterly confused because, for three and a half years, they had devoted their entire lives to Him, leaving their homes to follow Him everywhere, and now He was dead! Just a week before, Jesus had entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey like a King, and now, within the same week, He was killed. They thought the positions they had fought over had disappeared forever. Even in our lives, Fridays of sorrow come, but Sunday is on the way!

On the second day, although it was the Sabbath, a day of rest, the priests, filled with fear and troubled consciences, went to Pilate. These chief priests, pastors, and high-ranking bishops told Pilate, “We remember that deceiver said while He was still alive that He would rise again after three days. Therefore, command that the tomb be secured, so His disciples do not come and steal Him and tell people He has risen from the dead.” Although they claimed to be resting on the Sabbath, abiding by their 1,521 Sabbath-keeping laws, they were busy working on their evil schemes. This labor of deceit had consumed their entire lives—during Jesus’ ministry, His arrest, His trial, and even after His death.

At times, they wondered if resurrection was possible for Jesus, as He had raised others from the dead. Pilate told them, “You have guards; go, make it as secure as you know how.” So, they went and secured the tomb, sealing it with a stone and placing guards. In their hearts, although they called Jesus a deceiver to calm their fears, the truth was that they were deeply afraid, for everything Jesus had ever said came true during His ministry—He never lied. After being with Him, they knew that they trusted Him more than they trusted themselves. While they were capable of lying, He was not! He also had power and authority that no other human being had ever possessed.

They likely stationed many guards, thinking it would strengthen their security. This also became a blessing for believers, as these guards witnessed

the resurrection firsthand. While the whole city slept that night, only Jesus' opponents were present to witness the resurrection. Perhaps even hundreds of soldiers were stationed there! Sunday had come—death could not hold Him, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Hallelujah! Praise be to Almighty God, who is all-powerful—Jesus has risen! The Good News came on Sunday after Jesus rested in the tomb. Those guards must have seen everything that happened, heard the voices of the angels, and witnessed Jesus Himself rising. Yet when they reported to the chief priests, they were given bribes to spread a false story, saying that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body while they slept.

Many people knew this was a lie—because if the guards were asleep, how could they have seen the disciples steal the body? And why were the soldiers not punished for falling asleep on duty or allowing such a crime to occur? The guards and the people of the city witnessed a mighty earthquake. That is when Jesus rose from the grave. The guards must have seen Jesus emerge, and His glory caused them to freeze. They saw wonders that you and I would love to witness. Mary and the disciples found the empty tomb with the burial cloths neatly folded. Thieves would never bother to fold clothes when stealing a body. Instead of repenting and turning away from their evil, the leaders chose to maintain their lies. Be careful—there are still deceitful people today who deny the truths of God.

Since that day, billions have believed in Jesus through the testimony of the truth. Where truth exists, lies cannot prevail. Those who declared, "Let His blood be on us and our children," lived in fear, perhaps worrying that they might encounter the risen Christ. Early Sunday morning, at dawn on the first day of the week—Sunday—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and Salome went to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus' body. They found the tomb empty and were deeply distressed.

During the night, a great earthquake occurred because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. The greatest and most important Good News of yesterday, today, and forever is that Jesus has risen—He is the Resurrection, the Truth, and the Life! Perhaps as the angel rolled away the stone, he called out to Jesus, "Son of God, Your Father is calling You—come out!" The One who is the Author of Life had been in the tomb for three days and then rose again. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life! Because He is risen, that is our hope—that we too shall rise again. His resurrection is the ultimate victory over sin, death, and the devil. Let us rejoice today!

Although the disciples were filled with sorrow on Friday, by Sunday, their joy was beyond measure. The angel sitting on the stone had a face like lightning



and clothes as white as snow. The guards trembled in fear and became like dead men. The angel told the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here—He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’” The women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell His disciples.

The first person to see the risen Jesus was Mary Magdalene—how remarkable that God chose to reveal His resurrected Son first to a woman who had once been demon-possessed! God does not show favoritism—He looks at a person’s heart, their love for Him, and their obedience. Mary, weeping outside the tomb, saw two angels in white seated where Jesus’ body had been. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” She replied, “They have taken my Lord away, and I don’t know where they have put Him.” Turning around, she saw Jesus but did not recognize Him. Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned toward Him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). She wanted to hold Him to verify it was really Him, but Jesus said, “Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’” Mary went to the disciples with the news, “I have seen the Lord!” and told them everything He had said to her.

Questions:

1. Why did they place guards at the tomb?

2. Why do you think the guards' story was a lie?

3. What did the angel say when he saw the women?

4. How do we know that Jesus is alive today?

5. According to the book of Hebrews, what is one of Jesus' current roles in heaven?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Mark 16:1-3.

[1-3] When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

Activity: Role-play where the girls "buy" spices, then act out walking to the tomb while wondering who would roll away the stone. Emphasize their intention to anoint Jesus' body and their surprise at finding the tomb empty. You can also explain how spices were mixed, play a "rolling the stone" game, or discuss what happens when events surprise us.

Goal: To understand the women's purpose and how they prepared for it.
Task: Collect spices like cinnamon, cloves, etc. Let children "buy" spice mixtures to represent the real ones used for Jesus' body.

Discussion: Talk about why the women wanted to bring spices and their love in honoring Jesus.

Purpose: To show the challenge the women faced at the tomb.

DAY 286. (October 12)

TOPIC: The Road to Emmaus: Cleopas and His Companion Receive a Bible Lesson!

(Luke 24)



On that Sunday, after Mary had seen Him, two people who believed in Jesus were walking to a village called Emmaus, which was about a two-hour walk or approximately 12 kilometers away. These two were discouraged because their hopes had been shattered. They were discussing and questioning each other about the events that had occurred. They had heard that Jesus' body was missing and that some women had seen angels and spoken with them. These were the breaking news and the main topics of conversation that week, bringing them sadness and disappointment.

Some had been misled by the Sadducees' doctrine that there is no resurrection, and instead of rejoicing that Jesus was now alive in heaven, they were sorrowful. As they walked, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with

them, but they were kept from recognizing Him due to their overwhelming grief and tears, which clouded their understanding.

Jesus asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, replied, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

Jesus asked, “What things?” They replied, “About Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him. But we had hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. Some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but did not find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Him.”

Jesus felt compassion for their sorrow because He knew these were His disciples who loved Him but were confused by traditions. He lovingly said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?”

They were surprised at the stranger’s emphasis. Jesus began with Moses and all the Prophets, explaining to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. He explained everything, including His death and resurrection on the third day, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. He also told them about being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit from on high.

Wouldn’t we also love to have such sweet Bible teachings as Cleopas and his companion received? Even today, it is important to use Old Testament prophecies to know that Jesus is the Messiah and our example. His death is a powerful testimony that He is the prophesied Messiah.

Many people today neglect the Old Testament. This is a grave mistake because the Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament more clearly. The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament—they are inseparable twins. The Old Testament speaks about creation in the first and second chapters, and in the third chapter, it talks about the fall of man and the beginning of the promise of the coming Messiah to save us from sin. The remaining 1,186 chapters continue to discuss the salvation of humanity.

The Old Testament is the Word of God—His breath and His final authoritative words.

Many Jews do not believe in Jesus or the New Testament, and this is a significant problem because both Testaments are crucial for our journey to understand the full picture. I worked with Jews at their hospital near New York City and found that many rely on the New Testament and traditional stories like the Talmud as the foundation of their faith. Some abandoned even their Old Testament in favor of these traditions. Giving authority to traditions or denominations over the Bible is not only a mistake but a sin.

The Word of God is not just good words we follow selectively—it is the final authority in heaven and on earth. God reveals Himself to people gradually, and people's spiritual understanding differs. The Old and New Testaments are interdependent—neglecting one risks breaking both.

Some people may not have the entire Bible, like my friend, a Tanzanian missionary in Kisangani, Congo, who found that some people only had portions of Scripture—some had the books of Moses, others had Paul's letters, etc. In such cases, people use and follow what they have. Not everyone possesses the whole Bible. This is due to various reasons, including the resources needed to translate and print Bibles. Currently, the Bible has been translated into about 2,900 languages, while approximately 1,680 languages still need translations (according to Wycliffe Bible Translators).

As our story continues, Cleopas and his companion approached the village to which they were going, and Jesus acted as if He were going farther. But they urged Him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." Hospitality was their custom, especially for this stranger who had spoken to them so powerfully.

So, He went in to stay with them. As He sat at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

If they had not invited Him to stay, they would have missed the blessing. Jesus does not force His way into anyone's home or heart. He enters by invitation, whether the home belongs to a rich person or a poor one, filling hearts with joy and abundant peace.

That very hour, Cleopas and his companion returned to Jerusalem despite the

darkness and fatigue, driven by their renewed energy and joy. They found the Eleven gathered together, along with others, and said, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” They explained what had happened on the road and how Jesus was recognized by them when He broke the bread.

While they were still talking about this, Jesus Himself stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost because the doors were locked! They forgot that He had extraordinary powers. Jesus reassured them by saying, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?” He invited them to touch Him to confirm that it was really Him.

There are three crucial questions in life:

1. Where did I come from?

2. Why am I here?

3. Where am I going?

For a Christian, the Great Commission to “Go into all the world” answers the second question—we are here to be used by God to prepare the world for the end times by spreading the gospel. Life only has meaning when we dedicate ourselves to this mission.

To succeed in reaching others, remember this: only Christ’s method will bring true success. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy, ministered to their needs, and won their trust. Then He said, “Follow Me.”

If you find the voice and time to pray, God will find the voice and time to answer.

Questions:

1. To which village were the two people going?

2. Why were their faces downcast?

3. What words did Jesus use to comfort them?

4. Has your heart ever burned while hearing God’s Word?

5. How did they recognize Jesus?

6. What did Cleopas and his companion do after Jesus disappeared?

7. What is your plan to study the Scriptures to understand prophecy and today's events?

8. How can our eyes be opened today, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Luke 24:24-26.

[24-26] He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if He were going farther.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father. Help us to hold on to Your Word so that our hearts may burn within us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Teach how to give Bible lessons so that people's hearts may also burn within them! Train your class how to hold a Bible study and teach each other.

[32-34] They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."

DAY 287 (October 13)

TOPIC: Simon and John Go to the Tomb to Confirm

(John 21, Luke 24)



"Jesus is risen!" This was the news everywhere. The reports of the empty tomb spread widely, and millions—or perhaps all the Jews—heard about it. It was no longer a secret. Saints had risen with Him from the graves and appeared to many. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the battle was over. Heaven rejoiced in victory, and Satan was defeated. Humanity, all creation, and even the angels understood the plan of salvation more clearly than ever before. Some angels had followed Satan out of ignorance, but after God demonstrated His love for us, they realized that God's power and strength come from His goodness, mercy, and love. Everyone acknowledged that God is true and just.

For 4,000 years, Satan worked to oppress humanity, but Jesus worked to lift people up. From the time of Jesus' birth, Satan tried to disrupt the plan of salvation, but now he was defeated. Satan, who knows God's love, mercy, and goodness better than humans do, had deceived many by claiming that God's law was not based on love and that it could not be obeyed. However, after Jesus' death, this accusation was silenced. Satan had lost his opportunity to repent; his door to mercy was closed because he had utterly refused to turn back. Satan chose to be rebellious—no one deceived him. Instead, it was humanity that was deceived by Satan. Yet, in His mercy, God spared us from severe punishment despite our lack of excuse.

Today, as we are given the opportunity to know the gospel, we are left without excuse because we understand the greatness of God's love. God offers His mercy to us all, and He knows when a person has utterly rejected the gospel after it has been presented to them. He grants us the greatest gift—the power to live holy lives through His grace. His mercy, truth, and justice were fully revealed through His death, and these qualities cannot be separated. The battle between God and Satan continues until the end of time. Everyone—whether young or old—must choose between God's Word and His promises, or reject His Word, which He has exalted even above His own name.

In those few days, many people heard about Jesus' resurrection because even those who had been raised appeared to many, sharing this good news before being taken to heaven as the firstfruits with Jesus. Although the Bible does not provide many details about these resurrected people, we know they appeared to many. In the Bible, death is compared to sleep. On the day Jesus returns, many will hear the voice of the Son of Man calling them from the sleep of death. That voice, which declared "It is finished," will penetrate the graves, and the dead will rise. Those who believed in Jesus will be raised by the same power that brought Him out of the grave.

Simon Peter and John ran to the tomb to see if these things were true. John, being younger, outran the older Peter and arrived at the tomb first. He bent down and saw the linen cloths but did not enter. When Peter arrived, breathless from running, he went straight into the tomb and saw the linen cloths and the cloth that had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the other cloths but was folded and placed separately. Then John also entered, saw, and believed, although they still did not fully understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. The words, "I will see you again," spoken by Jesus, had not yet registered with them. So, the two disciples returned home.

That evening, Jesus appeared to two people walking to the village of Emmaus. They later told others, but many did not believe. According to the Gospel

accounts and Paul's letters, Jesus appeared about eleven times during the forty days He remained on earth after His resurrection.

Jesus met with His disciples on that Sunday night. Although the door was locked, He entered—because He has the power to transcend natural laws—and said, "Peace be with you." Jesus had six wounds from the crucifixion—two in His feet, two in His hands from the nails, one in His side where He was pierced by a spear, and one on His head from the crown of thorns. He showed them His side. They approached, astonished and fearful, thinking they were seeing a ghost or spirit. But when they touched Him, He was tangible. They recognized His voice, His appearance, and the way He did things.

It is a trustworthy promise that when Jesus returns, we will recognize all our loved ones who are resurrected. We will see them face to face—it will not be spirit to spirit. Heaven is not just a state of being; it is a real place where people will live and know each other. If you touch someone, they will be tangible—they will not be a spirit, but a complete, real person.

When I was a child, some people taught that we would become spirits in heaven, floating around playing harps. Although the Bible gives a clear picture of what heaven will be like, there are still things beyond human perception that will be revealed there. Some people overstep and claim things the Scriptures do not say. The Bible makes it clear that heaven is a real place. In Scripture, the terms "person" or "living soul" do not separate the body from the spirit. To be a human being, the body and spirit must be together—if they are separated, life is lost.

Body (dust) + Breath of Life from God = A Living Soul or Person

The apostles had much to testify about—His life, His death, and His resurrection. Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see Me." Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. He said, "Why are you troubled? Look at My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see; a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." After saying this, He showed them His hands and feet. Still in wonder and disbelief because of their joy, He asked, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, which He took and ate in their presence, proving that a spirit cannot eat.

Interestingly, Jesus appeared to His friends before His family, even though some of His friends were also relatives. This surprises us because we might have expected Him to reveal Himself to His family first. But the angel sent

the message to His disciples and close followers—like Mary and the other women—before anyone else.

Jesus alone has the power to lay down His life and take it up again. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we have hope that we, too, will be resurrected. He is the model for all who will be raised—those who died believing in Him—on that glorious morning of the first resurrection.

JESUS REVEALED HIMSELF

Sometimes it may seem that knowing Christ is impossible, but Scripture shows otherwise. In John 21:1, it says, "After these things, Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples." Jesus did not hide—He continued to make Himself known.

1. He appeared to Mary in the garden – (John 20:11-18)

2. To other women – (Matthew 28:8-10)

3. To two disciples on the road to Emmaus – (Luke 24:13-32)

4. To Peter – (Luke 24:34)

5. To the disciples (without Thomas) – (Luke 24:36)

6. To the disciples (with Thomas) – (John 20:26-29)

7. To the disciples at the Sea of Galilee – (John 21:1-2)

If you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13).

Questions:

1. Who alone has the power of resurrection and life?

2. Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples?

3. How did Jesus pass through the door?

4. Why did Jesus show them His side?

5. What would you have done if you were a disciple on that day?

6. Why didn't the disciples believe, even though Jesus told them repeatedly that He would rise again?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Luke 24:1-3.

[1-3] On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer: We thank You, Heavenly Father, that the stone was rolled away and You came out of the tomb. This is the good news of hope for us forever! Thank You so much. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Use large gray balls, pillows, or foam "stones." Let the children take turns rolling the stone away from a pretend tomb (made from a box or play tent). Each time the "stone" is rolled, let everyone shout: "Jesus is alive!"

DAY 288 (October 14)

TOPIC: Jesus Appears to His Disciples for 40 Days

(Matthew 28, Acts 1, John 21)



As the women went to inform Jesus' brothers, they met some soldiers entering the city to report to the chief priests about all that had happened. The soldiers had witnessed the extraordinary event of Jesus' resurrection. The chief priests gathered with the elders to discuss the matter and decided to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money to silence them. They instructed the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole His body while they were asleep.

This was an outrageous lie because even Jesus' disciples themselves did not know that He had risen—they were still grieving. Thieves do not usually take time to fold clothes neatly! After Jesus' resurrection, His burial cloths were found folded carefully. Furthermore, Jesus' disciples would never dishonor their Teacher by stealing His body without His garments. Besides, all the apostles, except John, were willing to die for Jesus. If the resurrection were a lie, they would not have risked their lives.

It is likely that the soldiers were the first to witness the miraculous resurrection and reported it to the chief priests. The priests, however, instructed them to say that they fell asleep and, while they were sleeping, Jesus' body was stolen. To protect the soldiers from punishment for failing their duty, the priests promised to speak to the governor on their behalf. This lie spread among the Jews and, to this day, many people still believe it. Not only among the Jews but across the entire world, this falsehood has spread. Yet, the

truth remains—Jesus rose from the dead. Many people witnessed it with their own eyes. Every year, millions visit Jerusalem to see the empty tomb.

The remaining eleven disciples traveled approximately 120 kilometers to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had instructed them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, although some still doubted if He was truly their Teacher who had lived with them for three and a half years. Jesus did not stay with them continuously as before but would visit them from time to time. Now, He could be present anywhere within His vast and eternal Kingdom.

He explained to them that His mission was not to establish an earthly kingdom or engage in politics, but to bring a heavenly, spiritual kingdom. He instructed them to begin their work in Jerusalem, despite the hostility and opposition there. The people of Jerusalem were given another opportunity to repent from their previous actions against God's servants. God would work miracles and wonders—not only through the apostles but also through all believers who follow His calling until the end of the world.

Jesus granted His disciples extraordinary gifts, even though they were uneducated. Their wisdom and power surpassed those with formal education. Today, it remains our responsibility to share the good news, whether to crowds or to individuals. Many people carry burdens of poverty, guilt, and troubled consciences due to the oppression of the enemy. We must pray that God gives us genuine love for them. True love, without hypocrisy, comes only from God. We should begin by sharing the Bread of Life with those in our homes, then with our neighbors and friends, and finally with those who do not know God. If we do our part faithfully, God will perform great works. Jesus came to heal the sick and break the chains of Satan. Faith—trusting in Him—is essential for us to work with God in reaching others.

Angels may wonder why we do not pray more when God is ready to do great things for us. He left the glories of heaven for our sake. Scripture records Jesus appearing to His disciples on several occasions, although the accounts are summarized. He had returned to His position as the Ruler of heaven and earth.

On one occasion, Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. Not knowing what else to do, Peter said, "I am going fishing." The others joined him, and they went out to fish, but that night they caught nothing. At dawn, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize Him. He called out to them, "Children, do you have any food?" They answered, "No." He then instructed them to cast

their net on the right side of the boat. Although they did not know who He was, they obeyed—and the net became so full of fish that they could not pull it back into the boat.

John realized it was the Lord and told Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Peter heard this, he quickly put on his outer garment and jumped into the water to reach Jesus. The other disciples followed in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. When they arrived onshore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it and some bread. Jesus told them to bring some of the fish they had just caught. Peter went back and hauled the net ashore, which, although full of 153 large fish, did not tear.

Jesus invited them to eat the breakfast He had prepared. Even today, we are invited to open our mouths to receive spiritual nourishment through His Word each morning. The disciples were blessed to have the Lord Himself serve them. If Jesus, the King of the universe, cooked for His disciples, how much more should we be willing to serve others? Every young person should learn to cook simple, healthy, and affordable meals using locally available ingredients before turning fifteen years old.

Jesus' third appearance to His disciples after His resurrection revealed His deep love and care for them. Our greatest need is already known to the Lord, but He wants us to seek Him in prayer. "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Questions:

1. How many days did Jesus stay with His disciples before ascending to heaven?

2. What conspiracy did the chief priests devise?

3. Do conspiracies occur in churches today? How can we avoid them?

4. Why did Jesus cook for His disciples?

5. How many fish did the disciples catch?

6. Have you ever thought of returning to your old ways and leaving God's service, like the disciples?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Matthew 28:4-7.

[4-7] The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples: 'He has risen from the dead.'"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for rising again as You said, and this is our hope. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Activity: Sing a resurrection hymn. For example: "Christ is Risen, Hallelujah." You may also find the song AMEFUFUKA – Beroya Mission Adventist online.

DAY 289 (October 15)

TOPIC: Jesus Strengthens Peter

(John 21)



Since Peter had openly denied Jesus, it was important for Jesus to help rebuild his faith so that if he faced trials, he would be able to endure. Peter loved Jesus and was willing to die for Him, but he relied on his own strength. After denying Jesus during those three days, Peter felt sorrow in his heart. We all need to ask God to help us withstand trials because no one can overcome them by their own power—only God gives us strength. Jesus called Peter by name to comfort him and assure him that he was fully forgiven.

After they finished eating the fish and bread that Jesus had prepared for the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My lambs." Again, Jesus asked him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter replied, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You." Jesus said, "Take care of My sheep."

A third time, Jesus asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was deeply saddened because Jesus asked him the same question three times. He answered, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus told him, "Feed My sheep."

Peter had denied Jesus three times, so Jesus asked him the question three times. The term "feed My lambs" refers to caring for new believers—both children and adults—who are like little lambs in their faith. When someone

comes to Christ for the first time, they are like newborns who need spiritual nourishment. Peter realized he had been forgiven, and Jesus trusted him to care for His followers.

The same power Jesus gave Peter is available to anyone willing to care for His people by sharing the Word of Life. Even today, when workers in God's vineyard stumble and fall, they should be helped to repent and be forgiven, just as Peter was. God performs many miracles for those who follow His calling.

Jesus also told Peter, "When you were young, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." This statement foretold the manner of Peter's death. Historians say Peter was crucified upside down around 68 AD. The man who once spoke hastily and acted impulsively had become wise and close to Jesus' heart. He became a leader of the early church and brought many to Christ.

As the Bible says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). There are many truths we would not know if Peter had not asked questions that revealed important lessons. Through His conversation with Peter, Jesus gave him a powerful assurance of restoration and trust.

After saying this, Jesus told Peter, "Follow Me." However, instead of focusing on his own calling, Peter became curious about John. Seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow Me."

Jesus wanted Peter to keep his eyes on Him, not on others. Even today, we should not be jealous of how God blesses others—whether they are successful in ministry, financially prosperous, or seemingly living an easier life. God knows what is best for each of us and blesses us accordingly.

This conversation spread among the disciples, leading to the belief that John would not die. However, Jesus had not said John would never die—He only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" Each person has a unique calling from God. For example, John the Baptist knew when his mission was complete, even when Jesus' ministry continued. Jesus Himself faced His time of suffering, and the disciples also fulfilled their calling in their time. Now, it is our turn to follow Jesus and carry out our mission without worrying about others' paths.

Peter was not given authority to manage others' lives—his focus was to follow Jesus. Later, in 1 Peter 5:3-4, he advised others to be faithful shepherds, reminding them not to be surprised by the trials they faced. John testified about what he had seen and heard firsthand—he witnessed Jesus before and after the resurrection, and he saw Jesus in His glorified body.

The Bible says that if everything Jesus did were written down, the whole world could not contain the books (John 21:25). Even in heaven, we will continue learning more about God's Word without ever exhausting its depth. The story of salvation itself is so profound that it will take eternity to fully understand it.

Another vital element of effective and enduring prayer is faith. As the Bible says, "Anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus also said, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

Do we come to God with the confidence to claim His promises through His Word?

Questions:

1. How did Jesus strengthen Peter?

2. Why do people deny Jesus today?

3. Have you ever denied Jesus in any way? If so, have you confessed?

4. What kind of death did Jesus say Peter would face?

5. Why was Peter curious about John's future?

6. Why can't the world contain all the written accounts of Jesus' works?

7. How can we encourage a friend who has made a mistake today?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

DAY 290 (October 16)

TOPIC: Jesus Ascends to Heaven

(Matthew 28, Luke 24, Mark 16, and Acts 1)

Jesus chose the Mount of Olives as the place of His ascension. This was a place where He had often prayed with His disciples. He had spent 33 ½ years with them. Together, they endured hardships, insults, and even ridicule from people. Despite being rejected and eventually crucified, Jesus still loved humanity. Although the disciples had their weaknesses, they sincerely loved Jesus with genuine affection. Though they were not perfect, He purified them.

Jesus came to them, spoke to them, and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Whoever believes will be saved,



but whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name, they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

He also said to them, "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you into the world to proclaim the good news." After saying this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Thus, the disciples began to receive the Holy Spirit while Jesus was still with them. They forgave one another, reflected on their past desires for greatness, abandoned their old, flawed ways, and began to rejoice and work together.

However, one disciple, Thomas, also called Didymus, was not present when Jesus first appeared to the others. When the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord," he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, saying, "Peace be with you!" Then He turned to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas was shocked because no ordinary man could know what he had said to the other disciples. Overcome with humility, and without even touching Jesus' wounds, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus then said, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

These words apply to us today. Although we may not see Jesus in our daily lives, we believe in Him and trust Him in every aspect—whether in our needs, education, health, or joy.

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have eternal life.

More than 500 people gathered on the Mount of Olives in Galilee, near Bethany. After giving the Great Commission—"Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations"—Jesus prepared to ascend to heaven. This was the eleventh

time the risen Savior had appeared to His disciples.

After speaking with them, He led them to Bethany, lifted His hands, and blessed them. While blessing them, He was taken up into heaven. The disciples worshipped Him and watched in awe as He ascended, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.

This incredible event fills us with joy because we too will ascend to heaven when Jesus returns. Our journey to heaven will be extraordinary. We will witness wonders beyond the knowledge of human science. What takes rockets millions of years to reach, we will travel in a short time—perhaps within a week.

We will see planets like Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus, and much more, for human knowledge barely scratches the surface of the universe. We will travel without needing safety belts or spaceships, able to see and converse with one another in joy as we recount our experiences on earth. Our earthly troubles will seem small compared to the glorious reward God has prepared for us.

As Jesus ascended, two men dressed in white—possibly angels—appeared and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."

He will not return in secret, nor will He touch the earth. Instead, we will be caught up to meet Him in the clouds. Are you ready to meet Jesus in the sky?

The disciples returned to Jerusalem filled with joy. People expected them to be sad after Jesus' departure, but instead, their faces shone with heavenly joy. They were eager to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, and many believed because of their testimony.

The disciples knew they had a Friend in heaven who deeply cared for them. They devoted themselves to prayer and communion with their beloved Friend, knowing He would grant whatever they asked in His name. The Holy Spirit also filled them with even greater joy, as Jesus had promised.

When Jesus arrived in heaven, He presented His scars to His Father—proof of His sacrifice for humanity. Jesus' prayer to His Father was: "Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am." That includes you and me.

Heaven rejoiced as the angels welcomed their victorious King. As described

in Psalm 24:7-10, they sang in a call-and-response:
“Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.”

Jesus, who had left heaven as the Word, returned in human form—forever uniting heaven and earth. Because He lives eternally, He is able to save us completely when we come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus is not just a good man who died for our sins; He is the risen God who sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us.

When we ask for forgiveness, we must also forgive others. How can we pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” if we hold unforgiveness in our hearts? (Matthew 6:12) If we expect our prayers to be heard, we must forgive others just as we desire to be forgiven.

Questions:

1. Approximately how many people were present with Jesus on the Mount of Olives?

2. What did He instruct them to do?

3. What promise did Jesus give His disciples? How would it help them?

4. What does “ascension” mean? What happened during Jesus’ ascension?

5. What was Thomas’ doubt?

6. What did the two men in white say?

7. How can we overcome doubts like Thomas’?

8. Based on this passage, describe how Jesus’ return will be.

9. Are you ready to meet Jesus in the sky today?

10. How did Jesus’ 30 years at home before His ministry prepare Him for His work?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: John 21:4-6.

[4-6] Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father. We are grateful that You care for Your children, even preparing food and providing abundance. Be praised, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A dramatization of these words: "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?' He said, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' Jesus said, 'Feed My lambs.' Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love Me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.' Jesus said, 'Take care of My sheep.' The third time He said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' He said, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said, 'Feed My sheep.'"

DAY 291 (October 17)

TOPIC: We Have a Friend in Heaven



Jesus lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years as both man and God. Many children are curious to know what things were like when Jesus went to heaven and what He is doing there now. The Scriptures give us glimpses of what Jesus is currently doing. According to the book of Psalms, Jesus was welcomed by angels when He entered heaven. Angels, elders, and the four living creatures worship Him in heaven. Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, is worthy to receive power, authority, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. There was a song of praise heard in heaven, as all creatures sang, "Blessing and honor, glory, and power be to Him who sits on the throne, forever and ever."

When the apostles received the Holy Spirit on earth, Jesus was installed as the High Priest and King of heaven. We do not know how His Father greeted Him after completing such a difficult mission. Both of them had sacrificed greatly. Jesus had spent 33 ½ years on earth speaking with His Father through prayer, and now He had returned home to heaven to meet Him face to face. We cannot fully understand divine matters, but we can discuss a few things as revealed by the Bible. We must avoid speculating about things that the Bible does not speak of. The book of Hebrews explains Jesus' work in heaven more

clearly than any other book. He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. After providing purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, becoming superior to the angels as the name He inherited is more excellent than theirs. He is the one who gives us rest for our souls and sets us free – Hebrews 4:9.

It is essential to read the Bible more about the Messiah because it tells us that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him. Indeed, we all need these treasures found in Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We must remain in Him and surrender to Him.

Stephen, in Acts 7, saw Jesus in a vision standing at the right hand of God the Father. Psalms 110:1 also speaks of this. Earthly priests stood and repeatedly offered many animal sacrifices that could never completely take away sins. But Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, died once for all to remove sin forever because He offered one perfect and eternal sacrifice.

Jesus has finished the work of offering Himself as a sacrifice for our salvation, and now He is in heaven as our High Priest, interceding for His followers. Jesus is greater than Moses, Joshua, Aaron, or any angel, and He offers us a superior priesthood and a better covenant. He holds a permanent priesthood because, unlike human priests who die, He lives forever. Because of this, He can save completely those who come to God through Him, for He always lives to intercede for them. Jesus did not only offer the greatest sacrifice for our salvation, but He also serves as our perfect High Priest, who mediates and reconciles us to God. He is all-powerful, so we have no reason to fear. His hand is not too short to save. He is Almighty, which is why He is called the Almighty God.

John wrote to the children, saying, "I am writing to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. John clearly states that humans commit sin, but if we confess our sins without making excuses, Jesus will intercede for us. Therefore, we should approach His throne with confidence to receive mercy and grace.

Paul says, "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Is it trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword? No! None of these can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus.

We have a Friend in heaven today – Jesus Christ. Jesus said that the Father does not judge anyone, but He has entrusted all judgment to the Son. Therefore, Jesus is both our Judge and our Advocate. As long as we maintain our faith and relationship with God through Jesus, we have no reason to fear. Why should we not fear judgment? Because Jesus died for us, He was resurrected, and now He is at the right hand of God, interceding for all who believe in Him as their High Priest. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for He has already borne our punishment.

It is important to understand that there is a judgment before we enter heaven. However, our High Priest is also our Judge and Advocate, meaning we are safe in Jesus. The Bible assures us that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. We have a Friend in heaven who answers our prayers. Since He became human, He understands our experiences and loves to answer the prayers of those who trust and rely on Him. He listens to the prayers of both children and adults. His intercessory work is the core of His ministry as our High Priest today.

Another work Jesus is doing in heaven is judgment. The Jews observed the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which was a day of judgment. In Daniel 7, it says: “I watched as thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a blazing fire, and its wheels were all aflame. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands served Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”

In human terms, when Jesus finishes His work of judgment, He will set aside His priestly robes and wear the garments of a victorious King. This scene of thrones and books being opened shows that judgment is a serious matter. God wants the world and all other created beings to know that He has done everything possible to address the problem of sin. The judgment in Daniel 7 concludes by stating that Jesus, the Son of Man, will be given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, and all peoples, nations, and languages will serve Him.

The purpose of judgment is not to keep people out of heaven but to bring as many as possible to Jesus so they may live with Him forever. Each person will be judged according to their deeds, which is why Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of My Father.”

One day, the door of mercy will close. Those who are unjust will remain unjust, and those who are holy will remain holy. Jesus is coming soon, bringing His

reward with Him to repay each person according to their work.

We have a powerful Advocate, so we should approach Him confidently through prayer to receive forgiveness and cleansing.

Questions:

1. How many years did Jesus live on earth?

2. What are the works of Jesus in heaven today?

3. Why should we not fear judgment?

4. Why should we be courageous?

5. What are you doing to prepare for judgment today?

6. Why should we fear and glorify God?

God bless you, child and youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Hebrews 4:14-16

[14-16] Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, we are grateful because You are our Creator, Friend, Brother, High Priest, Teacher, Father, and Redeemer.

Activity: Who is a Friend? Come together and hold hands.

Friendship Stories: Begin a story about friends, and let each student add a sentence to continue it, encouraging creativity and interactive storytelling about friendship.

Friendship Pledge: Read aloud the "Friendship Pledge."

DAY 292 (October 18)

TOPIC: Share the Story of Salvation in Three Minutes!



What is Salvation?
Now that we have finished the Gospels—the Good News for all of us, the children of Adam—can you tell the story of salvation in a few minutes to someone who does not know God or Jesus at all? It is important that you can. Through the resurrection of Jesus, we have received the forgiveness of sins. There is joy in heaven because people are being saved now through His death. That humanity can no longer be lost forever is a miracle worth telling for all eternity. People began to experience this gift from the cross on that very day—such as the thief crucified with Jesus and even the centurion.

Since you are now a disciple of Jesus, not just a follower, you must go and tell others. You are now an apostle of Jesus. Ask Him to give you His Spirit so

you can live a godly life and witness to others. A disciple or convert learns, but an apostle is sent to testify about God to others. When you meet people, tell them of the great things God has done—that is how you overcome Satan: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11).

Friend, do you know the way of salvation? Do you know that God exists and has a plan for everyone, including you? Do you know how to have peace with God in your heart? It is possible to have peace even in the troubles and struggles of this life. The answers to all your questions are found in God's Word. Do you know what happens when you die? Is it possible to live a life full of joy, peace, and contentment? Yes, it is possible, and the secret is in God's Word—it is not about being wealthy, highly intelligent, or talented!

The Word of God in Romans 3:23 says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It continues to say: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12). "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23). "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

To receive salvation, we must confess our sins and genuinely repent: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). We must confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead to be saved. You can live a happy, meaningful, and fulfilling life. Yes! You can know God personally; all the answers are in His Word. Now that you know these truths, go and tell others about the great things God has done for you—the precious story of salvation.

Tell them about God's plan after the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. Put your name in that promise: "For God so loved [your name] that He gave His only Son…"

Jesus took the punishment we deserved so that we could receive the righteousness and goodness we did not deserve. He died our death so that we might have eternal life—we are healed by His wounds.

Continue to grow in faith and obey His commandments: "We know that we

have come to know Him if we keep His commands" (1 John 2:3). Walk in the light and be born again through water and the Spirit—be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit to guide you in all things.

If you have taken these steps, the Lord bless you—you are now a child of God, born again. He who began a good work in you will complete it. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). Amen. He is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

If someone asks, "If Jesus comes today, will you be in heaven?" say, "Yes!"
If someone asks, "Are you saved?" say, "Yes!"
Continue reading His Word and living according to His teachings.

If you sin, confess it and return to the right path as the Scriptures instruct us.

If you share the story of salvation, some may ask, "What is the Holy Trinity?" Though the term is not found in Scripture, it refers to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—three persons in one God. We do not have three gods but one true God. Like a family with a father, mother, and child—each is distinct but together form one family.

Keep reading His Word, praying, and living according to His will. Maranatha—The Lord is coming again—soon!

Now answer God's call by saying, "I will go."

Key Text: John 3:17-19

[17-19] For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Prayer: Thank You Lord, for You have been merciful and tenderly compassionate to us. Help us to walk in Your way. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Compare the four Gospels and write down the unique features of each book.

DAY 293 (October 19)

TOPIC: Waiting for the Holy Spirit / Pentecost in Jerusalem

(Read: Luke 24, Acts 1 and 2)



Jesus instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and promised them they would receive power from above—the power of the Holy Spirit. As He led them to Bethany, He lifted His hands and blessed them. While blessing them, He departed from them and was taken up into heaven. They worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, continually praising God in the temple.

Although they did not know exactly what power they would receive, they remained united in prayer, humility, and love. They forgave each other and helped anyone in need.

Luke, the beloved physician, wrote the Book of Acts as a continuation of the Gospels. It records the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles—work that continues today through us.

Jesus instructed them to wait for the Holy Spirit's power to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Two men in white robes (angels) assured them that Jesus would return the same way He ascended.

In the upper room, Peter led the believers (about 120) to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. They prayed and cast lots, and Matthias was chosen.

The apostles went out preaching everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, confirming the message through signs and wonders.

Questions:

1. Why did the apostles cast lots?

2. What did the men in white robes say?

3. How did Luke write the Book of Acts?

4. How do the acts of the apostles continue today?

5. What is the difference between being chosen by lot and being ordained by laying on of hands?

6. Name the twelve apostles after Jesus ascended to heaven.

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 1:2-3

[2,3] Until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Dear Father, we thank You for the Holy Spirit who comes with all the gifts we need. Help us to receive power and go out into all the world. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Divide into two groups and rewrite together the works of the Holy Spirit.

DAY 294 (October 20)

TOPIC: Pentecost

(Acts 1)

Before going out to preach, the apostles spent ten days together, humbling themselves, asking each other for forgiveness, and seeking God's forgiveness for their unbelief in the Scriptures and prophecy. The word "Pentecost" means fifty days after Passover or after Jesus' resurrection. The disciples received the Holy Spirit, whom Almighty God had promised. Jesus appeared to them for forty days after His resurrection, and then ascended to heaven, and they received the Holy Spirit ten days after His ascension.

When the day of Pentecost had fully come, the disciples of Jesus, the twelve apostles, including Jesus' mother, His brothers, and other believers, were gathered in an upper room in one place. Suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, filling the entire house where they were sitting. There was a shaking, and this loud noise was heard by people outside. Then, tongues of fire appeared and rested on each one of them. Each person could see these tongues of fire on their companions' heads, making the house seem as if it was ablaze. They had been quietly praying, but everything changed. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them. The apostles could no longer remain inside – they went out and began to proclaim the story of Jesus, the cross, and salvation with joy.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit happened while believers from every region had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, giving many people the opportunity to witness this event. These people included Jews, devout men, and people from every nation under heaven. When they heard the sound of the rushing wind, they gathered in amazement because each one heard the 120 evangelists speaking in their own languages, which they recognized. The apostles were not speaking meaningless words but complete languages from different nations. The crowd, in astonishment, said, "Aren't these people all Galileans?" (Only Judas Iscariot was from outside Galilee.)

They asked, "How is it that each of us hears them in our native languages?" There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya near Cyrene, Romans, Cretans, Arabs – all heard the apostles speaking in their own tongues



about the mighty works of God. They were amazed and puzzled, asking each other, "What does this mean?" because languages from the east, west, north, and south were being spoken. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the gift of speaking in different languages to spread the Gospel. Even today, there are missionaries who, when they speak, are understood in the local language by miraculous means – like the Maori people in New Zealand who heard the Gospel in their own tongue.

Nowadays, people spend years studying languages like Chinese, which has over 100,000 characters, although about 200 are used daily. In comparison, Swahili uses only 24 letters. People invest time learning languages for business opportunities, especially in China. But the apostles did not need formal education to speak in other languages. As is human nature, some mocked and ridiculed them, saying they were drunk on new wine. Such mockery is often a way to avoid thinking deeply or making decisions about choosing Almighty God. Let us be careful never to treat the matters of God lightly.

Even children today know that a drunk person cannot speak a foreign language fluently and be understood by locals. If it were possible, people would drink alcohol to become instant translators. People say knowing Chinese guarantees employment because it is in high demand for business. If alcohol could grant language skills, everyone would drink to get jobs. Even the Chinese themselves, about 1.5 billion people, want to learn English because it is the second most spoken language worldwide.

The gift of speaking in tongues was given to the apostles so the Gospel could reach the whole world. At the Tower of Babel, languages were confused due to human rebellion, making communication difficult. But the Holy Spirit bridges this gap for the sake of the Gospel. Even today, some people have the gift of

learning languages easily or receive divine help to speak new languages to spread the Gospel. The promise of the Holy Spirit is still available to all of us. We cannot accomplish God's work without being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person (not a mere force), and when we pray, we must acknowledge this truth. One of the key focuses of Jesus' ministry was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Today, our cities are home to people of many languages and ethnic backgrounds – Europeans, Indians, Arabs, Jews, Chinese, Koreans, Turks, and others. Many of them do not know Christ. It is our responsibility to reach them however we can. Some are refugees, international students, or migrant workers. Scott Griswold's book "Reach the World," available online for free, encourages us to engage these communities (visit: ReachtheWorldNextDoor.com).

A friend from Turkey became a Christian while working as a tour guide. An African Christian visiting Turkey shared the Gospel with her while touring biblical sites like Mount Ararat (where Noah's Ark landed) and the seven churches of Revelation (Revelation 2 and 3). This Turkish woman later attended school with me in Michigan. In the United States, about 160 million tourists visit each year – nearly half the population – providing many opportunities to share the Gospel. Tanzania receives about 2 million visitors annually, giving you a chance to make a difference!

Business leaders like those from Honda in Japan, Chinese plastic manufacturers, and Indian IT experts often visit other countries. These visits are unique opportunities for Christians to share the Gospel. People in foreign lands are often more open and humble, willing to listen. God declared in Isaiah 56 that His house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Even in nations hostile to Christianity, where people have been martyred for their faith, there are visitors who travel abroad. These travelers, while in other countries, can encounter Christians and hear the Gospel. Would you want these people to miss out on eternal life? Millions still worship ancestral spirits or follow religions like Hinduism, Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Others are secular or follow no religion at all.

Pray for these people and ask the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Pray for government leaders to open doors for the Gospel. Psalm 67 tells us that God desires to bring salvation to all nations. Imagine if others knew how to find eternal life and did not share it with you – how would you feel? The Gospel is the ultimate cure for sin, leading to eternal life. Let us pray daily to grow spiritually and help others know the truth.

We must be united in faith, following God's Word as our guide. JESUS IS LORD, AND HIS WORD IS THE LIGHT FOR EVERYONE.

The Holy Spirit does not need to appear as tongues of fire to be present. Although we cannot see Him, His work is visible. He is always present, 24/7. John 16 tells us the Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Teacher, guiding us in faith and helping us pray. He convicts us of sin, leading us to repentance. No one can live a faithful life without the Holy Spirit. We must allow Him to lead our lives.

Joel's prophecy says that in the last days, God will pour out His Spirit like rain. Even in our weakness, God will empower us to do great things. Today, people from China and India – one-third of the world's population – are coming to Africa for business. Many of them do not know the God of heaven. Let us reach out to them, for their salvation matters to God. With the Holy Spirit's help, start sharing the Gospel with your friends and peers.

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 1:7-11

[7-11] "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven that You will return again to take us, just as You went up into heaven. Lord, we are waiting for You; help us to do what You commanded and to tell others the good news as we wait for You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Go outside, look at the clouds, and retell the story of Jesus' ascension.

DAY 295 (October 21)

TOPIC: Peter's Sermon

(Acts 2)

As people were amazed, Peter stood up boldly, raised his voice, and told the whole story of salvation. He said, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you. It is not as you suppose; we are not drunk, for it is only the third hour of the day (9:00 AM). But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'I will pour out My Spirit on all people; your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Wonders in the heavens will be shown— the sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood— before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

This was God's promise to them, to us, and to our children today. Peter spoke about Jesus of Nazareth, how He performed miracles and wonders, how He was crucified, and how God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death. David saw the Messiah before him, exalted to the right hand of God. "Therefore," Peter declared, "let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

When the people heard Peter's bold preaching, they were cut to the heart because they were involved in Jesus' death. Even Pilate, the Roman governor, was surprised by their determination for Jesus to be crucified. They had lived sinful lives like all humans, but they knew it was time to repent sincerely, and they were convicted.

Peter preached without a notebook, a microphone, or a projector, but people's hearts were changed. The people asked the apostles, "What shall we do, brothers?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you, your children, and all who are far off— for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Peter continued to testify and warn them, urging them to save themselves from this corrupt generation. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 people were added to their number that day. It is possible



this number only counted the men. This was the seed of the first Christian church. Some who had not believed in Jesus during His life now turned to Him after His death and resurrection. As Jesus said, “When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to Myself.”

People began to be drawn to Jesus— even today, we are drawn to Him. Jesus, who loves us and died for us on the cross and rose again, still has the power to forgive our sins and help us live holy lives. The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold their possessions and goods and shared with anyone in need. No one was left wanting. Every day, they continued meeting together in the temple courts, broke bread in their homes, and ate together with glad and sincere hearts— without deceit, hatred, envy, or pride— praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

As Jesus said, “My brothers and sisters are those who obey My teachings,” so these followers became brothers and sisters in Christ. Believers became family to each other. This did not mean Jesus wanted us to neglect our biological families— far from it. Long before Jesus was born, God commanded, “Honor your father and mother.” Jesus wants us to love and respect our parents and family members.

Parents and children live together for a time, but eventually, children grow up and become independent, continuing their own lives. If their relationship remains good, they support each other through joys and struggles. In the family of God, believers encourage and help each other in the same way. Sometimes, the spiritual family in Christ can be even closer than biological relatives.

Noah had a family like this— though he could not save others, he saved his family because they listened to him and worked together in obedience to God. This is the best example. However, if you did not have a godly family when you were born, do not lose hope— through faith in Jesus Christ, you gain a spiritual family with countless brothers and sisters.

We must remember that loving our families should not interfere with our obedience to God. All people are created by God, making us all part of His family, and through Christ’s sacrifice, we are redeemed by His precious blood.

The book of Acts fills my heart with joy and anticipation more than any other book in the Bible. It gives a clear picture of the great outpouring of the final rain. Luke, the historian, wrote Acts while traveling with Paul. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His followers a crucial key to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus instructed His disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the Father's promise:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Christ has given us the Great Commission to take the Gospel to the whole world. Yet, in our zeal, we sometimes commit the sin of omission— failing to do what we should. We must confess our sins and seek unity. The Word of God urges us to always kneel in prayer for His strength.

I want Jesus to return today, but even if He does not come during my lifetime, one thing is certain— He will return. One day, He will come back to take His people home, and that truth should motivate us to prepare the world for His coming. This world will not last forever— one day, it will end.

Wherever we are on this earth, let us prepare the world for His return. There is no greater mission than this! God says, "Take hold of My strength and make peace with Me; yes, make peace with Me."

God will help us, but we must not isolate ourselves. Our light must shine so that people may see God through us. While the enemy plays games with people's lives, we must not lay down our oars— instead, we must row against the current with determination. Sometimes, the wind will blow against us, but we must persevere.

In the life to come, the mysteries and troubles that frustrated or discouraged us will be revealed. We will understand that our prayers, which seemed unanswered, were among the greatest blessings we received.

Questions:

1. What did Peter say in his sermon?

2. Why were the people pierced to the heart?

3. Why did the apostles continue in teaching and fellowship?
4. How can someone today remain steadfast in God's teachings while being

in fellowship?

5. What important lesson do the apostles teach us about joining the fellowship?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 2:17-21

[17-21] "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. … The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

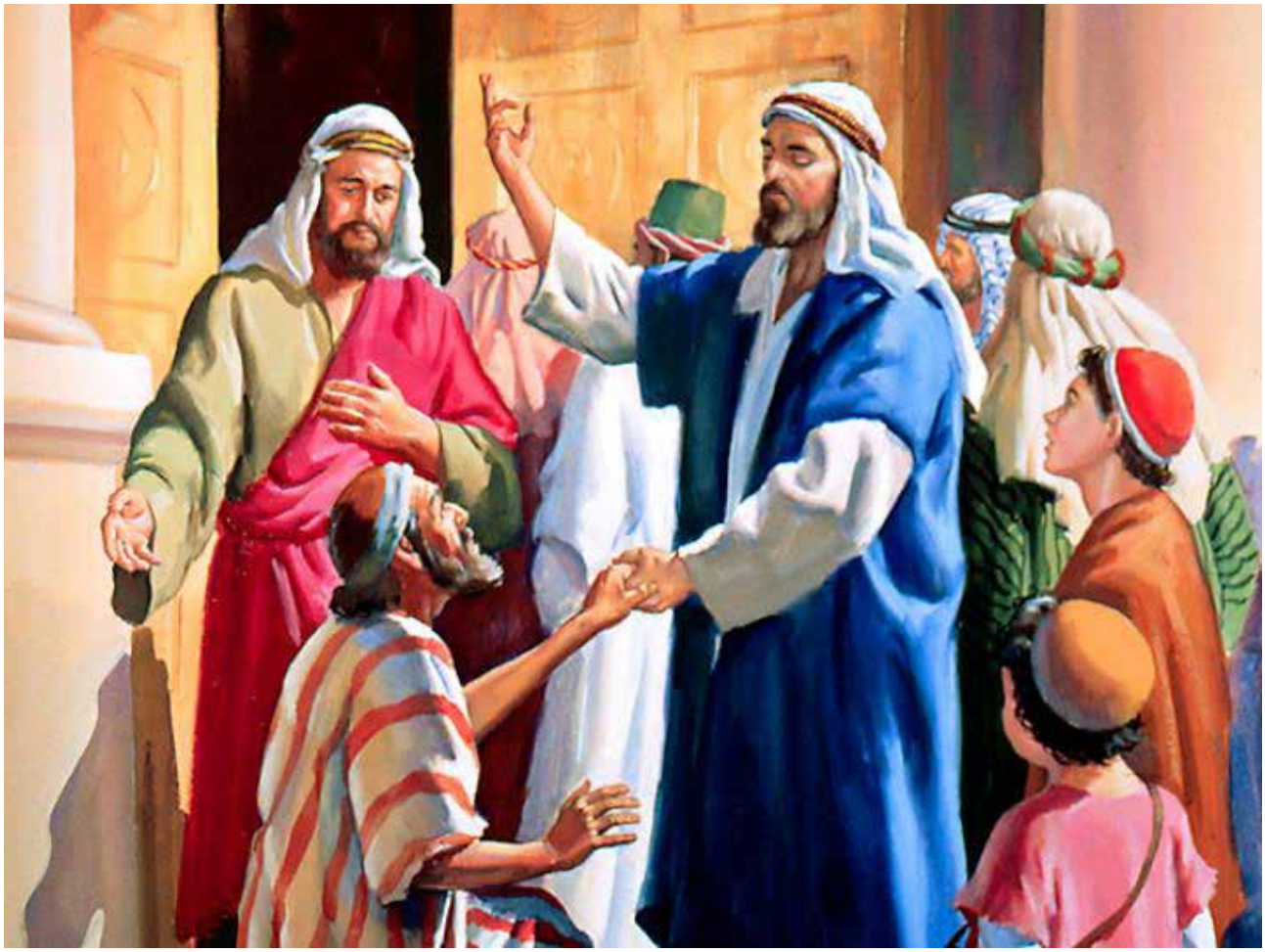
Prayer: Beloved Father in heaven, thank You for Your Holy Spirit whom You promised would come to us. We pray that He may enter our lives and bring revival and reformation. Help us to prepare for Your coming. Thank You for giving visions and dreams. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Explain to children who the Holy Spirit is, and that He cannot be seen with the eyes—like the wind in John 3. You can place a piece of paper where there is wind so the children can visualize it. Sing together a song about the Holy Spirit.

DAY 296. (October 22)

TOPIC: The Lame Man Jumps.

(Acts 3)



Besides speaking many different languages and being renowned preachers, the apostles were also given the power to heal—meaning they were more than just doctors. They also cast out demons and performed various other miracles. Many people were empowered to continue the work of Jesus. This work has also been entrusted to us today—you and me—because Paul, Peter, and John are no longer here. We have been handed the torch, and we must run with it through God's power.

One day, at three in the afternoon, Peter and John went up to the temple to pray. There was a man who had been lame from birth. He was carried daily and placed at the temple gate called Beautiful, where he would beg for money from those entering the temple. In many of our cities, we have seen people like this and labeled them as beggars.

When this man saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us!” The man gave them his attention, expecting to receive something. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!” Taking him by the right hand, Peter helped him up, and immediately the man’s feet and ankles became strong.

He jumped to his feet, began to walk, and entered the temple courts with them, walking and jumping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God and recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people ran to them in astonishment at the place called Solomon’s Colonnade, for they had known him since childhood. Perhaps his relatives carried him and placed him in a public spot to beg for money.

Peter addressed the crowd, saying, “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified His servant Jesus. You handed Him over to be killed, and you disowned Him before Pilate, though he had decided to let Him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised Him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through Him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.”

Peter continued, “Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that His Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you. Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from their people.’”

Peter reminded them that God had told Abraham, “Through your offspring, all peoples on earth will be blessed.” When God raised up Jesus, He sent Him first to the Israelites to bless them by turning each of them from their wicked ways.

Even today, we are called to preach the good news of healing and salvation to all people. The message is clear: “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7).

This message is even more vital today than it was during the apostles’ time, and nothing should distract us from it. We are called to proclaim the message of the first angel flying in midair, who has the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth (Revelation 14:6). The angel urges everyone to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the Creator of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water (verse 7).

These verses remind us that humanity originates from God—the Creator—and not from any evolutionary process. Those of us who believe in His Word hold onto the everlasting gospel, a timeless, essential message that meets the needs of every age.

We are also called to share the second angel’s message found in Revelation 14:8: “Fallen is Babylon!” This message urges true followers of God to reject any form of worship and beliefs that are not based on the Word of God. It calls us to leave behind all human-made doctrines not founded on the Scriptures or the Spirit of Prophecy. Later, the angel in Revelation 18:4 commands, “Come out of her, my people,” urging us not to participate in her sins or receive her plagues.

The third angel’s message connects with the first angel’s call to worship God and the second angel’s call to separate from false worship. However, this third message delivers the most solemn warning:

“If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath” (Revelation 14:9-10).

This message draws a clear line between those who worship the beast and receive his mark and those who worship God and bear His seal. It is written, “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep His commands and remain faithful to Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

This is the message we must proclaim now—with great power and urgency. We must not let human theories or deceptions cloud this divine truth. As we pray today, let us ask God to strengthen our worship so that we may boldly proclaim His final message to a dying world. Let us remember—we all have a reason to leap and praise God! We have a Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. We

have been redeemed! We have the hope of eternal life!

Be encouraged, my friends. Don't look down. Don't focus only on your troubles. Lift your head today. Seek Jesus. Look up—He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Let us walk, leap, and praise God as that lame man did! What do you say?

Prayer:
Our Creator God, King of the Universe, we humbly come into Your presence. You alone are our God—worthy of our praise, worship, and lives surrendered to Your will. You are wonderful, good, and powerful. Fulfill Your promise, and fill us with the Holy Spirit so that our lives may reflect Your perfect love. Manifest Yourself through us.

We know we live in the hour of Your judgment. Thank You for the assurance of salvation through the righteousness of Christ. Help us live lives of service and mission, honoring You in all things. Despite the effects of sin, we still see the beauty of Your creation. We exist because of You. Thank You for sharing Your life with us and calling us into eternal fellowship with You.

In Your glorious name, Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why was healing the lame man more important than giving him silver or gold?

2. The Jews acted in ignorance—are we also acting unknowingly?

3. Why did people stare at Peter?

4. Through which name alone is salvation found?

5. Are we sharing the Word of Life with others?

6. Do you believe in God's miracles?

7. What does the third angel's message say?

8. How can you recognize false worship?

9. Do you read the Scriptures daily?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 3:4-7

Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.

Activity: Role-play with three people: the lame man, Peter, and John. Act out the healing and the man leaping with joy.

DAY 297 – (October 23)

TOPIC: The Apostles Are Imprisoned for the First Time

(Acts 4)

While preaching, the priests—many of whom were Sadducees—and the captain of the temple approached the apostles, feeling disturbed because they were teaching about the resurrection of the dead. They arrested the apostles and put them in prison until the next morning, as it was already evening. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection or angels. The Gospel is the good news about Jesus dying for us and rising again as our High Priest to intercede on our behalf. The Sadducees opposed this Gospel because of their beliefs. However, later, some other priests came to believe.

Even though the apostles were arrested, many people had already heard the Word, and about 5,000 men believed in Jesus. The next morning, the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law gathered in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others from the high priest's family questioned them, asking, "By what power or in whose name do you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke to them boldly and respectfully, saying:

"Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame, know this—you and all the people of Israel—that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Peter repeatedly had the opportunity to testify about the Lord. God gave them many platforms to share the Gospel. Even today, God gives us opportunities—let us pray to recognize and use them. You don't need to attend a seminary to share your faith. As a layperson, you can pray, study the Scriptures, and you will be amazed at how many people you can reach. However, if you feel called to attend seminary and become a pastor to teach others, that is a noble thing.



Jesus is the way to heaven—without Him, no one can be saved. He is the truth—without Him, we live in lies. He is the life—without Him, there is no eternal life. The Sadducees and priests thought their traditions were the truth, but they were wrong. We can only find the way, the truth, and the life by being united in His love. By believing in and following Jesus and His teachings, we will have joy and peace, even when things go wrong.

When the priests, Sadducees, and elders saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished. They recognized that these men had been with Jesus. Jesus gave them wisdom and ability. Even today, if you want to excel in your studies, make wise decisions, be innovative, and live harmoniously with others, spend time with God. You will learn valuable lessons. Even those with the highest academic qualifications may lack the wisdom that comes from God, which even a child can possess.

Seeing the healed man standing with Peter and John was undeniable proof, leaving the religious leaders speechless. They debated how to punish them because all of Jerusalem had witnessed the miracle. Unable to deny the truth, they warned Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. However, Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to Him? We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

After further threats, they released them, finding no basis for punishment because all the people were praising God for the miracle—especially since the healed man had been lame for over 40 years.

Upon their release, Peter and John reported everything to the believers. Together, they prayed, saying:

"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against His Anointed One."

They asked God to consider the threats and grant them boldness to speak His Word, performing healings, signs, and wonders through the name of Jesus. After they prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the Word of God boldly.

The believers were united in heart and mind. No one claimed private ownership of any possessions; instead, they shared everything. With great power, the apostles testified to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's grace was

powerfully at work among them. There were no needy persons among them because those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money, and placed it at the apostles' feet for distribution according to need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (meaning "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. Barnabas was known for his kindness, humor, and generosity. Today, "sons of encouragement" are needed everywhere—at school, home, work, and in the community—to lift others up.

Each of us has the gift of time—let's use it to speak words of healing and hope rather than words that harm. Barnabas gave from his heart. In the Bible, there are tithes and offerings. The Psalmist asks, "What shall I return to the Lord for all His goodness to me?" (Psalm 116). Recognizing that God owns everything, he vowed to fulfill his promises and proclaim God's deeds as an act of gratitude.

A tithe is 10% of one's income, while offerings are any additional gifts given to God. Studies show that 90% of people's wealth is not in liquid cash but in assets like houses and property. Barnabas was generous not for personal glory but to support God's work. Offerings can be given in gratitude, to help the poor, for blessings, or for health.

Reading Scripture, praying, singing, and giving are acts of worship. When God blesses us, we should not come to worship empty-handed if we have the means. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If you keep all your wealth at home, your mind will always focus there. Instead, we should invest in heavenly things.

When we entrust our resources to Jesus, it deepens our love for Him and for others. Our finances can do much good. Jesus spoke more about money and possessions than any other topic. One out of every six verses in Matthew, Mark, and Luke refers to money. The Gospel is the good news that God can free us from the misuse of and love for money. Let us give while we are healthy, not just leave gifts after we are gone.

Our offerings reflect our commitment to God. Generosity reveals and strengthens our love for Him. When giving, remember the sacrifice Jesus made for you. Giving is an act of worship. Whether through time, money, or talents, our giving expresses gratitude for God's gifts.

In Prayer, We Feel the Presence of Jesus
If we keep the Lord before us and allow our hearts to thank and praise Him,

we will be renewed spiritually. Our prayers will become a conversation with God, just as we speak with a friend. He will reveal His mysteries to us, and the joy of His presence will fill our hearts.

Questions:

1. Through which name can we find salvation?

2. How united were the believers?

3. How old was the lame man?

4. Why were the apostles bold and wise despite their lack of formal education?

5. Why is it important to give offerings when we have income?

6. How can someone become a “son of encouragement”?

7. What are the purposes of offerings?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 4:11-12

[11,12] Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

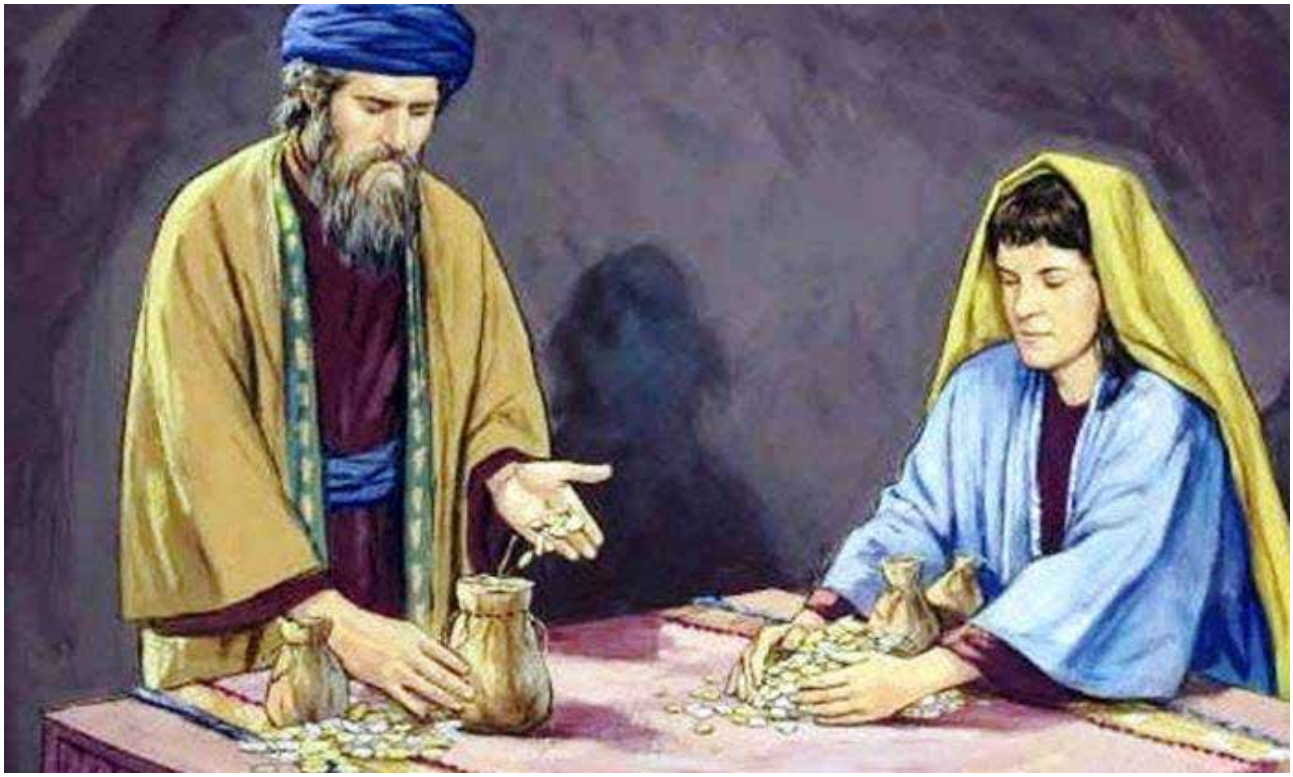
Prayer: Lord, You are great and exalted in heaven and on earth. Help us to give You the honor and glory You deserve as our Creator and Savior. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Song Suggestion: All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name (Psalter Hymnal, 1987).

DAY 298. (October 24)

TOPIC: Ananias and Sapphira.

(Acts 5)



The apostles did not force anyone to bring or sell their property, but the believers recognized that it would be helpful to share and support the preaching of the good news so that every creature could hear it. Those who had been rejected and cast out by their families or employers also benefited from the fellowship of believers. The believers were happy to do this; no one commanded them. This unity caused God's work to spread like wildfire because of their selflessness. This fellowship supported everyone in need, ensuring no one went hungry, lacked clothing, or had no place to sleep. Offering one's property was a voluntary vow to God, not to humans.

A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira were part of this fellowship. They sold their property and vowed to give everything to help spread the gospel. However, they secretly kept part of the proceeds and brought the rest to the apostles out of greed and a desire for status and praise. Ananias came first, laid the money at the apostles' feet, and claimed he had brought everything. This problem often arises when someone wants to appear generous but lacks

true kindness in their heart. Those who gave their property relied on the fellowship to meet their needs.

Ananias and his wife wanted to benefit from both sides—keeping part of the money for themselves while gaining recognition for giving everything. They wanted to be famous for their generosity while secretly keeping some of the proceeds. Through the Holy Spirit, Peter was made aware of their deception. Without knowing that the Spirit had revealed the truth, Ananias was asked by Peter, “Is this the full amount you received for the land?” Ananias replied, “Yes.”

Peter answered him, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land? Wasn’t the land yours before you sold it? And after selling it, wasn’t the money yours to use as you wished? Why did you lie not to us but to God?” When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Great fear seized all who heard about it. The young men arose, wrapped his body in a cloth, took him out, and buried him—perhaps without his family’s knowledge.

About three hours later, his wife Sapphira came in, unaware of what had happened and not realizing she was now a widow. Peter asked her, “Tell me, did you sell the land for this amount?” She answered, “Yes, for that amount.” Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.” At that moment, she fell at his feet and died. When the young men came in and found her dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Their children must have been deeply saddened, perhaps learning the lesson that lying to God brings severe consequences. Even today, we must be faithful in returning tithe, giving offerings, and fulfilling the vows we make to God. God is not to be mocked—whatever a person sows, they will also reap. You cannot plant weeds and expect to harvest beans.

Great fear seized the entire church and everyone who heard about these events. This fear helped people avoid lying to God. They realized that a person could die from lying—not by sword or spear, but by divine judgment. Ananias and Sapphira were driven by greed, thinking they were giving too much, so they withheld some and lied. They planned to use the hidden money for fine clothes and luxurious things. They conspired together in wrongdoing. Even today, it is wrong for a husband and wife, or parents and children, to agree on dishonest actions.

The unity Jesus spoke about is unity in doing good. Ananias and Sapphira thought Peter would thank them for their contribution, not realizing they were offending God. It is likely that Peter was warned by the Holy Spirit about their deception.

God empowered the apostles to perform many miracles and heal the sick. Believers gathered to pray in Solomon's Colonnade near the temple. The Jewish leaders did not dare to interfere with the apostles out of fear, though the apostles were highly respected by the people. The Lord added many men and women to the number of believers. Peter healed people in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and even those possessed by evil spirits were delivered.

The church was founded by Christ, who chose its first leaders (Mark 3:14). Christ loves His church as a groom loves his bride. When Peter spoke to Ananias and Sapphira, he did so as a representative of the church. In times of persecution, the church often meets privately, like bees in a hive working together. But here, Peter and the apostles acted openly, leading the church and working to strengthen it. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that Ananias and Sapphira were frauds.
What is the church?
The Bible uses many metaphors to describe the church: a holy nation, a covenant people, the body of Christ, God's family, the household of faith, the bride of Christ, and a royal priesthood. A local church refers to a gathering of people.

But what does all this mean? What is the church?
The church is a group of Christian believers. It is a living entity that Christ Himself gives spiritual life to, which cannot be fully defined by human words. Above all, the church is built on Christ and exists to serve people. It is not an institution for itself but for its people.

The word "church" sometimes means "called-out ones," signifying people separated from the world but united in fellowship. Christianity is a relationship, not isolation. The church is not the building where people gather but the people themselves. Christians are called out of the world to learn to love God and love one another.

We must pray for the Holy Spirit as the disciples did at Pentecost. Our hearts must be cleansed from every impurity to be filled with the Spirit. It was through confessing and forsaking sin, praying earnestly, and dedicating themselves fully to God that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The same work—on a greater scale—must be done today.

Questions:

1. Why are the vows or promises we make to God important?

2. How did Peter know about the lies of Ananias and Sapphira?

3. Why did great fear seize the whole church?

4. Why did people bring out their sick and lay them on mats?

5. Do you want to be a Barnabas—a son of encouragement—or an Ananias and Sapphira—children of discouragement?

6. What do you think the death of Ananias and Sapphira taught the people?

7. For how many hours was Sapphira a widow?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 5:3-4

[3,4] Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven, help us to always speak the truth, never lying to God or to people. Protect us from the evil one who leads us into sin. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Teach about tithe and offerings, and about faithfulness in giving. Take pieces of paper and make about 100 one-shilling notes. Teach children how to give tithe, regular offerings, and special vow offerings.

DAY 299 (October 25)

TOPIC: The Apostles Are Imprisoned Twice

(Acts 5)

The high priest and his fellow priests, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy because they did not believe in the resurrection or angels. Out of envy, they arrested the apostles and put them in prison. However, during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, brought them out, and instructed them, "Go, stand in the temple courts and tell the people the full message of this new life." At daybreak, the apostles entered the temple and began to teach.

The high priest and the Sanhedrin council gathered to decide what to do with the apostles. But when they sent for the prisoners, the guards found the jail securely locked with the guards standing at the doors, but no one inside. This caused confusion and concern about what might happen next. Traditionally, the elders of Israel, including the Sanhedrin, were 71 in number.

The events involving the Pharisees and Sadducees are written for our instruction as we live in the end times. When we commit ourselves to the Lord's work by obeying His Word, He will use us to complete His mission, even when circumstances seem hopeless. Moreover, He will transform our hearts, making us pure, holy, and joyful in His service. We will not be mere wage workers or laypeople with political agendas.

Let us wake up and free ourselves from the enemy's grasp. Let us put on the full armor of God so that we may fight diligently against the cunning adversary who roams around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Yet, he does not always roar—when he fulfills his purpose most effectively, he lowers his voice and whispers gently, appearing as an angel of light. Humans have little knowledge of his cunning schemes and evil secrets, but only the Lord can help us in this spiritual battle.

Those who enjoy gossiping and spreading others' faults should also awaken and examine their own hearts. Let us read the Bible and approach God in earnest prayer. We should ask Him to reveal our own hearts, to help us understand our weaknesses, our sins, and our foolishness in the light of eternity. Let us seek the Lord's guidance to know where we stand before Him. These are the prayers we ought to offer when we face opposition like the early church did.

While the high priest and the captain of the temple were wondering what would become of the situation, someone came and reported, “The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people!” The high priest ordered the captain and the temple guards to arrest the apostles again, but carefully, fearing that the people might stone them. Many had already recognized the priests’ deceit and had come to believe in Jesus, the Messiah.

When the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin, the high priest said, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” Peter and the apostles boldly replied, “We must obey God rather than men!” He continued, “The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging Him on a cross. God exalted Him to His right hand as Prince and Savior to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

When the council heard this, they were furious and wanted to put the apostles to death. However, a respected Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law honored by all the people, stood up in the council and advised, “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.”

He gave examples of previous uprisings:

1. Theudas, who claimed to be someone important, and about 400 men followed him. But he was killed, and all his followers were scattered and came to nothing.

2. Judas the Galilean, who led a revolt during the time of the census when Jesus was born, also perished, and his followers were dispersed.

Gamaliel concluded, “Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them—you may even find yourselves fighting against God.”

The council was persuaded by his words. They called the apostles back, flogged them, and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus before releasing them. Though the beatings were painful, the apostles left the council rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. They continued to teach and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ every day, both in the temple and from house to house.

Indeed, we are not only called to believe in Christ but also to suffer for His sake. We are instructed to "consider it pure joy when we face trials of many kinds, because the testing of our faith produces perseverance." Let perseverance finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Jesus is coming very soon. Let us hold firmly to what we have, so that no one may take our crown. Suffering is painful and is often caused by anger, hatred, jealousy, and rage. Many countries today—especially in Asia and parts of West Africa—have severe persecution against believers, such as North Korea and Somalia.

If you are being persecuted, pray and ask God to give you strength and wisdom to do what is right. Seek counsel from wise believers. The Lord constantly reminds us through the gospel to pray without ceasing. The Bible contains thousands of promises about how to endure and overcome suffering. Study the Scriptures daily because God's answers are always found in the Bible and through prayer.

Remember to trust in the Lord with all your heart during times of sorrow and never lose hope. We must also forgive and even pray for our enemies. Our present sufferings are temporary, but our eternal rewards await us in God's heavenly kingdom. Let us persevere in faith and pray for one another.

Christian homes should be a light to the world. From them, morning and evening prayers should rise to God like sweet-smelling incense. Just as dew falls silently at dawn, so will the Lord's mercy and blessings descend upon those who pray.

Questions:

1. Why were the apostles imprisoned?
2. What advice did Gamaliel give?
3. Why must we obey God rather than men?
4. What is the Sanhedrin?
5. Why did the priests dislike hearing that they were responsible for Jesus' death?
6. What should we do during times of persecution?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 6:2-4

[2-4] So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven for the ministry of deacons, which supports the leadership of the local church and allows ministers to have time for Scripture study, counsel, and prayer. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: The lesson is focused on service and choosing helpers. You can use a ball or another object to toss to someone while saying, "I choose you to do …." You can also involve

DAY 300 (October 26)

TOPIC: The Persecution and Martyrdom of Stephen

(Acts 6)



During those days, the number of believers increased significantly, creating a need for administrative structure and leadership. As any growing organization requires systems and governance, the early church faced challenges. Disputes arose between the Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists) and the native Hebrews because the Hellenist widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. This neglect, possibly due to language barriers or discrimination, caused tension among the believers. Initially, there had been trust among them, but now suspicion and dissatisfaction began to emerge. The essential needs of the people—such as food, care for the sick, and other forms of support—were being neglected.

The apostles gathered the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

The primary mission of the church is to proclaim the message of salvation

to everyone. This should be the foremost duty of every Christian. Activities such as cleaning, cooking, farming, working, collecting firewood, or lighting fires should come after spreading the gospel. The church's second duty is to care for those in need—the poor, widows, orphans, strangers, the sick, and prisoners, while also maintaining the church environment. The role of deacons is administrative, helping to ensure the gospel continues to advance.

The proposal pleased the whole group, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, along with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, who was a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them, blessing them for this special ministry. Since that time, the laying on of hands has continued as a sign of God's blessing upon those called to serve in ministry.

The Word of God spread rapidly, and even many Jewish priests came to believe in Jesus Christ. This was encouraging because, although Jesus Himself had not witnessed these conversions during His ministry, His death and resurrection became a powerful message that drew people to Him. As Jesus had said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself."

Another prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled through the apostles' work as the Holy Spirit empowered them to perform even greater works. Stephen did not limit himself to the administrative duties of a deacon. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he preached boldly and performed great wonders and signs among the people. However, opposition arose from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including Jews from Cyrene (Libya), Alexandria (Egypt), Cilicia, and Asia. They argued with Stephen, but the wisdom and Spirit by which he spoke were irresistible.

Since they could not defeat him through debate, they resorted to false accusations. They secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." This stirred up the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council.

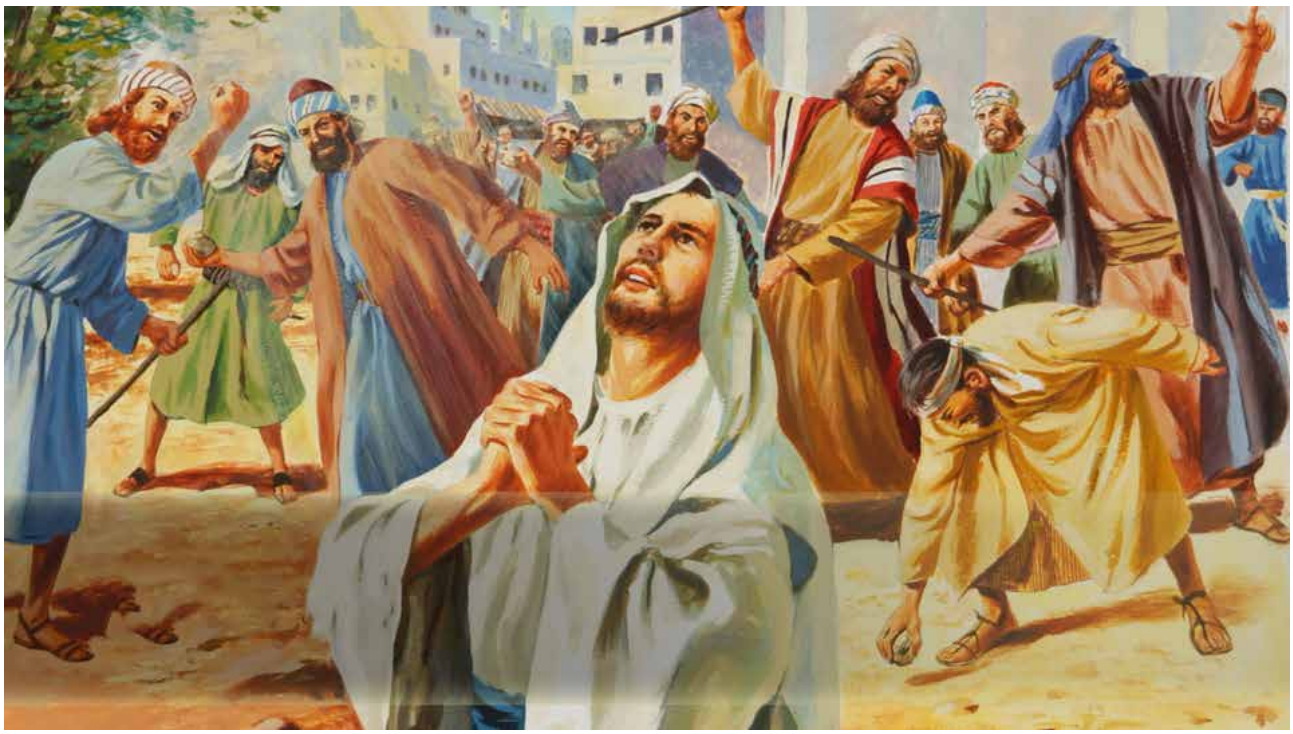
They produced false witnesses who testified, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the law. We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." As all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, they saw that his face was like the face of an angel, reflecting the glory of God due to his unwavering faith.

The high priest asked Stephen if these charges were true. In response, Stephen began a detailed defense, recounting the history of Israel. He started with Abraham's calling in 2091 B.C., when God commanded him to leave his homeland of Ur in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and go to Canaan (modern-day Israel). Stephen spoke about Isaac (born in 2066 B.C.), Jacob (born in 2006 B.C.), and Joseph (sold into slavery around 1885 B.C.). He also described Moses' life from his birth in 1570 B.C. until God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt in 1446 B.C.

Stephen emphasized that Moses had foretold the coming of a prophet like himself—Jesus Christ. He explained how their ancestors had rejected Moses, just as they were now rejecting Christ. Stephen accused them, saying, "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You always resist the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors did. Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him—you who have received the law given through angels but have not obeyed it."

When the Sanhedrin heard these words, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

At this, they covered their ears, yelled at the top of their voices, and rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, following the Jewish law to avoid defiling the temple. Even though they valued their



physical temple, they failed to understand that God's primary temple is the human heart.

As Stephen was being stoned, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were killing him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep (died). Saul approved of Stephen's execution and soon became a leader of the persecution against the early church in Jerusalem.

Stephen's example of faithfulness, even unto death, remains a model for all believers. While some people curse others in their dying moments, Stephen chose to bless and forgive. We must learn to bless others rather than curse them. This is especially important for evangelists and parents.

Today, we should be grateful for our freedom to worship, unlike Stephen's time when believers faced death for their faith. The right to freedom of religion means that we should advocate for truth with love, without resorting to violence. Jesus did not command us to kill those who oppose us; rather, we are called to be patient and loving.

Questions:

1. Why are deacons needed in the church today?

2. Name the seven original deacons.

3. What qualities did Stephen possess?

4. How did Stephen get the opportunity to witness about Christ?

5. Why did people kill Stephen?

6. What is the primary mission of the church?

7. Why did Stephen forgive his persecutors instead of being angry?

8. Since our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, in what way did Stephen's killers already defile the temple?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 9:1

[1] Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. But those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven that You always use everything for good, even when bad things happen, like the death of Stephen. We pray that You help us to walk according to Your plan. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Gather a group, and let each person with their Bible scatter to different spots to preach to others sitting aside, just as the disciples scattered after the death of Stephen.

DAY 301 (October 27)

TOPIC: Saul Persecutes the Saints and the Church

(Acts 8)



Because of the persecution of Christians, believers began to scatter to the lands of Judea, Egypt, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Caesarea, and Samaria. However, the apostles remained in Jerusalem. People buried Stephen with great mourning. Everything had been going well for these new Christians until the killing of Stephen. Believers faced many hardships, but God also performed many miracles to protect them.

The chief priests did not want this new faith that Christ brought because they saw that the old system was not helping people. To prevent Christianity from spreading, they sought ways to persecute these believers. A man named Saul, who was a member of the Jewish council, entered people's homes and dragged believers—both men and women—throwing them into prison, thinking he was serving God.

During those days, the children of believers suffered because their parents were imprisoned and tortured. However, many who fled to other towns continued to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. The Jews made a mistake by thinking that since they had killed Jesus, the gospel would fail. In fact, the more they persecuted and killed Christians, the more it became a seed that caused many to believe and become even bolder.

This pattern is common in religious persecution. We saw the same thing happen in Uganda and Rwanda—after persecution, there was a spiritual awakening and revival as many people embraced God's work with great zeal.

Philip, who had started serving as a deacon, went to Samaria and preached Christ. The people were eager to listen to him, and miracles happened through him. Evil spirits came out of many who were possessed, and they cried out in loud voices. The lame and the blind were healed, and great joy filled the city of Samaria.

The same people who had once rejected Jesus and refused to welcome Him into their village were now ready to receive His Word. Truly, we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him—those who have been called according to His purpose.

A man named Simon the sorcerer lived in Samaria and earned money through the magic he performed, claiming to be someone great. People, both young and old, followed him. But when Philip came preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, many believed and were baptized—both men and women. This baptism is recorded as the first one outside the land of Judea.

Even Simon himself claimed to believe and was baptized. When he saw the signs and miracles being performed, he was amazed and desired to have that power too because he realized that his magical abilities were weak compared to the power of Philip.

We must understand that Satan's power can never compare to God's power because Satan is merely a created being.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers to receive the Holy Spirit, because although they had been baptized in the name of Jesus, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, asking to receive the same power so that anyone he laid hands on would receive the Holy Spirit. Poor Simon—he did not even understand who the Holy Spirit truly is.

Peter rebuked him, saying, "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that He may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart."

Simon had to repent because he was envious of the gifts God had given to the apostles. However, God does not accept bribes—no one can buy the Holy Spirit with money. Simon replied, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

The apostles and Philip continued preaching the gospel in many villages in Samaria.

The Lord said, "I will also do the thing that you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

Even the prophet Moses did not stop pleading with God. Every prayer he made was answered, but he still had a deep desire for a greater sign of God's favor. Finally, he made a request that no human had ever made before: "Please, show me Your glory."

Questions:

1. Why did the early believers scatter?

2. Why was the scattering of believers a blessing in some ways?

3. What work did Philip do in the village of Samaria?

4. Why did Peter rebuke Simon?

5. Why is it a sin to be envious of the gifts of others?

6. Why can't the Holy Spirit be bought?

May God bless you, child and youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 8:30-32

[30-32] Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for reaching people of every nation, like the Ethiopian who met Philip. Bring us also to meet people of other nations and help us to share the story of the good news. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make a scroll using paper. Then let the children or youth sit in a circle and pass the scroll around. Each one should look at it as though reading it. Write on it the passage from Isaiah 53.

DAY 302 (October 28)

TOPIC: Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

(Acts 8, Isaiah 53)



While Philip continued his work in Samaria, an angel of the LORD told him to go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is a desert road. Without questioning or arguing, he obeyed. As he traveled, he saw a man from Ethiopia who had journeyed over 1500 kilometers to worship in Jerusalem. This man was a eunuch and a high official in charge of the treasury for Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. These Ethiopians had known the God of Heaven and the Old Testament for many years.

The Ethiopian eunuch was returning to his country, seated in a luxurious chariot, reading from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go closer to the chariot. Philip ran up and heard the man reading aloud from Isaiah. Philip asked him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The eunuch replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” He invited Philip to sit with him in the chariot.

The passage the eunuch was reading was from Isaiah 53, which speaks about the suffering of Jesus and the sacrifice He made as the Lamb of God to take

away our sins. It says, “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth.” (Please read this chapter in your Bible!)

The eunuch asked Philip, “Who is the prophet talking about—himself or someone else?” Eager to understand, the eunuch listened as Philip explained the Scriptures. Philip taught him how the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus—His birth, His death for our sins, His resurrection, and His promise to return. Philip also explained the steps to becoming a believer in Jesus, including the importance of baptism, as Jesus had taught Nicodemus about being born of water and the Spirit.

As the chariot continued on, they came to a place where there was water. The eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What prevents me from being baptized right now?” Philip replied, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and my Savior.” Filled with love for Jesus and a desire to follow Him completely, the eunuch ordered the chariot to stop.

They both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again but went on his way rejoicing as the first African missionary, sharing the Good News in his homeland.

Philip, the same man who met the eunuch, had four daughters who prophesied by the power of the Holy Spirit. Even today, some people are baptized after reading the Scriptures at home, but they may need guidance in areas they do not understand. It is good for someone to be thoroughly taught the Scriptures before being baptized. Often, they are asked questions to ensure they understand what they have been taught.

Topics covered in Bible lessons include:

- Why the Bible is the Word of God and should be trusted
- Who Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are
- How to understand the Bible
- The judgment day
- Prophecies in Daniel 2
- How Jesus will return
- The great prophecies of the Bible
- God’s love and the truth about hellfire
- The unpardonable sin
- How to find peace in your heart

- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Achieving economic success, and more.

Meanwhile, Saul continued to increase his persecution of the saints, threatening and even killing the Lord's disciples. One day, he approached the high priest for letters of authority to go to Damascus and arrest any followers of Jesus he found and bring them back to Jerusalem. Saul, a Pharisee, became the greatest enemy of the Christians, and everyone feared him.

Questions:

1. Can someone be both a deacon and an evangelist?

2. How did Philip meet the eunuch?

3. What did the Ethiopian eunuch say to Philip when they met?

4. Why did the eunuch return home rejoicing?

5. Why did Saul go to Damascus, Syria?

6. What is the Gospel?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 8:30-32

[30-32] Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for reaching people of every nation, like the Ethiopian who met Philip. Bring us also to meet people of other nations and help us to share the story of the good news. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make a scroll using paper. Then let the children or youth sit in a circle and pass the scroll around. Each one should look at it as though reading it. Write on it the passage from Isaiah 53.

DAY 303 (October 29)

TOPIC: Saul Encounters Jesus

(Acts 9)



Young Saul was a Pharisee with an extreme and fanatical zeal filled with hatred. He traveled north to Damascus in Syria, about 200 kilometers away, to capture the saints there and bring them back to Jerusalem to persecute and destroy them. The journey took several days, and as he and his companions neared the city, suddenly a bright light, as intense as lightning, shone around him from heaven, and they all stood still.

Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” In confusion, Saul asked, “Who are You, Lord?” The voice answered, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

The men traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. When Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, he could

not see anything—he was blind. Stumbling and unable to proceed with the threats and violence he had planned, his companions led him by the hand to Damascus.

During those three days without sight, food, or drink, Saul reflected humbly on his wrongdoing. His energy and zeal, once used for evil, transformed into a passion for serving Jesus. Saul had time to reflect and realize that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. Before this, he had done terrible things, believing he was serving God. Both the Jews and the Christians were curious to understand what had happened to him.

In Damascus, there was a disciple of Jesus named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, and Ananias answered, “Here I am, Lord.” The Lord instructed him, “Arise and go to Straight Street and inquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul of Tarsus. He is praying and has seen in a vision that a man named Ananias will come and lay hands on him so that he may regain his sight.”

However, Ananias, knowing how dangerous Saul was, replied, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man and all the harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. He has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name.”

But the Lord reassured him, “Go, for he is My chosen instrument to carry My name before Gentiles, kings, and the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Ananias obeyed and went to the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He stood up, was baptized, ate some food, and regained his strength.

From that time on, those who had known him began calling him by his Roman name, Paul, meaning “small” or “humble.” Paul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for several days and began to preach boldly in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t this the man who caused havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to arrest them and take them to the chief priests?”

Paul grew stronger in his preaching through the power of the Holy Spirit, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. The Jews who debated



with him could not refute his words. The former enemy had become a brother in Christ as soon as his spiritual eyes were opened. Those he had once persecuted were now his fellow believers.

The Jews in Damascus, unable to accept his conversion, conspired to kill him. They kept watch at the city gates day and night to capture him, but Paul learned of their plan. With growing hatred against him, the Lord directed Paul to go to the desert of Arabia for three years, where He personally taught him. There, Paul had time to study the Scriptures, pray, and grow spiritually without interference.

Afterward, Paul returned to Damascus to continue preaching. The Jewish leaders' hatred intensified, forcing his disciples to lower him in a basket through an opening in the city wall to escape. Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles, a bold champion spreading the gospel to the early church.

He undertook four extensive missionary journeys across regions, even though there were no modern means of travel like cars or planes—he traveled on foot and by boat.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, they were afraid and did not believe he was truly a follower of Christ. However, Barnabas,

known as the “Son of Encouragement,” befriended Paul and introduced him to the apostles. He explained how Paul had encountered the Lord on the road and how boldly he had preached in Damascus.

The apostles accepted Paul as one of their own, and he moved freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He debated with the Hellenistic Jews, who also tried to kill him. When the believers learned of this, they took him to Caesarea and sent him to his hometown of Tarsus.

Paul continued his ministry, supporting himself by making tents, and spread the gospel to other regions of the world. Despite his education at the finest universities of his time and possibly holding a high position in the Sanhedrin council, Paul counted all his worldly achievements as worthless compared to knowing Christ.

The church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria experienced peace, was strengthened, and grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, Peter traveled through the region and came to Lydda, where he found a man named Aeneas who had been bedridden for eight years due to paralysis. Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed.” Immediately, Aeneas stood up, and all who lived in Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah—who had been taken up—appeared as bearers of light and glory from the Father to the Son. In that moment, the ancient request of Moses to see the promised land was fulfilled. He stood on that “good mountain” in the land of Israel, bearing witness to Jesus, the fulfillment of all divine promises.

Questions:

1. Why is God displeased with hypocritical religion, hatred, or harming others?

2. Why did Saul go to Damascus?

3. How was Saul converted?

4. Why was Paul lowered in a basket?

5. What was Aeneas’ condition?

6. Why did Paul go to Arabia for three years?

7. How can we persecute Christ today?

8. How can you be a chosen instrument today?

9. What are people called who travel to other countries to preach?

10. Why did Ananias obey the voice of God?

11. If you heard God's voice calling you today, would you respond like Saul?

12. How do you value earthly things compared to heavenly matters? (Philippians 3:8)

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 9:4-6

[4-6] He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" "Who are You, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," He replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Prayer: Thank You Lord, for showing Your power to change even the hardest of hearts, as You did with Saul. Help us to follow Your voice when You call us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Explain how God's power has changed even very bad people. Pair children, and blindfold one safely while the other leads them. This illustrates Saul's blindness on the road to Damascus and how Jesus showed him the right way, bringing him to a new path of sight.

DAY 304. (October 30)

TOPIC: Tabitha or Dorcas, the Kind Woman, is Raised to Life.

(Acts 10)



Near Joppa, there was a devout woman who was a disciple of Jesus, named Tabitha or Dorcas, which means "gazelle." She was full of good works and acts of charity. It is possible that Tabitha was gentle like a gazelle and quick to help those in need, showing compassion and providing comfort to others. There are many ways to assist people—offering hospitality to strangers, sewing clothes for orphans, cleaning the homes of the elderly, caring for the sick in hospitals, visiting those in prison, comforting a lonely widow, helping a blind person cross the road, or teaching someone to read. Tabitha did these acts with kindness, a cheerful spirit, and love.

The church valued her greatly, and anyone in need would turn to her for help. We do not know what illness she had—whether it was an infection or a chronic disease—but she became seriously sick and died. After washing her body, they laid it in an upper room. At that time, and even today, it was common for Jews to bury the dead on the same day.

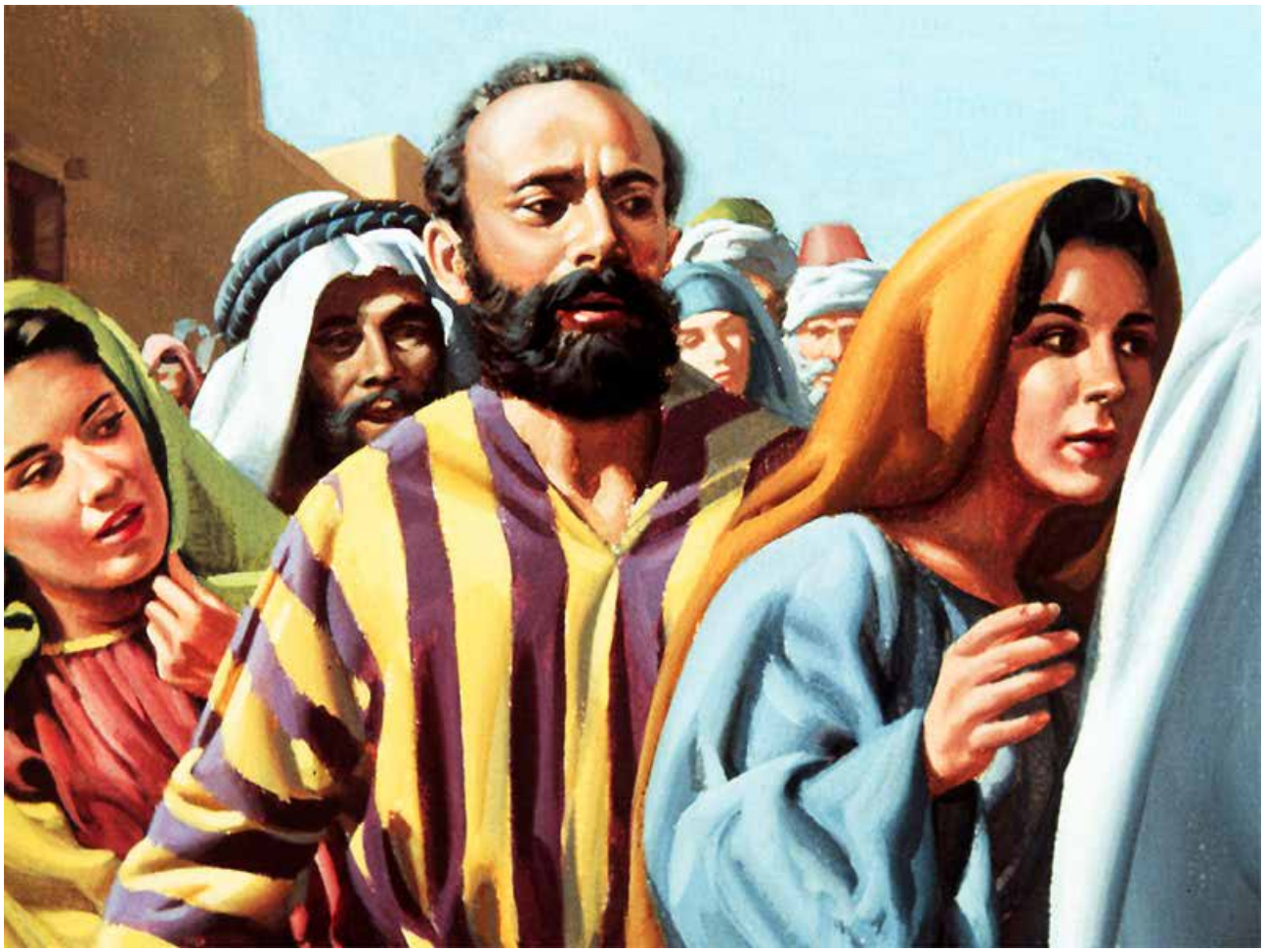
Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, upon hearing that Peter was nearby, sent two men to urge him to come quickly. When Peter arrived, he was led upstairs where the widows stood weeping. They showed him the tunics and garments that Dorcas had made for them while she was alive.

Peter asked everyone to leave the room. Then, kneeling down, he prayed.

Turning to the dead body, he said, “Tabitha, arise!” She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. She was surprised to see this famous apostle beside her. Peter gave her his hand, helped her stand up, and called the saints and widows to present her alive.

This miracle became known throughout Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for several days with Simon, a tanner. Tabitha, with her spirit of service, did not sit idly by after being raised; she continued to care for and serve others.

The people were overjoyed because their helper, “Lady Gazelle,” was alive again to continue her ministry. Indeed, serving others is a great blessing. Today’s lesson teaches us not to be lazy or waste our time playing all day, expecting others to serve us. Even if we have household workers, we should still learn to serve others and use our resources to help those in need.



Peter had compassion for the widows and the poor and wanted to assist them. The early church was filled with the good news of Jesus Christ. The miracles and signs performed by the apostles through the power Jesus gave them were real. Even today, we are given that same power to do the works of Jesus. As we approach the second coming of Jesus, we will see even greater signs, for

the Holy Spirit will be poured out abundantly.

Hannah was a Woman of Prayer.
Hannah did not blame her husband for their difficult marriage situation. Instead, she took her sorrow, which she could not share with any earthly friend, to her Heavenly Father and sought comfort from Him, who said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.” There is great power in prayer.

Our greatest enemy, Satan, constantly tries to separate troubled hearts from God. Yet, the humble prayer of a saint is more frightening to Satan than the decrees of earthly rulers or the commands of kings.

Questions:

1. What does the name Tabitha mean?

2. Why did people love Tabitha?

3. What did Peter say to Tabitha?

4. What kind of service do you think you can begin to do?

5. What did people say when they saw Tabitha alive again?

6. Why do we feel joy and encouragement when we do good deeds for others?

May God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 19:17

[17] Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done.

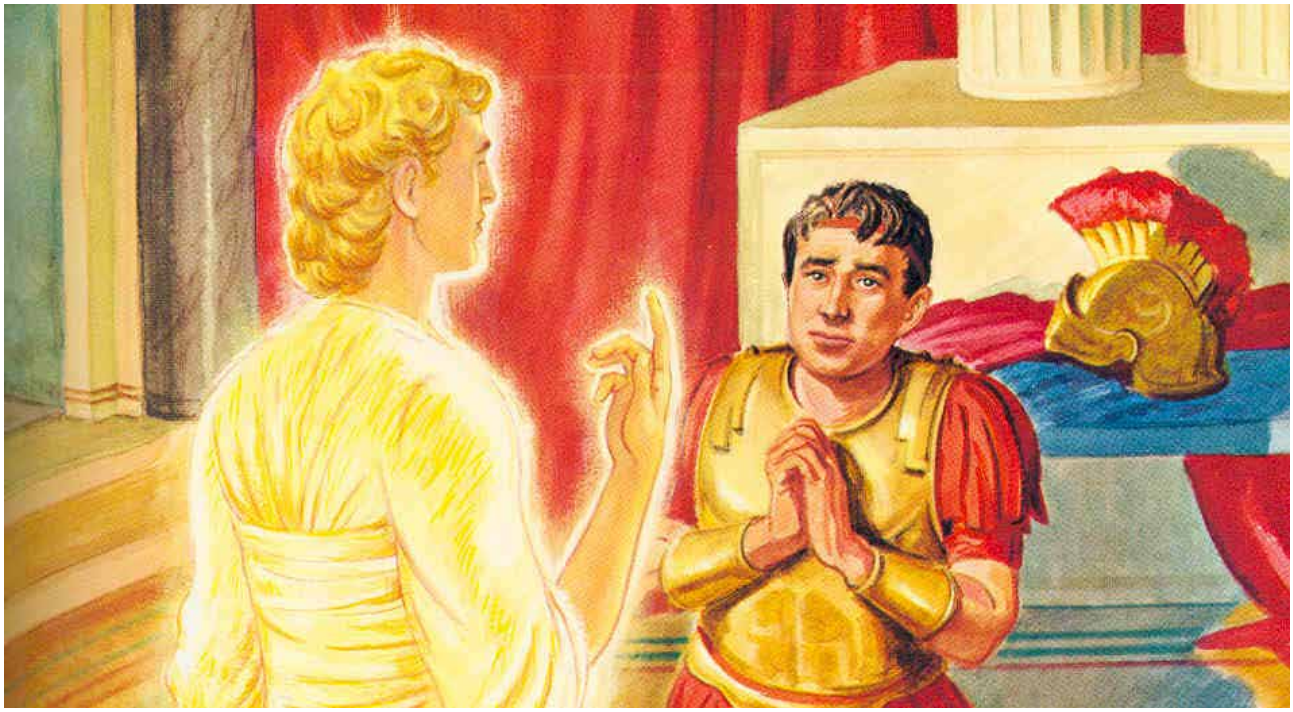
Prayer: Thank You Father in heaven. Help us to care for the poor, widows, orphans, and those in need. We thank You today for providing us with food, clothing, shelter, and all our needs. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Involve children in blessing others by collecting items and distributing them to those in need. Use scissors and paper to cut out different shapes of clothing, etc.

DAY 305 (October 31)

TOPIC: Cornelius of the Gentiles – His Prayers Were Heard

(Acts 10)



There was a man in Caesarea of Rome named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Regiment. Today, our armies would call him a captain. Unlike the Romans who worshipped idols, he was a devout and God-fearing man along with his entire household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed to God regularly. One day, at about three in the afternoon, he had a clear vision. An angel of God came to him and called, "Cornelius!"

Cornelius stared at the angel in fear and asked, "What is it, Lord?" The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. He has not forgotten you. Surely, God pays attention to your prayers and offerings!"

Our possessions, time, and the entertainment we engage in reflect the condition of our hearts. Just as we saw with the widow who gave two small coins and was commended, here we see a soldier receiving encouragement. Many people in the military serve the God of heaven, which is why the army has a chaplaincy to minister to them. Soldiers who defend their countries

while upholding justice often live out the Bible verse: ‘Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’ (John 15:13)

The angel continued and instructed Cornelius to send men to Joppa to bring back Simon, who is called Peter. Peter was staying as a guest with Simon the tanner, whose house was by the sea. The angel departed, and Cornelius immediately called two of his household servants and a devout soldier who attended him regularly. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

They traveled overnight, covering approximately 45 kilometers. Around noon the next day, as they approached the city, Peter went up on the rooftop to pray. He became very hungry and wanted something to eat. While the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

In his vision, Peter saw heaven open and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals—creatures like octopuses, crabs, rats, dogs, snakes, donkeys, turtles, ostriches, pigs, snails, bears, kangaroos, hippopotamuses, elephants, rabbits, and others. He also saw reptiles and birds such as owls, eagles, crows, bats, millipedes, and more.

A voice said to him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

Knowing that these animals were considered unclean, Peter replied, “Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

This happened three times, and then the sheet was taken back to heaven.

Peter was puzzled, wondering what the vision meant. At that very moment, the men sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon’s house, asking if Peter was staying there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

Peter went down and said to them, “I am the one you are looking for. Why have you come?”

They replied, “Cornelius the centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man who is respected by all the Jewish people, was directed by a holy angel to invite



you to his house so that he may hear what you have to say."

Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day, Peter set out with them, accompanied by six other brothers from Joppa. The following day, they arrived in Caesarea, where Cornelius was expecting them. He had gathered his relatives and close friends to hear the message.

It is a good thing to invite your family and friends to hear the good news of the Gospel so that they may not perish but have eternal life. Often, we think loving our family means only providing for their physical needs, but this is a mistake. The greatest need of every person is to know Jesus and have eternal life.

Can you walk 10 kilometers in a day? Start practicing—it will help you as a missionary of the Lord to be active and not lazy!

When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

As he talked with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them, "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

Cornelius explained what had happened. "Three days ago, at this exact hour—three in the afternoon—I was in my house praying. Suddenly, a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been remembered before God.' He told me to send for you, Simon Peter, who is staying by the sea at Simon the tanner's house. I immediately sent for you, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

These people were eager and ready to listen and obey God's will.

Nehemiah's Prayers Were Strengthened by a Firm Purpose
There is a need for Nehemiah-like figures in the church today—not just people who can pray and preach, but those whose prayers and sermons are reinforced by a firm and passionate purpose.

Questions to Consider:

1. What did the angel say to Cornelius?

2. What vision did Peter have?

3. Why do angels refuse to be worshipped?

4. What should we do for God to hear our prayers?

5. How did Peter learn that God is not only for one nation?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 10:4

[4] Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God."

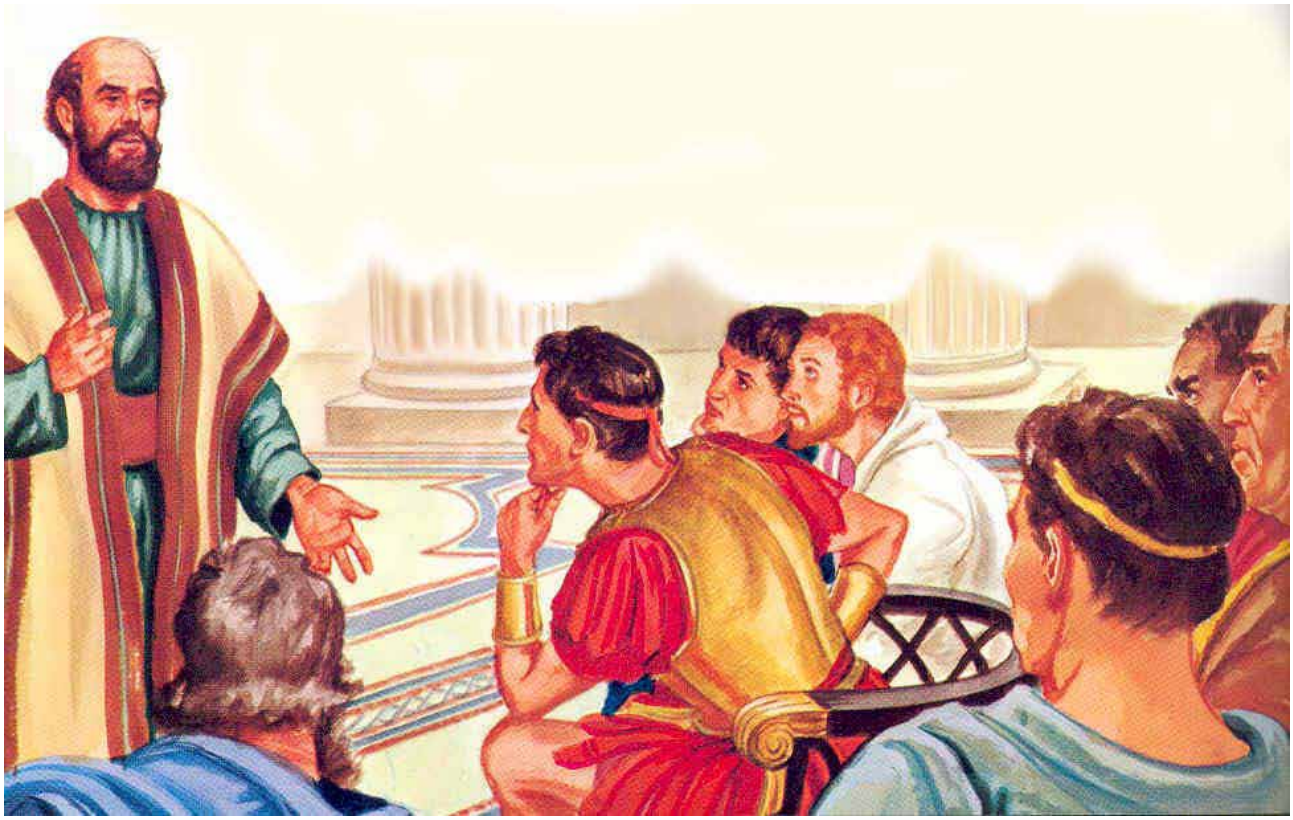
Prayer: Thank You so much Father for bringing us people of different ranks and positions to reach. Help us to share the gospel with the wealthy, the powerful, and those in high positions, for You also reached people of every kind. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Discuss how the gospel can reach wealthy people, those with influence, or leaders in government or even in houses of worship.

DAY 306 (November 1)

TOPIC: Truly, God Shows No Favoritism

(Acts 10)



Then Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly, I understand that God shows no favoritism, but in every nation, anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him." He spoke about the word that God sent to the people of Israel, preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.

Peter said they were witnesses who saw, heard, and touched Him. They lived with Him for three and a half years, and the Jews in Jerusalem killed Him by hanging Him on a tree. He died, but God raised Him on the third day and allowed Him to be seen—not by all the people but by witnesses chosen by God, like Peter and others. These witnesses ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. Peter said that Jesus commanded them to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to judge the living

and the dead. All the prophets testify about Him, and through His name, everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the message. The Jewish believers who had come with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. They heard them speaking in different tongues and praising God. Indeed, God is for all people—not just for a particular tribe, nation, race, family, or language. Peter said, “Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

So, he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay with them for a few days after the baptism. The apostles and other Jewish believers heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him, saying, “You entered the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.” Peter explained everything to them from the beginning—his vision, his journey, his meeting with Cornelius, and how the Holy Spirit was poured out, even enabling them to speak in tongues.
Peter then recalled how his Master, John the Baptist, had baptized with water for repentance, but they were given the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He concluded by asking, “If God gave them the same gift He gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?” When the Jewish believers heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to the Gentiles, God has granted repentance that leads to life.” The belief that a Gentile could not enter a Jew’s house or receive God’s Spirit was destroyed.

Peter was a devout believer who had never eaten unclean animals like bears, lions, pigs, crabs, rats, cats, or donkeys. While he was a disciple of Jesus, he observed that Jesus and the other disciples did not eat such things, which is why he was puzzled by the vision. But when he was called to the Gentiles, he realized that God’s message was not about eating unhealthy animals, but about extending love and sharing the good news of the kingdom with Romans and all people so they would not perish but have eternal life.

At creation, God gave humanity plants for food (Genesis 1:29). After sin and the flood, vegetation was scarce, and God allowed Noah and his family to eat clean animals that would not harm their health, with specific instructions on how to use them. Noah did not eat unclean animals on the ark—if he had, those species would not exist today because there were only two of each. Even for clean animals, there were restrictions—God commanded that they should not eat fat or blood (Leviticus 11).

Every morning, take time to begin your day with prayer. Do not think of it as wasting time—it is time invested for eternity. This practice brings success and spiritual victory. Your body will respond to the touch of the Great Master. Seeking God's blessing is worthwhile, and no work can be done properly without a right beginning.

Questions:

1. What does it mean that God shows no favoritism?

2. What would happen if God were as partial as humans?

3. Why were the Jews amazed when the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles?

4. Why were the Gentiles baptized after believing in Christ?

5. Why did Peter refuse to oppose God?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 10:34-36

[34-36] Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."

Prayer: Thank You Lord in heaven. Surely You do not show favoritism, You love everyone regardless of their nation. Help us to preach the good news to all nations. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Bring toys or pictures of animals such as dogs, crocodiles, lions, goats, and other clean and unclean animals. One person asks another if they should eat a certain animal, and the other answers yes or no based on whether it is clean or unclean. You may also draw clean and unclean animals.

DAY 307 (November 2)

TOPIC: Peter is freed from prison by an Angel

(Acts 11-12)

The believers who were scattered after the persecution following Stephen's martyrdom continued to travel to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Cyrene, and other places, preaching the Word of God—but only to the Jews. They remained united and supportive of one another, ensuring that no one was in need or faced hardship without help. However, the Jews who thought the desire to preach Jesus would fade continued to persecute the new believers and disciples of Jesus, with hearts hardened like stone and eyes blinded to the truth. The hand of God continued to sustain these new Christians, and even those who once thought believing in Jesus was madness joined them.

When people from the islands of Cyprus and Cyrene arrived in Antioch, Syria, they boldly shared the Good News with the Greek-speaking Jews. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people turned to the Lord. News of these happenings reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas (Barsabbas), the "son of encouragement," to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God transforming people and bringing many to faith, he encouraged them to remain faithful to the Lord with all their hearts.

Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and through his work, many people were brought to the Lord. He then went to Tarsus to find Saul and brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met with the church and taught many people. This marked the beginning of a long partnership between Paul and Barnabas, working together among people from various nations. Seeing the love and dedication of Barnabas and Paul as they preached Christ, the people of Antioch began calling the followers of Jesus "Christians" for the first time, meaning followers of Jesus Christ. Today, as followers of Jesus Christ, we imitate His character and walk in His footsteps.

It was in Antioch that the Greek word "Christos" began to be used, meaning "Messiah" in Hebrew. This term signifies the Anointed One or God's Chosen One. Even today, we are called Christians when we accept and believe in Jesus as the Lord who died on the cross for our salvation and rose again. We cannot be true Christians without following Christ with all our hearts—He is the foundation and cornerstone of our faith. In the past, many did not know Him, but He came, lived among people, and revealed Himself. Even today,



some do not know Him. Let us, with love and compassion, share these truths with others because eternal life comes from knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent (John 17:3). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and everyone is given a measure of faith. When we genuinely love people, we do not want them to be lost on Judgment Day.

During that time, prophets went to Antioch, and one of them, named Agabus, stood up and foretold by the Holy Spirit that a severe famine would strike the entire Roman world. This happened during the reign of Emperor Claudius. The disciples, each according to their ability, decided to send help to the believers living in Judea, and they sent their gifts through Barnabas and Saul.

Around that time, King Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great (who killed the children in Bethlehem) and the nephew of Herod Antipas (who beheaded John the Baptist), began to persecute some members of the church. He ordered the execution of James, the brother of John—one of the "Sons of Thunder"—by the sword. This occurred about ten years after Jesus' ascension. When Herod saw that the Jewish leaders were pleased, he continued to persecute the believers and arrested Peter during the Passover festival, intending to present him to the people and execute him afterward.

Peter was imprisoned, guarded by four squads of soldiers. As Peter lay asleep between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with sentries guarding the prison doors, the church earnestly prayed to God for him. The night before Herod planned to bring him to trial, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. The angel struck Peter on the side, woke him up, and said, "Quick, get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists. The angel instructed him to dress, put on his sandals, and follow him.

Peter followed the angel, not realizing that what was happening was real—he thought he was having a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened by itself. They went through, and the angel suddenly left him. Realizing what had happened, Peter said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent His angel to rescue me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were expecting."

Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many believers were gathered in prayer. When he knocked at the door, a servant girl named Rhoda answered. Recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she ran back to tell the others, forgetting to open the door. The believers, although praying for Peter's release, did not believe her, saying, "You are out of your mind." Others thought it was Peter's angel. Peter continued knocking,



and when they opened the door, they were astonished. He motioned for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison.

The next morning, there was great confusion among the soldiers about Peter's disappearance. Herod, after searching and failing to find Peter, ordered the guards to be executed. Peter left Judea and stayed elsewhere to continue preaching.

Later, Herod quarreled with the people of Tyre and Sidon, who depended on him for food. On the appointed day, Herod dressed in royal robes and delivered a public address. The people shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man!" Because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. Despite persecution, the Word of God continued to spread and flourish.

When following Christ, if you keep your eyes on Him, the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will feel His presence, knowing that He sees your every intention. At every step, you should humbly ask, "Does this please Jesus? Does it glorify God?" Morning and evening prayers should ascend to God for His guidance and blessings. True prayer relies on the Almighty and brings victory. A Christian on their knees gains strength to overcome temptations.

Questions:

1. What is the work of the church?

2. How do you know if your church is fulfilling its mission?

3. How did Peter escape from prison?

4. Who was the first apostle to die for Christ?

5. Why did Herod's stomach decay?

6. What should you do if people praise you like they praised Herod?

7. Why did Herod kill the apostle James?

8. How can we avoid "stomach decay" today?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 10:34-36

[34-36] Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."

Prayer: Thank You Lord in heaven. Surely You do not show favoritism, You love everyone regardless of their nation. Help us to preach the good news to all nations. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Bring toys or pictures of animals such as dogs, crocodiles, lions, goats, and other clean and unclean animals. One person asks another if they should eat a certain animal, and the other answers yes or no based on whether it is clean or unclean. You may also draw clean and unclean animals.

DAY 308 (November 3)

TOPIC: The Jews Reject the Gospel, Christianity Goes to the Gentiles.

(Acts 13-14)

When Barnabas and Saul finished their ministry, they returned to Jerusalem. From there, they took John Mark and went to Antioch, approximately 350 kilometers away, where they were sent as the first missionaries. In Antioch, there were Christian prophets and teachers, including Barnabas, Simeon called Niger (a black man), Lucius of Cyrene (a North African from Libya), Manaen (who was brought up with King Herod), and Paul.

While they worshiped and fasted, the Holy Spirit instructed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work He had called them to do. The believers laid hands on them and sent them off. Laying hands symbolized asking God to give them special blessings for His work and showed the church's support for their mission. Led by the Spirit, they traveled to Seleucia and then to the island of Cyprus. In Salamis, they preached in Jewish synagogues, accompanied by John Mark.

Travel during those days was difficult—there were no trains, cars, airplanes, or fast ships. The apostles walked on foot and sailed on boats to spread the gospel to many. Paul undertook three major missionary journeys, visiting various cities (see the map), with a fourth journey taking him to Rome.

During their missionary work, the apostles faced many hardships because Satan uses anyone willing to hinder God's work. When they reached Paphos, they encountered a false Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus (or Elymas). This man was an attendant of the local governor, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. The governor invited Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God and be saved, but Bar-Jesus opposed them, trying to prevent the governor from believing and distorting the message.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul stared at Bar-Jesus and said, "You are full of deceit and trickery, a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! Will you never stop perverting the straight paths of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately, Bar-Jesus became blind and needed someone to lead him by the hand. Seeing this, the governor believed and was amazed at the



teachings about the Lord.

From this point in the book of Acts, Saul began to be called Paul, a name he retained throughout his ministry.

Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia. At this point, John Mark, weary from the hardships of unpaid missionary work, the dangers, and the suffering, left them and returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued to Antioch in Pisidia, where they entered the synagogue on the Sabbath.

After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers invited them to speak if they had any encouraging message for the people. Paul stood up and began to speak, explaining that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He recounted the history of Israel, mentioning the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the exodus from Egypt, and the forty years in the wilderness.

He described how God defeated seven nations in Canaan, giving the Israelites their land after 430 years, and how God provided judges until the prophet Samuel. Then, Israel demanded a king, and God gave them Saul, followed by David, a man after God's own heart who fulfilled His will. Paul emphasized that Jesus, a descendant of David, is the Savior God promised.

Paul further explained how John the Baptist prepared the way by preaching a baptism of repentance and that the people of Jerusalem and their leaders failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Although Pilate found no fault in Him, they condemned Him to death and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead on the third day, and He appeared to many witnesses over forty days.

Paul declared that through Jesus, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed and that everyone who believes in Him is justified—a righteousness the Law of Moses could not provide. He warned them not to reject the message, quoting Habakkuk 1:5, which says, "Look, you scoffers, and be amazed and perish, for I am doing something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you."

The people were so moved that they invited Paul and Barnabas to speak again the following Sabbath. On that day, almost the entire city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. While many Gentiles and God-fearing converts believed, some Jews became jealous and opposed Paul's message, speaking abusively against him.

Paul and Barnabas boldly declared, “We had to speak the word of God to you first. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

The Gentiles rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and many who were appointed for eternal life believed. However, some Jews stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, expelling them from the region. The apostles shook the dust from their feet as a testimony against them and moved on to Iconium. Despite the opposition, the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Take time each day for prayer
Those who put on the full armor of God, pray regularly, and study the Scriptures will be connected with heaven and have an influence that leads others to salvation. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, and clear understanding of truth and duty toward God will become theirs. They will long for purity of heart, light, love, and the grace of heaven. Their earnest prayers will reach the throne of God, and they will experience His divine presence.

Questions:

1. Why did Bar-Jesus become blind?

2. Why were Paul and Barnabas set apart by the laying on of hands?

3. Why did the apostles shake the dust from their feet?

4. What lesson can we learn from John Mark?

5. Why did Paul frequently recount the history of the Jews?

6. Why did the believers send Barnabas to Antioch?

God bless you, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 13:47-49

[47-49] For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

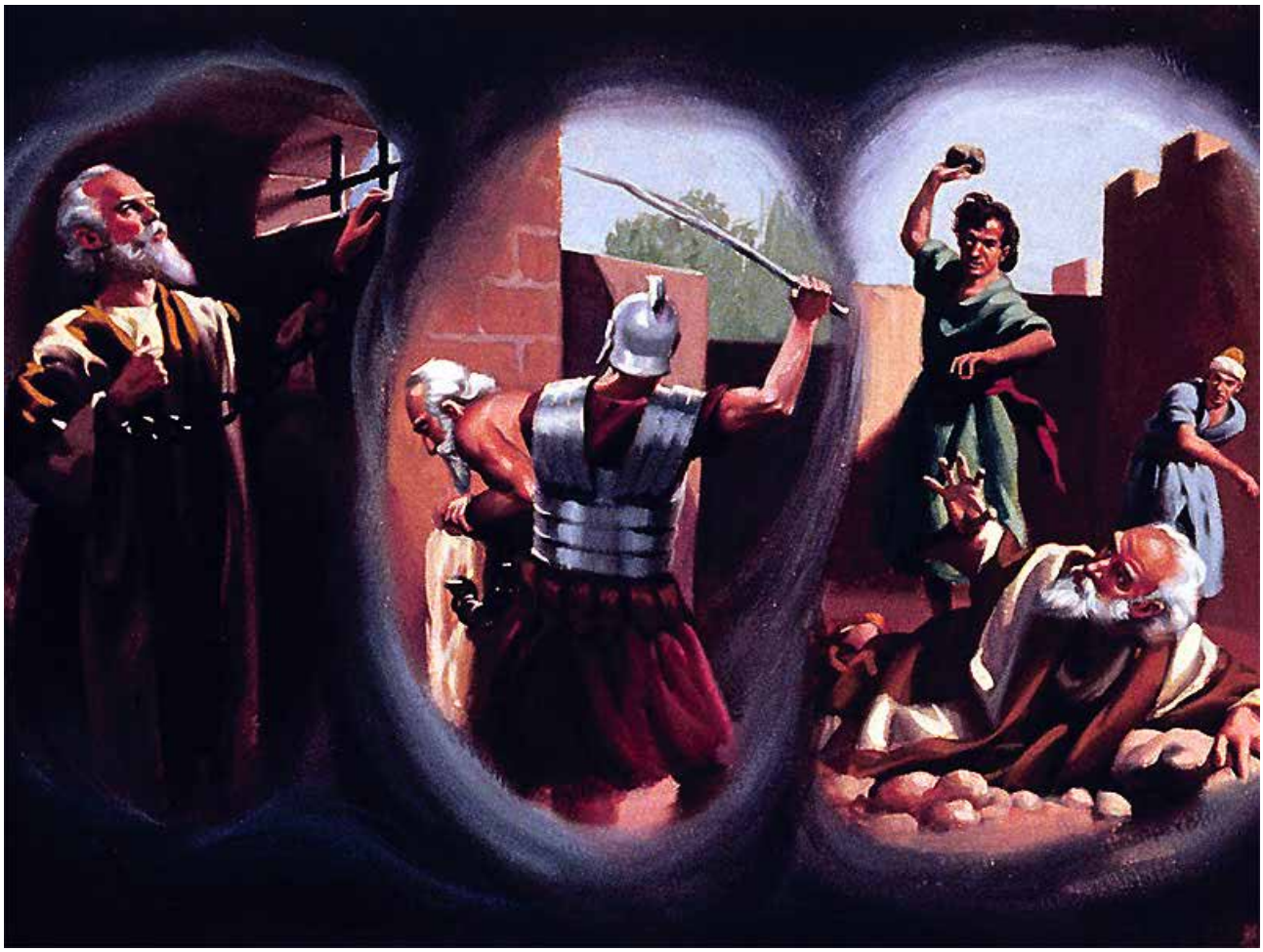
Prayer: Thank You so much Lord, for You did not care only for those written about in the Bible, but we also are Your chosen people. Help us to live by every word that comes from You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Use drawing materials to make a map of Paul's first missionary journey and color it.

DAY 309 (November 4)

TOPIC: Paul is Stoned at Lystra

(Acts 14)



When they arrived in Iconium, they did as they had done in Antioch—they entered the synagogue. A large group of Jews and Greeks believed. However, the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the preachers of the gospel. Everywhere there are people who create disturbances and difficulties for the work of God.

Paul and Barnabas stayed there, speaking boldly the Word of the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ. God allowed signs and wonders to be performed through them. The people were divided—some sided with the Jews and others with the apostles. The Jews incited a mob to stone them. These preachers fled to Derbe, Lystra, Lycaonia, and the surrounding regions, where they continued to preach the gospel. These were the first European regions they reached.

In Lystra, there was a man who had been crippled from birth and had never walked. When he heard Paul preaching, he paid close attention. Paul looked at him intently and, seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, “Stand up on your feet!” The man jumped up and began to walk.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they were amazed and said in their local language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” They called Barnabas “Zeus” because he appeared regal, and Paul “Hermes” because he was the chief speaker. Without Paul and Barnabas knowing, the people brought bulls and garlands to the city gates, intending to offer sacrifices to them.

When the apostles heard about this, they tore their clothes and ran into the crowd, shouting, “Why are you doing this? We are human beings just like you. We bring you good news, urging you to turn away from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. In the past, He let all nations go their own way, but He did not leave Himself without testimony—He gave you rain from heaven, crops in their seasons, and provided you with plenty of food and filled your hearts with joy.” With these words, they barely stopped the crowd from sacrificing to them.

However, Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived and persuaded the crowd to stone Paul. They dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead, and left. The disciples gathered around Paul, and in a miraculous moment, he stood up and returned to the city. The next day, he and Barnabas went to Derbe.

In Derbe, they preached the gospel and gained many disciples for Jesus. Afterward, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the believers and encouraging them to remain firm in their faith. They taught them that every believer must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.

In each church they established, they appointed elders to oversee and care for the congregation, committing them to the LORD through prayer and fasting. Paul later wrote pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus, who shepherded these churches. These letters should be read by every pastor, member, and believer to understand how to walk in the way of Christ.

Paul and Barnabas continued their journey, preaching in the cities of Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia. From there, they returned to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

At Antioch, they gathered the believers and reported all that God had done through them, including how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. They stayed there for a while.

The work of Paul and Barnabas was filled with tremendous hardships. This work was only possible through God's grace—their faith and love for God and people. Their boldness is the reason the gospel has reached us here in Africa today. Let us pray that we also receive that same passion and desire to share the good news with others.

Reflection:
Theoretical knowledge without practical action is not enough; neither is mere activity without a spiritual foundation sufficient. Both are essential in forming a Christ-like character. The power found in sincere, private prayer prepares us to withstand the temptations and pressures of the world.

Yet, we should not isolate ourselves from the world, for our Christian experience must be a light to those around us. Unbelievers will not harm us if we interact with them for the purpose of leading them to God while maintaining spiritual strength to resist their influence.

Questions:

1. Why must we enter the Kingdom of God through many hardships?

2. What did Barnabas and Paul do when the people gave them the names of their gods?

3. What did the people say when the crippled man at Lystra was healed?

4. What happened to Paul at Lystra?

5. Which letter of Paul did not address problems but was instead a letter of praise and encouragement?

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus.

Key Text: Acts 14:22-23

[22,23] Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the ministry of those who were appointed by the laying on of hands. Help us to remain steadfast in prayer, for we must enter the kingdom of God through many hardships. Remind us never to forget to pray. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: In a dramatization, act out the service of choosing church elders and laying hands on them.

DAY 310 (November 6)

TOPIC: A Song in Prison

(Acts 16)



Paul arrived at Derbe and Lystra in Europe, where there was a believer named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was Greek. Timothy was well spoken of by other believers for his good character and spiritual devotion. Paul invited him to join his missionary journey and circumcised him to avoid offending the Jews. Timothy became a beloved spiritual son to Paul in Christ.

As they traveled through the cities, Paul and his companions delivered letters from the council of apostles and instructions for those who needed to be arrested. The churches were strengthened in their faith, and their numbers grew daily. They passed through Phrygia and Galatia but were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia or Bithynia. After traveling through Mysia, they arrived at Troas.

At this time, Luke, the beloved physician, had joined them. He may have been a helpful companion, especially in matters of health. While in Troas, Paul had a vision during the night of a man from Macedonia in Greece, standing and pleading with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Convinced that God had called them to preach the gospel there, they immediately set sail. They traveled from Troas to Samothrace and then to Neapolis. From there, they went to Philippi, a major city in Macedonia and a Roman colony. They stayed there for several days. On the Sabbath, they went outside the city to a riverside, thinking it was a place of prayer, and they spoke with the women gathered there.

One of these women was named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth from the

city of Thyatira, and a worshiper of God. She listened carefully to Paul's words because the Lord had opened her heart. She and her household were baptized, and she urged the apostles to stay at her home, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." Her persistent invitation revealed her sincerity and hospitality.

Some people invite others without genuine intention, simply to appear welcoming, but Lydia's invitation was genuine. Welcoming those who bring the message of God is a blessing. This applies especially to those who work without pay, like the pastors and missionaries of that time. However, those who are welcomed should not burden their hosts or expect special treatment.

The book Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers warns against ministers who visit homes and expect their hosts to wash their clothes, gather firewood, cook special meals, and perform other burdensome tasks. Evangelism is not a vacation or a time to impose on others while enjoying oneself. Everyone should be willing to engage in manual labor. Even Paul, despite having advanced theological education, worked as a tentmaker to support himself.

Lydia was the person Paul had seen in his vision, asking for help in Macedonia.

One day, as they were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl with a spirit of divination met them. She earned a lot of money for her masters by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and his companions, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." This continued for many days, disrupting their preaching.

Although her words were true, Paul was troubled because her shouting created confusion, preventing people from hearing God's message. This girl was under the power of darkness, which is like a severe illness. Out of compassion, Paul turned to her and commanded the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her!" Instantly, the spirit left her.

Even today, seeking guidance from fortune-tellers or astrologers is a sin. Only God knows the future. Fortune-tellers work under the kingdom of darkness, even though they may say some true things. However, knowing the future through these means does not benefit us—only God can provide true guidance and peace.

When the girl's masters realized their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the marketplace before the authorities. They accused them, saying, "These Jews are disturbing our city and promoting customs that are unlawful for us Romans to adopt or observe."

The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped and beaten with rods. After being severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was instructed to guard them securely. He put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in stocks.

Despite their suffering, Paul and Silas did not complain. Instead, they prayed and sang hymns to God, and the other prisoners listened. Around midnight, a great earthquake shook the prison, opening all the doors and loosening everyone's chains.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword to kill himself, assuming the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Do not harm yourself! We are all here."

The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." They shared the word of the Lord with him and his family. That very night, the jailer washed their wounds, and he and his entire household were baptized. He then brought them into his home, fed them, and rejoiced because he and his household had come to believe in God.

When morning came, the magistrates sent orders to release Paul and Silas. However, Paul protested, saying, "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and now they want to release us secretly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

The authorities, realizing they had wronged Roman citizens, were frightened. They apologized, escorted Paul and Silas out of prison, and requested them to leave the city. Before leaving, Paul and Silas visited Lydia to encourage the believers, and then they departed.

The word of God protects us from sin, although sin itself can lead us to avoid the word of God.

Daily Prayer Is Needed to Resist Satan

Sanctification is not a one-time event but a continual growth in grace. Satan is active and persistent, and we must daily seek God's help to resist him. As long as Satan exists, we must continually deny selfishness and confront challenges. There is no point where we can rely on our own strength—we always need God's assistance.

Questions:

1. How did Paul meet his spiritual son, Timothy?

2. Where was Paul when he received the vision to go to Macedonia?

3. How did Paul meet Lydia and her companions in Philippi?

4. How was Lydia a blessing to the mission work?

5. Why is it wrong to leave someone sick or possessed, or to exploit them for profit?

6. What happened when Paul and Silas were imprisoned?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 16:25-26

[25,26] About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

Prayer: Thank You so much for the story of Paul and Silas. They gave us a good example of singing praises to You even though they were in great trouble in prison. Give us the same spirit. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Take a thin rope or toilet paper and wrap it around a child, as though they are in prison. Then ask them to sing praises to God even while "in prison"!

DAY 311. (November 7)

TOPIC: The People Who Turned the World Upside Down.

(Acts 17)



They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. We know that Paul wrote his first letters to the Thessalonian believers to encourage, counsel, and teach them matters of faith. It is possible that this was his first letter. As was his custom, Paul entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths, explaining that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead, and that this Jesus he proclaimed was the promised Messiah. Some of them believed, along with many Greeks and not a few prominent women.

The Jews became jealous and gathered some wicked men from the marketplace to stir up trouble in the city. They went to the house of Jason, a believer who had welcomed Paul, and when they did not find Paul and Silas there, they dragged Jason before the city authorities. They accused him, saying, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too, and Jason has welcomed them. They are acting against Caesar’s decrees, saying there is another king—Jesus.” The authorities were troubled by these accusations, and after taking security from Jason, they let him go.

The believers immediately sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to verify what they were taught. As a result, many believed, including prominent Greek women and many men. Truly, the apostles turned the world upside down

by preaching the gospel of Jesus. Are you turning your neighborhood or city upside down by sharing the gospel? Do you study God's Word and pray daily so that you too can impact the world? If you were taken to court for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Let us beware of being led astray by false teachings.

However, when the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching in Berea, they came there too, stirring up the crowds. The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. Paul was escorted to Athens, and Silas and Timothy were instructed to join him there as soon as possible.

While waiting for them in Athens, Paul's spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols. He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and devout persons and also debated daily with those in the marketplace. Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. Some said, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be preaching foreign gods," because Paul was proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection.

They took him to the Areopagus, a place of public discourse dedicated to their god Mars, and asked him to explain this new teaching. The Athenians and their philosophers spent much of their time discussing and listening to new ideas. Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all respects. For as I walked around and observed your objects of worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: 'TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, I proclaim to you.

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He served by human hands as if He needed anything, since He Himself gives life and breath to all. He made from one man every nation of mankind to dwell on the face of the earth, determining their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands, so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him—though He is not far from any of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as some of your own poets have said: 'We are His offspring.'

Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the Divine Being is like gold, silver, or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past, God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent. For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.” So, Paul left the council. However, some people joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Even today, many people appear good but are not ready to make decisions about their salvation. Paul realized that using Greek philosophy was ineffective and resolved to preach Christ directly in the future.

In our time, many theories oppose the truth of the living God. The Bible says, “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” (John 1:4). Christ is the Source of life, and obedience to Him brings joy and vitality. Knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, is essential for everyone who is to be saved.

The devil seeks to obscure the knowledge of God through appealing fictions and distractions. However, true wisdom and understanding come from the Word of God, which is unchanging and reliable.

Daily Prayer Includes Physical and Spiritual Needs

When we pray for our daily bread, we ask not only for physical sustenance but also for spiritual nourishment that leads to eternal life. Jesus said, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life” (John 6:27). He declared, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:51). We feed on Christ by meditating on His love and internalizing His Word.



Questions:

1. Why did the troublemakers go to Jason’s house? What makes a person a troublemaker?

2. Who believed in Athens?

3. Why is it dangerous to be a good

person without choosing to follow God?

4. How can we be noble like the Bereans today?

5. How did debating with the Greeks impact Paul's approach?

6. Are you turning your world upside down by sharing Christ?

7. Why do people say Western civilization began in Greece?

8. What theories have you heard that contradict God's revelations?

9. Are you making a difference by spreading the gospel today?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 17:11.

[11] These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the Bible, Your Word. We ask You to help us not to be deceived by people but to study it and confirm whether the things people tell us are true or not! In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Find ten verses, and among them add or remove five. Then bring the Bible, and let the students verify for themselves if everything you said is written in the Bible.

DAY 312 (November 8)

TOPIC: Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos

(Acts 18)

Paul left Athens and arrived in Corinth, where he met a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They had recently come from Pontus in Italy because Emperor Claudius of Rome had ordered all Jews to leave. Paul joined them to preach the gospel. Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers, and they welcomed Paul to stay with them and work together in their trade. Every Sabbath, Paul went to the synagogue to present his case and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself fully to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah who had risen from the dead. When the Jews opposed and insulted him, Paul shook out his clothes in protest and said, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles.” He left there and went to the house of Titius Justus, a God-fearing man whose house was next to the synagogue. Titius Justus and his entire household believed in the Lord. Even Crispus, the synagogue leader, believed in the Lord along with many Corinthians who also believed and were baptized.

One night, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to harm you, because I have many people in this city.” Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching the word of God. Paul described us humans as clay jars—of little value—yet carrying a great treasure, which is the gospel. Though we are earthen vessels, the love of Jesus motivates us to avoid sin.

When Gallio was the governor of Achaia, the unbelieving Jews united against Paul and brought him before the court, accusing him of persuading people to worship God contrary to the law. Just as Paul was about to speak in his defense, Gallio refused to get involved in their religious disputes. He dismissed them, saying, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or serious crime, I would be reasonable to listen to you. But since it is about questions of your law, settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.”

After Gallio drove them out of the courtroom, the Jews seized Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio showed



no concern for these matters. Although many opposed the preachers and the gospel, Paul had no reason to fear because God had assured him that no harm would come to him.

Paul stayed in Corinth for a while, then said farewell to the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchrea, Paul cut his hair because of a vow he had taken. Typically, such hair was brought to Jerusalem and burned on the altar as part of an offering to God. They arrived in Ephesus, where Paul entered the synagogue and engaged in discussions with the Jews. Although they asked him to stay longer, he declined but promised to return if it was God's will. Paul then traveled to Caesarea, greeted the church there, and proceeded to Antioch. After spending some time in Antioch, he traveled through Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples and encouraging them in the truth of God's word.

The people of Galatia were known for their generosity. They welcomed Paul as if he were an angel of God or even Christ Jesus Himself. Paul noted that they were willing to give him their very eyes if needed, just to support the spread of the gospel. However, the Galatians were later misled by Jewish teachers who falsely taught that they needed to follow Jewish customs and laws to be saved. In response, Paul wrote to them, asking, "Who has bewitched you? Why have you abandoned the gospel I preached to you and accepted another message that enslaves you?" Paul reminded them that they were free in Christ and that old laws like circumcision no longer bound them.

At this time, a Jew named Apollos from Alexandria in Egypt arrived. He was a learned man with a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and spoke about Jesus with great enthusiasm and accuracy. However, he only knew about the baptism of John and did not fully understand the message of Christ's death and resurrection. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him speaking boldly in the synagogue, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more thoroughly.

Apollos later traveled to Greece. The believers in Ephesus wrote a letter of recommendation for him, encouraging the disciples in Greece to welcome him warmly. When Apollos arrived, he was a great help to those who had believed by God's grace. He vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. Paul later described Apollos as a great champion of the faith. However, when believers started to divide themselves by saying, "I follow Apollos" or "I follow Paul," Paul corrected them, saying that neither he nor Apollos had died for them—only Jesus had. Paul emphasized that all believers are part of the body of Christ, with Jesus as the head. The Holy Spirit unites the body through God's love, and we must

remain faithful to Jesus rather than attaching ourselves to human leaders.

The church in Corinth was one of the major churches of that time. Corinth was a modern and prosperous city with a busy port that connected to other countries. However, some believers were influenced by the city's corruption and immoral practices. This prompted Paul to write several letters—about four in total—to correct and guide them. One of his key messages was about the importance of love.

We receive Christ through His word, and the Holy Spirit reveals God's truth to our hearts. We must pray daily for the Spirit to open our minds as we read the Bible and to strengthen our spirits with His truth.

Questions:

1. How did Priscilla and Aquila support Paul?

2. How did Gallio protect Paul?

3. What important teachings was Apollos lacking without realizing it?

4. What does "Your blood be on your own heads" mean?

5. What vision did Paul receive while in Corinth that gave him comfort?

6. Why is it harmful to attach ourselves to human leaders instead of Christ?

7. Paul established and visited churches, encouraging believers to give tithes and offerings. How were these tithes and offerings used? (Romans 15:26 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

May God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 18:3.

[3] …Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome, and he came to them. And because he was of the same craft, he stayed with them and worked; for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

Prayer: Christ of all grace, we thank You and ask You to give us diligence and skill in work, remove all laziness from our lives, and make us like the apostle Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila, in being self-reliant and supporting ourselves through learning and doing handiwork. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Tentmaking. Use needles and pieces of cloth or colored papers, and sticks for raising them up, or even Lego. Or use farming tools and go into the garden to learn gardening, etc.

DAY 313 (November 8)

TOPIC: Evil Books Are Burned

(Acts 19)

While Apollos was preaching in Corinth, Paul traveled on foot through Asia Minor and arrived in Ephesus, as he had promised, where he met new believers. These believers were called disciples of Jesus. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." When he asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" they answered, "John's baptism." Paul explained to them, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, confessing sins, but he told people to believe in the Messiah who was to come after him—that is, Jesus." Upon hearing this message, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues and prophesy, and the total number of these men was twelve.

We can learn an important lesson from these people. When they heard the teachings of Jesus, they were willing to correct their traditional beliefs and follow the truth.

Paul then entered the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, arguing and persuading people about the kingdom of God. However, some refused to believe and publicly maligned the teachings. So, Paul left them, taking the new believers—the disciples of Jesus—with him. He held daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, and Paul taught one group after another, until everyone living in the province of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, had the opportunity to hear the Word of God.

God performed extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured, and evil spirits left them.

During this time, some Jewish exorcists who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Among these were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. They treated the name of Jesus as if it were a magic charm. But one day, an evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize,

but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and wounded.

This event became known to all the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, and they were all filled with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came openly confessing their evil deeds. Some who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas, which is equivalent to three million dollars today. The Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.



It is remarkable how many books of sorcery there were, especially considering that this was a time when there were no printing presses, and everything had to be copied by hand. Even today, there are many books of magic and witchcraft. Children and youth must be careful not to read any evil books. Books like Harry Potter, Wicca, black magic, and others promote darkness. We must be vigilant in choosing books that promote light and truth. Romantic novels and spy thrillers should also be avoided.

Do you know which books promote evil? Can you list them? In those days, there were no movies, videos, computers, television, or radio. Today, we have all these things—can you identify which radio programs, television shows, or online content promote evil and should be avoided? What advertisements should you steer clear of? Some things may seem harmless, but their influence has led many astray, pulling them away from their goal of reaching heaven and instead leading them to hell.

Activities like playing cards or board games often foster laziness and addiction, which the Word of God condemns. Besides our faith in Almighty God, work is the next most important thing. We read that Jesus spent thirty years working as a carpenter and only three and a half years preaching. Hard work protects us from many temptations.

After the burning of these sorcery books, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, and eventually to Rome, the capital of the world at that time, and later to Spain. His primary goal was to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, the risen Messiah. He sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to assist him.

When we pray daily for both physical and spiritual blessings, we acknowledge our dependence on God's constant care. Through prayer and the study of His Word, our hungry souls will be fed, and our thirsty spirits will be refreshed by the fountain of life.

Questions:

1. Why did they burn the books instead of selling them to raise money for spreading the gospel?

2. What books today should be burned or never read?

3. What television shows or online content should we avoid?

4. Why is being a pastor's child or a church worker not a license to live sinfully?

God Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus!

Key Text: Acts 19:19.

[19] Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Prayer: Lord, we give You our thanks. Help us not to watch witchcraft videos or participate in sorcery in any way. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Gather bad books or dirty papers and burn them.

DAY 314 (November 9)

TOPIC: The Ephesians and Their Goddess Artemis

(Acts 19)



Paul stayed in Ephesus for two years. The Ephesians had a magnificent temple dedicated to their goddess Artemis (also called Diana). The Ephesians loved their silver idols of Artemis, which were made by silversmiths and worshipped. Even today in Africa and other parts of the world, people worship objects like sacred trees or other things instead of the Almighty God. Many people profit from selling religious items, knowing that people will buy them.

A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, stirred up trouble when he realized that Paul's preaching was turning people away from idol worship. He gathered other craftsmen and warned them that their trade was in danger. He said, "This man Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here and throughout Asia, saying that gods made by human hands are not gods at all. If this continues, our business will suffer, and the temple of Artemis will be discredited."

When the people heard this, they were furious and began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" Soon, the whole city was in turmoil. They seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed them into the theater.

Paul wanted to address the crowd, but the believers would not let him, fearing for his safety. Meanwhile, the assembly was in confusion—some were shouting one thing, some another—and most people did not even know why they were there.

Finally, the city clerk quieted the crowd, reminding them that the temple of Artemis was known worldwide and could not be easily discredited. He urged them to resolve their issues through legal channels rather than through violence. After calming the crowd, he dismissed the assembly.

Questions:

1. How did Demetrius incite the crowd to riot?

2. How did the city clerk calm the angry mob?

3. Why is it easy for people to follow a crowd without knowing the truth, like those in Ephesus?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Exodus 20:1-3.

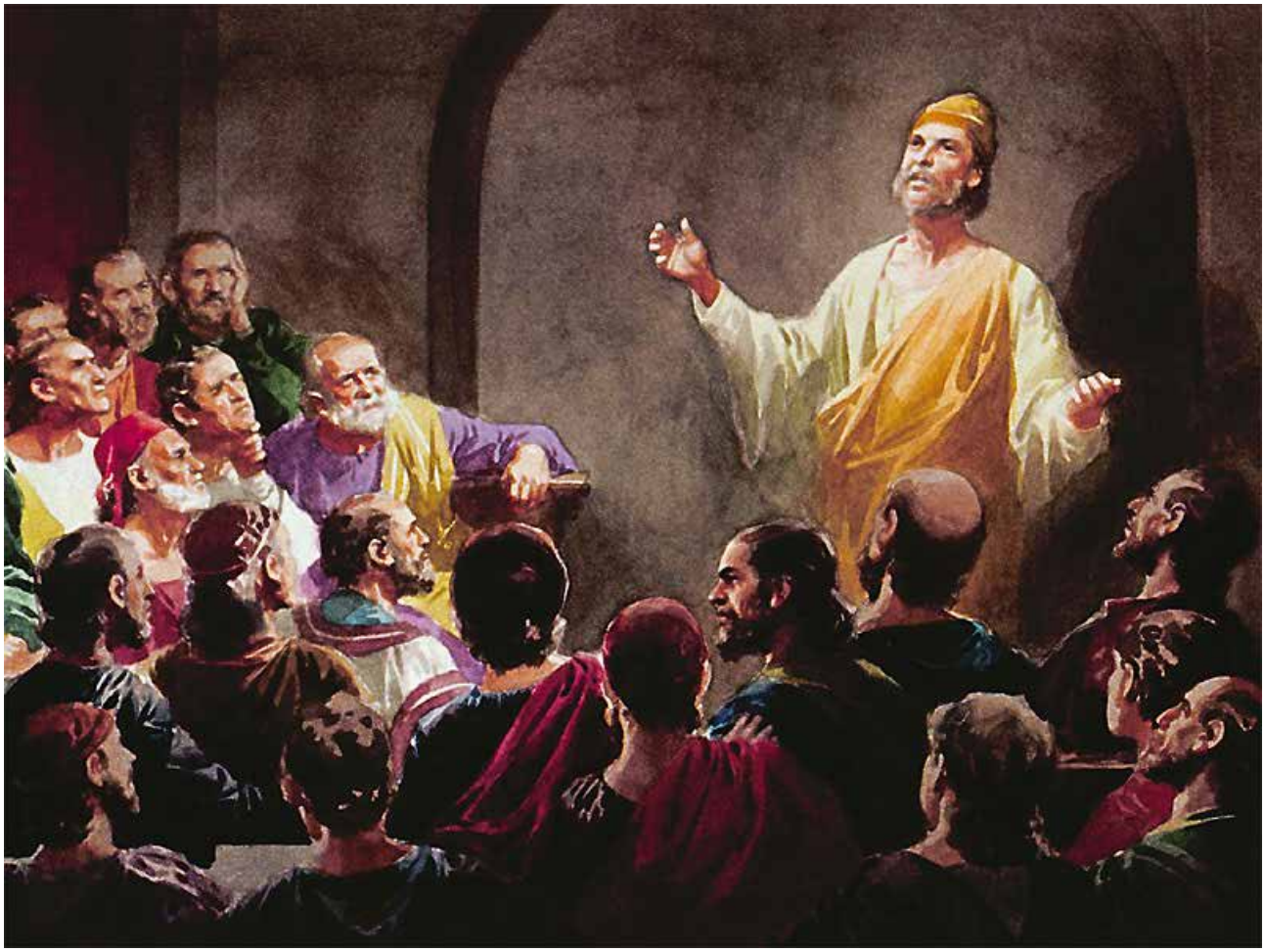
[1-3] I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 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.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for Your goodness and mercies. Help us to worship You in truth and righteousness. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.
Activity: Role play – show how worshiping idols is meaningless. Take a stick, cut it into two pieces, burn one piece, and bow down to the other piece asking it for this or that. Then demonstrate the difference between things God provides and why they should never be worshiped.

DAY 315 (November 10)

TOPIC: Paul Bids Farewell to the Believers

(Acts 20)



When the commotion ceased, Paul bid farewell to the believers, warning and encouraging them with words of comfort, and then departed for Macedonia. After traveling through those regions and encouraging the people with many words, he arrived in Greece. He stayed there for three months, but when the Jews plotted to kill him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. These men went ahead and waited for him at Troas.

It was during the time of Passover, when they ate unleavened bread according to the command given when they left Egypt, which symbolized the body of Christ being without sin. They departed from Philippi and arrived at Troas.

On the first day of the week, they broke bread, meaning they partook in the Lord's Supper. Paul preached to them, intending to leave the next day, and continued speaking until midnight. They were in an upstairs room, with many oil lamps and candles burning.

A fifteen-year-old boy named Eutychus was sitting by the window. He struggled to keep his eyes open but eventually failed. The usual bedtime for children had long passed. As Paul continued to preach late into the night, the boy was overcome by sleep, lost focus, fell from the third floor, and was picked up dead. The people began to cry out in fear, knowing that he had died.

Paul went down, embraced the boy's body, and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is still in him." He then returned upstairs, broke bread, ate, and continued speaking until dawn before leaving. They brought the young man back alive, and the people were greatly comforted.

There are many young people today like Eutychus who fall asleep in church despite their desire to listen. Such youths should be encouraged and given responsibilities in the church. At the same time, sermons should not be too long unless the Holy Spirit leads otherwise.

Let this story not make you fall asleep in church, for even as a child, you must listen to what the preacher says. Eutychus fell asleep because it was midnight, the place was crowded, there was nowhere comfortable to sit, and he wanted to listen, but it was very late. Church is not a place to sleep as if you are in a guesthouse—no! It is a place of worship. However, we can excuse this situation because Paul was giving his farewell speech, knowing they would not see him again, and the believers were eager to hear his final words of the gospel.

Luke, the physician, went ahead with others to Assos to meet Paul, who was traveling on foot. Paul did not sleep. After raising Eutychus from the dead, he continued preaching until morning and then began a 30-kilometer journey on foot. Truly, Paul was a champion of God's work.

When they reached Assos, Paul boarded a ship, and they traveled to Kios, then Samos, Trogyllium, and finally Miletus. Paul wanted to hurry to Jerusalem, passing by Ephesus, so that he could be there for Pentecost—the celebration fifty days after Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

At Miletus, Paul sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus. Church elders were appointed to oversee new churches as soon as they were established. When they arrived, Paul told them, "You yourselves know how I lived among

you from the first day I set foot in Asia. I served the Lord with all humility and with tears. You know the trials I faced because of the plots of the Jews.

I did not hold back from declaring to you anything that was profitable, teaching you publicly and from house to house. I testified to both Jews and Greeks that they must repent and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I am going to Jerusalem, compelled by the Holy Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there. What I do know is that the Holy Spirit has warned me that prison and hardships await me. However, I do not count my life as precious to myself. What matters is that I finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus."

Paul continued, "I want you to know that you have been precious to me since the day I began preaching the gospel to you. I know that after I leave, you will not see my face again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any man, whether Jew or Greek, who perishes. I have not hesitated to proclaim the whole counsel of God—that everyone may be saved and have eternal life.

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among you, men will arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after themselves. Therefore, watch and remember that for three years, day and night, I did not cease to warn everyone with tears."

Paul warned his spiritual children that false teachings not found in the Bible would come, but they should keep their focus on Jesus—the One who died on the cross. He said, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver, gold, or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my needs and those of my companions. In everything, I have shown you that by working hard like this, we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

After saying this, Paul knelt and prayed with all of them. They all wept as they embraced and kissed him, grieved most of all by his words that they would not see his face again. They accompanied him to the ship.

Paul was a father to many churches that he helped establish. He gave them advice and wrote letters to guide them. He did not value his own life above

the mission of sharing the good news of the kingdom of God. It is amazing how the Christian churches began and how the apostles labored day and night.

Brotherly love is a great blessing. As Psalm 133 says, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity! It is like precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing—life forevermore.”

A Parent’s Daily Prayer:
Make your work pleasant with songs of praise. If you want to have a clean record in heaven’s books, do not be angry or harsh. Let your daily prayer be: “Lord, teach me to do good. Teach me how to do excellent work. Give me strength and cheerfulness. Bring Christ into everything I do.” Then your life will be filled with light and gratitude. Let us strive forward with joy in the service of the Lord, our hearts full of His joy.

Questions:

1. What happened to Eutychus when he fell asleep during the sermon?
2. What did Paul do for Eutychus afterward?
3. What words did Paul speak when bidding farewell to the believers?
4. Why did the believers weep when Paul said goodbye?
5. How are pastors neglecting their pastoral duties in these last days of earth’s history?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 20:32.

[32] And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

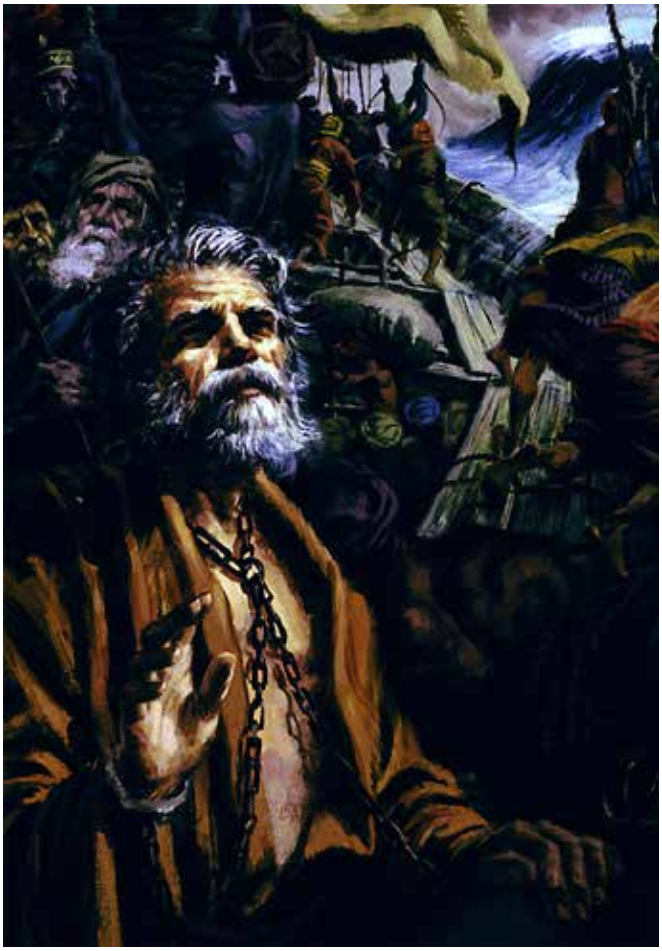
Prayer: Lord, thank You because You can build us up, and even raise our loved ones from their graves on the last day. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Role play of the young man Eutychus who fell asleep, fell down, and was raised back to life!

DAY 316 (November 11)

TOPIC: Paul is Arrested

(Acts 21)



After saying their farewells, they boarded a ship and sailed to Cos, then to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. In Patara, they found a ship going to Phoenicia, boarded it, and continued their journey. They passed by the island of Cyprus and arrived in Syria, where they docked in Tyre. The ship unloaded its cargo there, and they met other believers and stayed for seven days. Through the Holy Spirit, the believers prophesied, warning Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Afterward, they, along with the preachers, the children, and their wives, accompanied Paul out of the city. On the shore, they knelt down and prayed.

They then boarded the ship and arrived at Ptolemais, where they greeted the brethren in Christ and proceeded to Caesarea. In Caesarea, they stayed at the house of Philip, the evangelist, who was one of the seven deacons. The gospel had reunited them as friends and co-workers. Philip had fled because of Saul's persecution, but now Saul had become Paul, and they were brothers in the Lord. Philip had four unmarried daughters who were prophets. While they were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he arrived, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet, and said, "The Holy Spirit says this: the owner of this belt will be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles to be persecuted and killed."

۞ When the disciples, including Luke the physician and other co-workers, heard that Paul would be killed, they pleaded with him not to go to Jerusalem. But Paul responded, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” When they realized they could not change his mind, they stopped trying and said, “Let the Lord’s will be done.”

۞ They left Caesarea, gathered their belongings, and traveled on foot to Jerusalem. Some disciples from Caesarea, including Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, accompanied them. When they arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers in Christ welcomed them warmly. The next day, Paul and his companions, including Luke and the elders working with him in the gospel, went to meet James, the brother of Jesus. It had been about 25 years since Jesus’ resurrection.

۞ Many people in Jerusalem had become followers of Jesus. They greeted one another and shared testimonies of all that God had done among the Gentiles through Paul’s ministry, and when they heard these reports, they glorified God. The Gentile believers felt included in God’s kingdom and were dedicated to supporting the gospel work with their resources, so the Jewish people and the whole world could receive the gospel. However, the Jewish believers expressed concern that Paul was being accused of teaching Jews to abandon the law of Moses and not circumcise their children or follow Jewish customs. They feared that if people heard Paul was in Jerusalem, it would cause a public uproar and harm the church.

۞ They gave Paul private advice, saying, “We cannot deny you were sent by God, but take these four men who have made a vow of purification, join them in their purification rites, and pay their expenses so they can have their heads shaved. This way, everyone will know that the accusations against you are false and that you still respect the law of Moses.” Although the Gentile believers were not required to follow all Jewish customs, they had agreed to the council’s instructions to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, and meat from strangled animals.

۞ Paul agreed to follow their advice to maintain peace, even though it was a risky decision. The next day, he took the four men, purified himself with them, and went to the temple to announce the completion of their days of purification. When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from Asia Minor saw Paul in the temple and stirred up the crowd. They seized him, shouting false accusations: “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches against our people and the law, and he has brought Greeks into the temple, defiling this holy place.” They had earlier seen Trophimus the Ephesian with

Paul in the city and assumed Paul had brought him into the temple, though he had not.

The whole city was thrown into turmoil. People rushed together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple, shutting the gates behind them. They sought to kill him immediately, but news reached the Roman commander that the city was in chaos. The commander took soldiers and centurions and ran to the scene. When the mob saw the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The commander approached, arrested Paul, and ordered him to be bound with two chains, fulfilling Agabus' prophecy. He then tried to determine who Paul was and what he had done. The crowd was in such uproar that the commander could not get a clear answer, so he ordered Paul to be taken into the fortress.

As the soldiers carried Paul to the steps leading to the Antonia fortress, which overlooked the temple, the violent mob continued shouting, "Kill him! Kill him!" Ironically, the Roman soldiers—pagans who did not know the God of heaven—were the ones who protected Paul from the Jewish crowd seeking to kill him.

Paul, a former Pharisee, had once participated in the killing of many who believed in Jesus. Now, for his loyalty to Christ, he faced the danger of losing his own life. Yet, God gave him extraordinary courage.

Youth should pray daily for wisdom and grace. The trials and hardships that many young people complain about were endured by Christ without murmuring. This discipline provides the experience young people need to develop strong character and become like Christ—resilient in the face of temptation. But they cannot achieve this if they surround themselves with people who corrupt their morals and lead them astray. Through daily prayer, they will receive wisdom and grace from God to face life's struggles and emerge victorious. Integrity and mental stability are preserved only through vigilance and prayer. Christ's life was an example of unwavering strength, unaffected by criticism, mockery, poverty, or hardship.

Questions:

What did the prophet Agabus prophesy?

Why did people want Paul to be killed?

Is it possible for Christ's religion to cause pain or death to others?

How did the Roman commander help Paul?

Why is it wrong to seek to kill someone, whether wicked or innocent, thinking we are serving God?

Why is our testimony a powerful tool to spread the gospel story?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Numbers 12:6.

[6] And He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream.

Prayer: Thank You Jesus for revealing things to us beforehand to prepare us. Help us to have courage and to encourage others. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Use a belt or rope as the prophet Agabus did, to tie hands and feet as the story tells.

DAY 317 (November 12)

TOPIC: Paul Defends Himself and Repeats the History of the Gospel

(Acts 21 and 22)



When Paul was brought into the Antonia fortress, he spoke to the commander in Greek, saying, "I have something to say to you; do you permit me to speak?" The commander was surprised that Paul knew Greek and asked, "Where did you learn to speak Greek? Aren't you the Egyptian who, some time ago, led four thousand assassins into the wilderness to cause rebellion?" Paul replied, "No, I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of a respected city under Roman rule—I am neither a rebel nor a murderer. Give me permission to speak to these people." The commander allowed him, and Paul motioned to the crowd to be silent. Standing on the steps, which served as a platform, Paul seized the opportunity to testify about Jesus again before thousands of people.

Paul began his speech, saying, "Brothers and fathers, listen to my defense before you now." When they heard him speak in Hebrew, they became even more silent. He continued, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but raised in this city, Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, a respected rabbi who taught me the Law of our ancestors and the importance of Moses' teachings. I was zealous for God, just as you all are today. I persecuted those who followed this Way, imprisoning both men and women, believing I was serving God by doing so.

As a member of the Sanhedrin and a Pharisee, I continued this work with the authority of the high priest and the council. They gave me letters to go to Damascus and arrest those who believed in the resurrected Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem for punishment. But as I neared Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me, and I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' I answered,

‘Who are You, Lord?’ The voice replied, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ Those traveling with me saw the light but did not understand the voice. I asked, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ and He told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that you are appointed to do.’

I became blind because of the light. My companions led me by hand to Damascus. There, a devout man named Ananias, respected by all the Jews living there, came to me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that moment, I could see him. He said, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear words from His mouth. You will be His witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. Now, why delay? Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

When I returned to Jerusalem after three years, while praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me. He said, ‘Quickly leave Jerusalem because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ I answered, ‘Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat those who believe in You. When Your witness Stephen was being killed, I stood by, approving and guarding the clothes of those who were stoning him.’ But the Lord said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

The crowd listened until Paul mentioned the Gentiles. Then, they shouted in anger, “Away with him! He is not fit to live!” They became like wild animals, throwing off their clothes and hurling dust into the air. The commander ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks.

This is how it should be for young people. When trials increase, they should know that GOD is testing and proving their faithfulness. Only through maintaining integrity amid discouraging circumstances will their strength, courage, and endurance grow, making them strong in spirit.

Questions:

Where was Paul born?

Why did Paul repeat the history of his testimony?

Why was the commander surprised when Paul spoke to him?

What did Paul say about Stephen’s death?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 22:15,16.

[16] For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the Name of the Lord.

Prayer: Thank You Father for giving us baptism so that our sins may be washed away. Please help me to be Your witness to all people of what I have seen and heard. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Role play of baptism for one who believes, after explaining the meaning of baptism.

DAY 318 (November 13)

TOPIC: The Sadducees and Pharisees Argue Over Paul

(Acts 22-23)

The commander ordered Paul to be brought in and interrogated by flogging to find out why the people were shouting against him. As they tied him up to be whipped, Paul asked the centurion, "Is it lawful for you to flog a Roman citizen without a trial?" The centurion, shocked, went to inform the commander, saying, "Be careful what you do, for this man is a Roman citizen."

In those days, Roman citizens had special rights and protections greater than those of conquered peoples. When the commander asked Paul if he was a Roman citizen, Paul confirmed, "Yes." The commander replied, "I paid a large sum for my citizenship." Paul answered, "But I was born a citizen."

Those who were about to flog him withdrew immediately, and the commander became afraid because he had put a Roman citizen in chains without a trial. The next day, seeking to understand the accusations against Paul, he released him and summoned the chief priests and the Sanhedrin. Paul stood before them and declared, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God with a clear conscience up to this day."

The high priest Ananias ordered those near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Paul responded, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit to judge me according to the law but violate the law by ordering me to be struck!" Those standing nearby objected, "Do you dare insult God's high priest?" Paul apologized, "I did not know he was the high priest, for it is written, 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"

Realizing the council was divided between Pharisees and Sadducees, Paul declared, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead."

This statement caused a great dispute between the two groups. Sadducees do not believe in resurrection, angels, or spirits, while Pharisees believe in all these. The Pharisees argued that Paul might have received a message from an angel or spirit, while the Sadducees rejected this possibility. The dispute became violent, so the commander ordered his soldiers to remove Paul for



his safety.

🌻The Need for Teachers to Pray Daily:
Every teacher should receive daily instruction from Christ and work under His guidance. Only through prayer and self-denial can they perform their duties wisely and effectively.

🌻Questions:

Why did the commander stop flogging Paul?

Are there Pharisees and Sadducees today arguing over their beliefs?

Is it lawful for a pastor to strike someone like the high priest struck Paul?

Why did Paul apologize despite being wronged?**

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👨‍👧‍👧

Key Text: 2 Corinthians 11:24-27.

[24-27] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving us a picture of Paul's life. We pray that You keep us from danger and help us endure hardships as You did when necessary. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

Activity: Role play – use rods, stones, robbers, etc.

DAY 319 (November 14)

TOPIC: Paul Goes to Caesarea with the Army

(Acts 23)

That night, the LORD Himself stood near Paul, comforting him by saying,



"Take courage; for as you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify about Me in Rome." When morning came, more than 40 Jewish men conspired together and took an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. After making this agreement, they went to the chief priests and elders and told them that they had taken a solemn oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They asked the elders and chief priests to arrange for the Roman commander to bring Paul to the council again under the pretense of wanting to examine his case more thoroughly. However, their real plan was to ambush and kill him on the way, before he even reached the council platform.

Paul's nephew, his sister's son, heard about the plot and informed his

mother. His mother then sent him to the fortress to tell Paul about the evil scheme. Paul called one of the prison guards and asked him to take the young man to the commander because he had urgent information. The guard took the young man to the commander and said, “Paul, the prisoner, called me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something urgent to tell you.” The commander took the young man by the hand, led him aside, and asked him privately what information he had. The young man explained the plot he had overheard—that the Jews planned to ask for Paul to be brought to the council the next day, intending to kill him en route. The commander, after hearing this, instructed the young man not to tell anyone that he had revealed this information. Truly, being a disciple of Jesus involves the cost of faith and obedience.

The commander summoned two centurions and ordered them to prepare 200 foot soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen by 9:00 PM to escort Paul safely to Caesarea. He also ordered that horses be provided for Paul and another person to carry any belongings he had, ensuring Paul’s safe delivery to Governor Felix. The commander then wrote a letter to Felix. Paul experienced many trials while serving God. A military escort of 470 soldiers accompanied the man of God to Caesarea to ensure no harm came to him, as God intended for him to complete the mission He had given him. Even today, if we commit ourselves to God’s work, He will protect and perform great things for us.

The letter from Claudius Lysias, the commander, to the most excellent Governor Felix read as follows:
“This man was seized by the Jews, and they were about to kill him when I intervened with my troops to rescue him after learning that he is a Roman citizen. I wanted to understand the charges against him, so I brought him before the Jewish council. I found that he was accused concerning questions of their law but had committed no crime deserving death or imprisonment. When I was informed that there was a plot against him, I immediately sent him to you and ordered his accusers to present their case before you.”

The soldiers took Paul by night as ordered and brought him to Antipatris, about 45 kilometers from Jerusalem. The following morning, the 70 horsemen continued with Paul while the 400 foot soldiers returned to Jerusalem. Upon arriving in Caesarea, the horsemen delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul to him. After reading the letter, the governor asked Paul which province he was from. When Paul replied that he was from Tarsus in Asia Minor, the governor said he would hear Paul’s case once his accusers arrived. In the meantime, Paul was held under guard in Herod’s palace.

Do you know what happened to the men who had sworn not to eat or drink

until they killed Paul? Perhaps they broke their fast and ate, as it is unlikely they starved themselves to death. We must be very careful about making foolish vows or those that contradict the Word of God.

🏵Daily prayers enhance and strengthen our spiritual experience.
True religion begins with cleansing the heart and must be nourished by daily prayer.

🏵Questions:

What did the angel say to Paul in the vision?

What message did Paul's nephew deliver?

How many soldiers escorted Paul?

What questions did the governor ask Paul?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Psalm 34:7,8.

[7,8] The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for angels who encamp around us and protect us. Thank You for the goodness You send us, sweeter than honey. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Bring something sweet to taste together, such as honey, pineapple, etc., and let each child taste.

DAY 320 (November 15)

TOPIC: Paul Before Governor Felix

(Acts 24)



After five days, the high priest, some elders from the Sanhedrin, and Tertullus, a lawyer, arrived in Caesarea to present charges against Paul before the governor. When the governor gave them the floor, Tertullus began his speech with flattery, saying, “Most excellent Felix, under your wise leadership, we enjoy peace, and many reforms have been made for the benefit of the people. We welcome your governance everywhere and at all times, and we are grateful for your presence.”

Tertullus continued, “We do not wish to burden you with a long speech but ask you to hear us briefly. We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among Jews worldwide. He is also a leader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Furthermore, he attempted to desecrate the temple, and so we arrested him. But Commander Lysias intervened and took him away by

force. He ordered us to bring our charges before you here in Caesarea. If you examine him yourself, you will find that our accusations are true."

Although Tertullus praised Felix's leadership, Felix was not the just and noble ruler the lawyer claimed. After Tertullus finished his speech, the Jews present supported his accusations.

When given the opportunity to defend himself, Paul addressed the governor respectfully. He acknowledged Felix's long-standing role as a judge over the Jewish nation and expressed his willingness to present his case confidently. Paul explained that he had come to Jerusalem to worship and that he had not caused any disturbance in the temple or the city. He stated that his accusers could not prove their allegations.

Paul admitted that he worshiped God according to "The Way," which his accusers called a sect, but affirmed his belief in everything written in the Law and the Prophets. He shared his hope in the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing his effort to maintain a clear conscience before God and people.

Felix, familiar with "The Way," postponed judgment, stating he would decide when Commander Lysias arrived. Meanwhile, he ordered that Paul be kept under guard but granted him some freedom, allowing his friends to visit and care for his needs.

If you fail to seek divine help through prayer during trials, you risk falling into temptation. Neglecting your spiritual duties will be recorded by God and will bear witness against you on the Day of Judgment.

Questions:

Why did the high priest, elders, and lawyer go to Caesarea?

Why did Felix delay judgment despite knowing Paul was innocent?

Why is it sinful to delay helping someone when you can do so immediately?

Why was Paul on trial?

What challenges do we face today in spreading the Gospel, 2,000 years after these events?*

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Proverbs 3:28.

[28] Say not unto your neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give, when you have it by you.

Prayer: Our Father and God, we come before You with thanksgiving. Help us not to trouble others by telling them, "Come tomorrow I will give you what you ask," when we already have it with us. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Role play of telling your neighbor "come tomorrow, come tomorrow" when the very thing they ask for is with you—for example, a pencil, food, ruler, clothes, etc.

DAY 321 (November 16)

TOPIC: Paul Appeals to Go to Rome Before Agrippa

(Acts 24 and 25)

After a few days, Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he summoned Paul to hear him speak privately about his faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul testified to him about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment of God that awaits every person—including Felix himself—Felix became afraid. Trembling and unable to bear it, he said, "You may go now, Paul; when I find the opportunity, I will summon you again." He said this because his conscience troubled him due to Paul's preaching, yet he feared surrendering his life to God. He still wanted to maintain his high position, with God being beneath him. Moreover, he hoped to receive a bribe from Paul to release him. Accepting bribes is a sin because it denies justice to others. Paul, a tentmaker by trade, was poor in material wealth. Felix, a wealthy governor, still sought to exploit the poor man. He often called Paul to converse with him, and two years passed in this manner. The poor man of God was denied his right to freedom. Wanting to please the Jews, Felix left Paul imprisoned. Eventually, Felix was removed from office, and another governor, Porcius Festus, was appointed in his place.

After three days of being the governor of Caesarea, Festus visited Jerusalem, where the chief priests and elders informed him about Paul's case and requested that he transfer Paul to Jerusalem so they could plan to kill him on the way. They did this because they knew the government would do nothing, as Paul's charges were religious rather than criminal. Festus informed them that Paul was under Roman protection as a citizen and that he himself would soon return to Caesarea to handle the case. He invited them to accompany him if they wished to bring charges against Paul. Upon his return to Caesarea after ten days, Festus convened the court the next day and ordered Paul to be brought before him. The Jews from Jerusalem accused Paul of many serious charges, including being against Caesar, but they could not prove any of them. Paul defended himself, saying, "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews, the temple, or Caesar, as you well know, Governor Festus. I am not afraid to die if I am guilty, but if their accusations are false, no one can hand me over to them." Seeking to please the Jews and maintain their favor, Festus asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried there. Paul replied that he had already been tried there and found innocent, and that there was no hope of receiving a

fair trial or safe passage to Jerusalem. Therefore, he appealed to Caesar in Rome. After consulting with his council, Festus declared, “You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you shall go.” Paul was safer among pagan Romans than among religious Jews who had not surrendered to God.

King Agrippa was the son of Herod, who had killed James, the first Christian martyr, and imprisoned Peter. His great-uncle (another Herod) killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus during His trial. His grandfather (yet another Herod) ordered the massacre of Bethlehem’s infants after Jesus’ birth. It was a cruel family led by the enemies of God. Agrippa’s wife, Bernice, accompanied him to Caesarea to greet and congratulate Festus on his appointment as governor. After several days, Festus discussed Paul’s case with Agrippa, explaining how the chief priests and Jewish elders in Jerusalem had presented charges against Paul. He had told them that Roman law required a face-to-face confrontation between the accused and accusers before judgment could be passed. Festus recounted how, during the trial, the Jewish leaders accused Paul not of criminal behavior but of religious disputes concerning a man named Jesus Christ, who had been crucified under Pontius Pilate, but whom Paul claimed was alive. Unsure how to judge the matter, Festus asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem for trial. However, Paul appealed to Caesar’s court in Rome. Agrippa, intrigued, expressed a desire to hear Paul himself. Festus promised he would hear Paul the next day.

The following day, Agrippa and Bernice arrived with great pomp and ceremony, accompanied by high-ranking officers and city leaders. Festus ordered Paul to be brought in and addressed the assembly, saying, “King Agrippa and all present, here is the man the Jews have demanded I condemn to death. Upon investigating, I found he had committed no crime deserving death. However, as a Roman citizen, he has appealed to Caesar, and I am obligated to send him. Yet, I find it unreasonable to send a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.” Agrippa then granted Paul permission to speak, giving Paul another opportunity to testify. This provided a platform for the gospel to reach many, ensuring no one could later claim they had not heard the message. God offers everyone the opportunity to hear the good news so that no one will have an excuse on the day of judgment. Let us not neglect our duty to God while trying to please others. Prayer time should never be compromised for any reason. Let us approach prayer with joy and thanksgiving, offering our praises to God.

Questions:

Why did Felix want to receive a bribe?

Why did Felix tremble?

Why did Herod Agrippa visit Caesarea?

Why did Felix want to please the Jews?

Who do you seek to please today?

Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?

Why was Paul brought before Agrippa to speak?

Who was Bernice?

Why didn't the Jews accuse Paul of a criminal offense?

Why is it sometimes safer to be with those who don't know God than those who do?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 2:10.

[10] Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father. We are grateful to see how You helped Your servant Paul to proclaim the good news. He fought the good fight and finished the race. Help us also to fight the good fight. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Courtroom scene of Paul being accused; role play of guards and soldiers representing Paul's time in prison, with chains and two guards.

DAY 322 (November 17)

TOPIC: Paul testifies about his story again

(Acts 26)

Paul raised his hand as a sign and began to defend himself when he was given permission. He said, "I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today to defend myself against all the accusations brought against me by the Jews, especially because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs, religion, and controversies. I beg you to listen to me patiently, for all the Jews know about my life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning in my nation and in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time, and if they are willing to testify, they can affirm that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. And now, I am on trial because of the hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors."

"This is the promise our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God day and night. It is because of this hope, O King, that I am accused by the Jews. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This is exactly what I did in Jerusalem. With the authority of the chief priests, I imprisoned many of the saints, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. I often punished them in the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme. In my extreme rage, I persecuted them even in foreign cities."

"On one of these journeys, I was going to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. At noon, O King, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' and the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' Saul thought he was doing good by persecuting the followers of Jesus, but in reality, he was opposing God. Even today, we should examine our actions to ensure that we are not unintentionally working against God and His people."

"The Lord told me to get up and stand on my feet. He appeared to me to appoint me as a servant and a witness of what I had seen and what He would reveal to me. He promised to rescue me from the Jewish people and from the



Gentiles. He was sending me to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those sanctified by faith in Him."

۞ "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. From that time, I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and to the Gentiles. I told them to repent and turn to God and to demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. But God has helped me to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to both small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to His own people and to the Gentiles."

۞ "Through the Messiah, God offers the gift of eternal life to all who believe in Him. The prophets also foretold that the good news of salvation would be proclaimed to the whole world—to the Jews and to the Gentiles alike."

۞ May all who visit Christians recognize that the hour of prayer is the most valuable, sacred, and joyful time of the day. These seasons of worship bring a positive, pure, and uplifting influence that directs our thoughts toward heaven. They offer peace and a restful spirit of gratitude to the soul.

Questions:

1. Why did Paul have the courage to say he did not disobey the vision from heaven?

2. Why did Saul ask, “Who are you, Lord?”

3. Why can a person’s right to justice be lost, even when they are innocent?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Romans 1:16,17.

[16,17] For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Prayer: Thank You our Father. Help us not to be ashamed of the gospel, for it is Your power bringing salvation to us who believe. Thank You because we shall live by faith. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Take turns with different children testifying about Jesus as Paul did, while others listen.

DAY 323 (November 18)

TOPIC: Paul Challenges King Herod Agrippa

(Acts 26 and 27)



As Paul was defending himself and giving his testimony, Festus interrupted him loudly, saying, “You are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you insane.” But Paul replied, “I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.”

Nothing Jesus did was hidden—everyone saw what He did and had the opportunity to know Him. It was because of Jesus that the Jews seized Paul in the temple. Paul challenged King Agrippa by asking, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.” Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am—except for these chains.” Salvation had come to

Agrippa's doorstep, but he was treating it lightly, perhaps because he feared embarrassment. However, no matter how high our rank or position is, it is temporary. People usually hold office for just a few years—maybe 50 if they are a king or a president who does not leave power. But after that, they must step down. If they try to stay longer, they often end up in a wheelchair or confined to a bed for a long time, with a schedule full of medical treatments. Eternity, however, is infinitely long—without limits or an end! Our human minds cannot fully comprehend it because we are limited.

The king, Governor Festus, Bernice, and those sitting with them stood up, signaling that the hearing was over. As they left, they discussed among themselves, "This man has done nothing deserving death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." However, it was God's plan for Paul to testify to thousands of people in Rome, who would eventually choose to follow Jesus the Messiah. If Paul had been released, the Jews in Jerusalem would have killed him—especially those who, while claiming to serve God, were actually being used by Satan in their cruelty and rage.

Even today, many religious groups act violently and kill people, believing they are serving God and that He has commanded them to do so. But there is no such command unless a person is a criminal guilty of a capital offense. Nowadays, God does not have a chosen nation authorized to kill others! During the time of Israel under God's direct rule, He gave them specific instructions, but since then, things have changed.

Paul had delivered the full message of salvation, but people's positions and statuses can prevent them from making decisions that would lead them to heaven. Even today, we encounter people in various high positions who find excuses to avoid choosing God, reading His Word daily, and following it. The Jews had religious traditions but did not understand what was happening regarding the kingdom of God. Paul remained imprisoned for about two years before the date for his journey to Rome was set. He boarded a ship bound for Italy, accompanied by followers and co-workers like Luke and Aristarchus. It is possible that Timothy joined later, but we are not sure because he was in Rome, perhaps arriving afterward.

Paul and 276 other prisoners were placed under the custody of a centurion named Julius from the Imperial Regiment. They boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was preparing to sail to ports along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They stopped at Sidon, where Julius treated Paul kindly, recognizing that he was a servant of God. From there, they sailed past Cyprus instead of going directly because the winds were against them. Paul took the opportunity to meet with believers and continued witnessing during the journey to Rome, which took three months. They traveled through Cilicia, Paul's birthplace, then Pamphylia, and arrived at Myra in Lycia. There, Julius found an Alexandrian ship from Egypt sailing to Italy.

🏵 He transferred the 276 passengers onto this ship. The journey was slow and difficult due to opposing winds, and they struggled to reach Cnidus. From there, they sailed south of Crete, past Salmone. Struggling against the wind, they arrived at a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. They stayed there for a long time without any clear reason. When the leaders were ready to continue westward to Italy, the season of danger had arrived. After the Jewish Day of Atonement, sailing became hazardous due to winter storms and snow.

🏵 Paul warned them, saying, “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship, cargo, and even our lives.” But Julius, the centurion, ignored Paul’s advice, trusting instead the ship’s owner and captain, who wanted to continue for business reasons. Most of the passengers agreed with the captain, believing that Fair Havens was not a suitable place to spend the winter. They decided to risk their lives and sail to Phoenix, a harbor in Crete, which offered better shelter. When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had achieved their goal, so they weighed anchor and sailed along the coast of Crete.

🏵 Daily Prayer as Sweet Incense to God

The life of Abraham, God’s friend, was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, he built an altar nearby, where he offered sacrifices in the morning and evening. When his tent was moved, the altar remained. Any Canaanite passing by would know who had been there. Whenever Abraham settled in a new place, he built an altar and worshiped the living God.

🏵 Questions:

How did Festus and King Agrippa II get the opportunity to know God?

Why did Julius ignore Paul’s advice?

Why did they say they could not release Paul?

Why are people who share God’s Word sometimes called insane?

Discuss with others the duties given to the government of Israel during Joshua’s time and compare them to the government of Israel today!

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 27:23-25.

[23-25] For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God has given you all them that sail with you. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving visions and dreams to Your servants so that we may not be afraid. Help us to be cheerful and know that You love us even in the midst of storms. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: A basin of water, a paper boat, and a straw placed in the middle of the boat. Stir the water to create a storm.

DAY 324 (November 19)

TOPIC: Shipwrecked and Swimming.

(Acts 27)

Traveling in those days was very challenging. The ships were not sturdy, they had no engines, and they relied on the stars and the sun for navigation, while storms were fierce. However, everything happened because the centurion chose to listen to the ship's captain rather than the servant of God. Indeed, from a human perspective, the captain knew more about sailing than Paul, but Paul was led by the Spirit of God. Paul was an elderly man, possibly around sixty years old, and his friends, like Luke and Aristarchus, decided to accompany the man of God.

The sailors later came to realize who Paul truly was—indeed, those who do not know you cannot value you. Likewise, in our lives, we should be cautious about listening to the advice of certain people, friends, and experts over God. As they traveled along the coast of Crete, after some time, a wind called the Northeaster (Eurakilo) blew violently like a storm. It struck the ship so hard that it could not withstand the wind, and they were carried away to a small island called Cauda, where they tried to secure the lifeboat. The lifeboat, which was aboard the ship, was tied to it.

They used ropes to hoist the lifeboat and reinforced the ship by passing ropes underneath it, fearing they might run aground. They lowered the anchor, fearing that the wind would drive them onto the sandbanks along the coast of Cyrene, Libya. Despite their efforts, the storm battered them severely, and on the second day, they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. Neither the sun nor the stars were visible due to the thick clouds, and the storm persisted for many days, causing everyone to lose hope of being saved.

After spending a long time without eating properly, Paul stood up and addressed the passengers and crew, speaking loudly to be heard over the storm: "Men, you should have listened to me and not sailed from the harbor on the coast of Crete; you would have avoided this loss and damage. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost—only the ship will be destroyed. Last night, an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar, and God has graciously given you the lives of all


DUNLA

who sail with you.' So, men, keep up your courage, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me. However, we must run aground on some island."

On the fourteenth night, they were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea. About midnight, the sailors sensed they were approaching land. In fact, they were approximately 700 km from land. They took soundings and found the water was 120 feet deep. A little later, they took soundings again and found it was 90 feet deep. When they measured again, it was 15 feet deep. Fearing they would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. That night, some sailors attempted to escape from the ship. They let down the lifeboat into the sea, pretending they were going to lower more anchors. When Paul noticed this, he warned Julius, the centurion, saying, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." So, the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

As dawn was breaking, Paul urged everyone to eat, saying, "For fourteen days you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." After saying this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Once they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing the rest of the cargo overboard.

When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. The sailors cut loose the anchors and left them in the sea, untied the rudder ropes, and hoisted the foresail to the wind to make for the beach. However, the ship struck a sandbar where two seas met and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, while the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the waves.

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion, wanting to spare Paul's life, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to follow on planks or other pieces of the ship. In this way, everyone reached land safely. These people were blessed to travel with the man of God. Their safety was secured because of these faithful individuals. Even today, if you associate with those who worship the true God of heaven—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and follow His ways and His Word closely, you will be saved. Perhaps many

among the 276 passengers believed in God during those three months. Today, a journey like that could be made in about two days.

🌻Fathers and mothers, every morning and evening, gather your children close to you, and with humble prayer, lift your hearts to GOD for His help. Your loved ones face trials. The daily burdens press upon both the young and the old. Those who desire to live lives of patience, love, and cheerfulness must pray. It is only through receiving continuous help from GOD that we can achieve victory over ourselves.

🌻Questions:

1. How did Paul encourage the travelers?

2. What words did God use to encourage Paul?

3. How many people were saved from the shipwreck?

4. What scheme did the sailors attempt, which Paul warned Julius about?

5. Why didn't the soldiers kill the prisoners?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Acts 20:35.

[35] …It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for helping us to be generous, that we may rejoice in giving rather than receiving. Sometimes we part with our loved ones and feel sorrow; help us that we may meet them again in heaven one day. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make paper boats. Prepare a box with things for Paul's journey. Act out saying goodbye and the sadness of accompanying him.

DAY 325 (November 20)

TOPIC: On the Island of Malta and Their Kindness

(Acts 28)



When they had safely reached the shore, they discovered that they were on the island of Malta (check it on the map), which is part of Africa. Today, the people here speak Arabic but write it using the Latin alphabet, not Arabic script. The locals were not highly educated or advanced (primitive), but they were very kind and showed extraordinary kindness. God does not require people to be highly educated but to be loving. Even if they do not know Him deeply, they fulfill His Law according to their understanding by performing good deeds, as the Book of Romans says.

Since it was cold, and seeing that the shipwrecked people were wet from swimming and the rain, the locals lit a fire to warm them and welcomed them. While gathering firewood, Paul brought a bundle and placed it on the fire. As he did so, a venomous snake emerged from the bundle and bit

him, latching onto his hand. When the people of Malta saw this, they said, “This man must be a murderer. Although he escaped the sea, justice does not allow him to live because of his many crimes.” However, Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no harm. They expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead because they knew how deadly the snake’s venom was. But nothing happened—he remained healthy. After observing him for a long time and seeing no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

It is easy for a person who does not put God first to worship other gods when they encounter something extraordinary. Not far from that place, there were fields belonging to the chief of the island, named Publius. This wealthy and generous man, upon hearing about them, welcomed the shipwreck survivors. Paul and his fellow evangelists were honored guests for three days.

Publius’s father was bedridden, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul visited him, placed his hands on him, prayed for him, and healed him. News of this spread quickly throughout the island, and many people brought their sick to Paul, and through the power of Almighty God, he healed them all. The people of Malta were blessed by the team of evangelists. They honored them greatly, and when they were ready to depart, the people provided them with many gifts and all the supplies they needed. After three months on the island—during which many, I believe, accepted Jesus and the True God who created the heavens, the earth, and everything in them—they boarded an Alexandrian ship that had wintered on the island. This ship bore the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux, Roman deities.

From Malta, they traveled on foot for about 150 kilometers and reached Syracuse, then proceeded to Rhegium. After three days, a favorable wind blew, and the next day they arrived at Puteoli, near Naples in Italy. There, they found Christian brothers and sisters who had prepared to receive them and urged them to stay for seven days. Finally, the ship arrived in Rome.

By this time, the captains and even the soldiers had developed a good relationship with Paul and his companions, allowing them to stay for seven days. As a prisoner, Paul continued to preach and strengthen the believers there. Paul was a courageous servant of Christ who never grew tired of witnessing, along with his companions. Luke and Aristarchus worked tirelessly on the island. This example is one we should all follow as believers in Jesus.

If you want to develop a good and virtuous character, follow the example of this gospel preacher. Paul undertook about four long missionary journeys—you can explore his travels in detail through maps online. Pray for those you share

the gospel with. Ask God to give them hearts willing to receive His Word. Your role is to faithfully speak to them.

Jesus left us a command, saying:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What an amazing promise! It comes with all authority from Him, and He will be with us until the end of the world! 🌻Let us pray for courage like Paul’s! He led many to believe in the Messiah, including members of Emperor Nero’s household.

You cannot read Paul’s story and remain unconvinced that he truly believed with all his heart that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He was so certain of his faith that he was willing to die for it.

Paul, once a fierce enemy of Jesus, became a devoted follower because the risen Jesus appeared to him and removed his ignorance (lack of understanding). Only those with such strong faith will endure the coming “time of Jacob’s trouble” spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah. Let us ask God to give us this kind of faith.

🌻Every morning, dedicate yourself and your children to God for that day. Do not plan based on months or years—that is not yours to control. You have been given one short day. Work as if it is your last day on earth. Submit all your plans to God for Him to carry out or remove as He sees fit.

Accept His plans over your own, even when it means giving up cherished ambitions. In this way, your life will be increasingly shaped according to the divine pattern:

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

🌻Questions:

1. Where is Malta located on the map?

2. Which language is similar to the Maltese language?

3. What did the people say when Paul was bitten by a snake?

4. Who was Publius?

5. Were the people of Malta blessed by the evangelists or the servants of God?

6. Which city was Paul taken as a prisoner?

7. In which country is Naples located?

8. Do you talk to your neighbors about the Messiah?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Acts 28:3-5.

[3-5] And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffers not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Prayer: Father, thank You for protecting us from pain or harm and sending Your angels to accompany us. Help me to be courageous and to trust in You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Gather a bundle of sticks, use a plastic snake, then light a pretend fire among the sticks and throw the plastic snake into it.

DAY 326 (November 21)

TOPIC: Paul Testifies in Rome and Writes Letters to the Churches.

(Acts 28)



When the Jewish brothers heard that Paul was arriving in Rome with the evangelists Aristarchus and Luke, the beloved physician, they came to meet them at the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns, about 60 kilometers from the city of Rome. Julius, the centurion, handed over the other prisoners to the soldiers and the prison of Caesar in Rome. However, Paul was treated with respect because of his role during the shipwreck. Julius explained these things, and Paul was given the privilege of staying in his own rented house under guard. He was allowed to receive visits from friends. He had longed to one day arrive in Rome to preach, and he had already written a remarkable letter about the story of the cross. Now that he had finally set foot in Rome, he felt comforted and encouraged. Paul thanked God for the love and care shown by the brothers, despite being in chains and considered a criminal—they were not ashamed of him.

The believers who knew Paul understood well that God was using him as a chosen vessel so that many could receive eternal life. Paul explained his situation to these brothers and testified about his experiences. This courageous man, Paul, has brought millions to Christ through his work and writings. Although education is not a requirement to serve God, a well-educated person can easily reach certain groups and has the ability to articulate ideas in writing and speak to people in high positions. Every human being is given the ability to reach specific people that others cannot—what is known as reaching the "grassroots."

After three days, Paul invited the leaders of the Jews in Rome to meet with him and explained his circumstances. He told them that although they might have heard about his case, he had done nothing against the Jewish religion or the customs of their ancestors. Yet, he had been imprisoned in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. Upon investigation, the governor found no fault in him worthy of death and planned to release him. However, when the Jews objected to his release, and Paul realized that the governor might surrender him to them, he appealed to Caesar. He clarified that it was not his intention to bring any accusations against his own people.

Paul emphasized that he was in chains because of his hope in the Messiah and the promise to Israel. The Jewish leaders in Rome told him that they had not received any letters or reports from Judea about his case, nor had any of their brothers arrived to speak ill of him. They expressed their interest in hearing his views because, while the Christian movement was known to them, it was spoken of negatively everywhere.

They arranged a day to meet, and many people came to Paul's rented house. From morning until evening, he explained and testified about the kingdom of God. He taught them using the Scriptures, showing them how the writings of Moses and the prophets pointed to Jesus as the promised Messiah. Some of them were convinced by his message and believed in Jesus, while others disagreed and argued among themselves.

Before they departed, Paul reminded them of the words spoken by the Holy Spirit through the prophet Isaiah: "Go to this people and say, 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.' For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them."

Paul declared that the message of salvation was for all nations, languages, and tribes. If the Jews refused to believe, the Gentiles would be ready to

receive it. Many Jews did not accept Paul's words; instead, they smiled politely, said farewell, and left while continuing to argue among themselves. Although they were good people who did no harm to God's servant, their hearts were hardened. They were unwilling to accept Jesus because they feared their lives would be changed. They preferred to remain as they were. Are you ready to surrender to Jesus, or do you want to remain unchanged? When you hear this precious story, will you respond by embracing the love of Jesus, or will you remain indifferent?

Paul continued to preach the good news of the gospel. Since Governor Agrippa and others were in no rush to judge Paul, knowing he was not a criminal, they delayed the case. For two years, Paul remained under house arrest, continuing to speak boldly about the kingdom of God. He knew his time of execution was drawing near, so he made the most of every opportunity to share the gospel openly and without hindrance. Even the members of Caesar's household and the soldiers guarding him heard the gospel, and many believed (see Philippians 1:12 and Philippians 4:22).

Later, Paul was released and traveled again, but he was eventually imprisoned once more. During this time, he wrote letters to the young churches he had founded or that his disciples had established. These are known as the Prison Epistles, including Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Philemon. In these letters, Paul encouraged and comforted the believers. He concluded one letter by saying, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing." It is said that Paul was executed by Emperor Nero in 68 AD.

Paul and the apostles worked hard to break down the barriers of ethnicity and religion. They preached that Jesus, the Messiah, had come, died, and risen again. Although many knew this was true, they were reluctant to fully commit. The apostles emphasized that it was better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. They tirelessly testified about God. Their zeal and dedication deserve our support and imitation. If we want to develop good character, we must value and follow the example set by the apostles.

Daily Prayer Focus: We should view every duty as sacred because it is part of our service to God, no matter how humble the task may be. Our daily prayer should be, "Lord, help me to do my best. Teach me how to work diligently. Give me strength and enthusiasm. Help me to bring the Savior's love into my service."

Questions:

Who accompanied Paul to Rome?

What did Julius do upon arriving in Rome?

What kind of imprisonment did Paul experience?

Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?

Why did people refuse to change when Paul spoke to them?

Are you ready to fully surrender to God?

How do you think strangers perceived Paul, an older man in chains among other prisoners?

Have you ever heard the truth and failed to act on it?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Acts 3:7.

[7] Then Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I you: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father, for You heal our disabilities and diseases, even those we may have been born with since childhood. Blessed be Your Name. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Role play of a man standing up and leaping for joy.

DAY 327 (November 22)

TOPIC: The Letters of Paul, the Apostles, Jude, and James.

While in Rome as a prisoner, Paul had the opportunity to preach the gospel, receive visits from friends, and write letters to the churches he had helped establish. Luke, Aristarchus, Mark, Timothy, and others continued to serve alongside him. The letters we have are only a portion of those included in the Bible. The New Testament contains 21 letters, written to churches that had been established after being taught about the Messiah. It is believed that these letters were written even before the Gospels. Fourteen of these are Paul's letters, including the letter to the Hebrews. Paul's letters make up more than half of the New Testament. I encourage parents to discuss these letters with their children and to memorize passages from them. We should not overlook these letters, as they contain valuable teachings and are part of the Holy Scriptures. Paul was a remarkable letter writer, and his writings continue to be read by millions of people today. It is said that Galatians and Thessalonians were the first letters written around 45 AD.

Paul was a Pharisee, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. Initially, he was called Saul and held Roman citizenship because he was born in Cilicia, Tarsus. He was educated under Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He wrote letters to the newly founded churches to encourage them regarding their relationship with God, their relationship with others, and their family relationships. In his letters, he addressed people from different backgrounds and tailored his messages to their cultural contexts. He said that although he was free, he became a servant to all—becoming like a Jew to win the Jews, living under the law to win those under the law, and becoming weak to win the weak. It appears he did not marry, choosing instead to dedicate himself fully to serving God.

Although it is possible that during his time as a member of the Sanhedrin council he may have had a wife, he might have become a widower later on. He earned his living by making tents, choosing to be content and not depend on others. He knew how to live humbly and how to live in abundance, having learned to face hunger and plenty, and to endure need. He believed that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. After his conversion, Paul was taken to Arabia, where he was taught by the Holy Spirit for three years. Despite his great knowledge, he remained humble, calling himself the



chief of sinners. Through God's power, he preached and healed. He worked alongside many others, including Barnabas (the son of encouragement), Silas, Mark, Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila, Luke the physician, and others.

❁ In addition to their profound teachings on faith, these letters provide valuable insights into the history of God's work and the early Christian church. Although Romans is listed first among Paul's letters, the chronological order of his writings begins with Thessalonians, followed by Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy. Most of his letters were written between 45 AD and 65 AD. Epaphroditus and Timothy carried Paul's letter to Philippi, a letter filled with comfort, joy, gentleness, and kindness. Onesimus delivered the letter to the church in Colossae. This letter to the Colossians did not address any specific problem but offered Christian guidance. These letters conveyed messages of deep love, as the apostles wrote to their spiritual children, providing counsel in all aspects of life to help them grow in their faith and serve Christ until His second coming.

❁ The apostles desired believers to remain faithful until the day Jesus would appear in the clouds, living lives of godliness, humility, peace, love, joy, hope, and patience. These letters reminded the believers that they would face difficulties because the enemy sought to cause them to fall and suffer. However, they were urged not to worry, as nothing could separate them from the love of Christ—not trouble, hardship, hunger, lack of clothing, danger, or persecution. If you find some parts of Paul's letters difficult to understand, do not be discouraged, as even Apostle Peter acknowledged that some aspects of Paul's writings were challenging. When reading these letters, consider the audience, the time they were written, and the issues faced by those early believers.

❁ Many Christians had previously worshiped other gods, following pagan beliefs, and needed to be taught the truth with care and love—qualities that Paul demonstrated. Paul served the Lord with all his heart and strength, trusting that God would safeguard his faith until the end. In his letter to Timothy, Paul urged him to preach the Word, be prepared in and out of season, and to rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience. Paul foresaw a time when people would reject sound doctrine, follow their own desires, gather teachers to suit their itching ears, and turn aside to myths. He instructed Timothy to be sober-minded, endure hardships, and fulfill his ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Paul believed that God gave him the strength to rescue others from the jaws of the lion—meaning the devil.

❁ Other New Testament letter writers include Jude (the brother of Jesus),

James (the brother of Jesus), John, and Peter, who were apostles. Paul continued to testify about Christ freely. It is believed that at one point, he was released from prison and traveled again before returning to Rome, where he was eventually executed under Emperor Nero. Paul's final words were encouraging: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will award to me—and not only to me but to all who long for His appearing." May we also strive to live lives that reflect these words.

Consecrate yourself to God each morning; make this your first task of the day. Let your prayer be: "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Yours. I lay all my plans at Your feet. Use me today in Your service. Abide with me, and may all my work be done in You." This is a daily matter. Every morning, consecrate yourself to God for the day ahead. Commit your plans to Him to be carried out or set aside as He directs. By doing this day by day, you place your life in His hands, and He will shape your character to reflect that of Christ.

Questions:

For what purposes did Paul and the apostles write their letters?

Do you write to your friends and share with them about the Lord Almighty?

What teachings did Paul give to Timothy?

Who else wrote letters in the New Testament?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 16:19,20.

[19,20] The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul with my own hand.

Prayer: Thank You Father for the ministry of writing, that we can send letters to those far away to encourage them. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Provide pens and paper for writing a letter to greet people you know.

DAY 328 (November 23)

TOPIC: For I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel!



❁ Many people have called this book the clearest gospel book of all. Paul wrote the letter to the Romans around 60 AD while he was in Corinth, a city in Greece. Although he had never been to Rome, he knew there were believers there who began meeting after hearing the news of the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, who had been promised. Rome was a gathering place for people from all over the world, as it was the capital of the Roman Empire. It was a city filled with music, competitive sports, entertainment, and even brutal games where people died. An example of these cruel games included people being thrown to wild animals while others cheered as the victim tried to defend themselves.

❁ This city also had many God-fearing people like Priscilla and Aquila, Phoebe, and others mentioned in Romans chapter 16. Paul traveled farther than most missionaries of his time, despite the lack of modern transportation such as cars, airplanes, telephones, emails, WhatsApp, or trains. Communication was challenging, so letters like the one to the Romans were a great help to many. Paul prayed constantly for the Romans, and we too should pray for our parents, relatives, and all people who do not yet know Christ. Paul tells the believers that through faith in Jesus and what He did for us—dying on our behalf—we are reconciled to God. This means we should live our lives for

Him.

Romans 1:1 says, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.” What are we set apart for today? The Holy Spirit knew that we all need the message of Romans. Paul addresses the greatest problem in human history—God’s judgment on humanity due to our unrighteousness and self-righteousness. Human solutions to the problem of guilt and separation from God have always fallen short—our efforts cannot provide the required solution. Human-made religious systems cannot bridge the gap. Paul explains that both Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin (Romans 3:9), and the problem is so severe that only God can resolve it. We need to abandon our own righteousness and run to Christ and His sacrifice as our only righteousness. After being justified by faith, we must grow in righteous living and relationships. We need to embrace the gospel fully and share it with others. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus alone!

The letter to the Romans is a treasure of Christian faith, carefully organized and more widely understood than Paul’s other letters. It is a pastoral letter that completes the foundational plan of pastoral ministry. It speaks about grace led by the Holy Spirit. This letter has transformed the hearts of many who have read it. Grace is one of the most significant distinctions between Christianity and other religions. Paul wrote the letter to the Romans to explain the gospel—that our righteousness comes from Jesus alone and that we do not earn it. We are saved by works—the works of Jesus on the cross—not by our own actions.

This letter is another gospel book! It is the good news of salvation. Jesus died on the cross for us. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God. Blessed are the feet of those who bring the gospel so that others may hear. Paul also reminds us that same-sex relationships—whether a man with a man or a woman with a woman—are sinful and go against the natural order; there are consequences for these actions. Paul emphasizes how sin affects not only humanity but all of creation. Since the fall, all of creation groans under the weight of human sin. Before sin entered the world, animals did not prey on each other, and there was no pain, sorrow, or death. However, after human sin, all of creation suffered, even though it was not responsible.

Paul reminds us that all have sinned, and the wages of sin is death. He asks how a sinful person can live day by day to glorify God. Paul recognized his own struggle—“What I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.” He cried out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” He then thanked God, who gives us victory over sin through Jesus. Paul explains that evil comes to those who reject God as the Creator, believing they know

everything and refusing to follow His ways. It becomes difficult for God to help such people, and over time, they become entrenched in false teachings.

❁ With boldness, Paul declares, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.” A Gentile refers to people like you and me. The righteousness of God is revealed through faith, as God says, “The righteous will live by faith.” This means that we are not justified by the works of the law but by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for us while we were still sinners. Paul asks, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” He concludes that neither death, life, angels, nor powers can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

❁ The Jews believed that circumcision or being descendants of Abraham would save them. Paul explains that true circumcision is a change of heart—loving God and accepting the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. He uses Abraham as an example, who was justified by faith even before he was circumcised. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation, no matter how good our works are. Our ethnicity, religion, or heritage cannot save us. Only God’s mercy and grace through Jesus Christ can save us.

❁ Paul emphasizes that we should obey government authorities because they are God’s servants to bring order and justice. We should love and pray for our government. We owe no one anything except love. Paul stresses that believers should love one another and avoid false teachings that contradict the Bible.

❁ We are fully reconciled to God through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Sin entered the world through one man—Adam—and it is removed through Jesus’ death as a gift to all humanity. We are born again by confessing Jesus as our Savior and being baptized. Through Him, we are freed from the slavery of sin. Though Israel as a nation rejected Christ, many Jews will be saved through faith.

❁ Paul concludes the letter by greeting many friends, giving thanks, and praising God, saying: “To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

Questions:

1. Where was Paul when he wrote the book of Romans?
2. How does Paul say we are saved?
3. Why should we obey the government?
4. How many people does Paul say have sinned?
5. What does “grace” mean?
6. What does “mercy” mean?
7. Why is the letter to the Romans considered a gospel book?
8. How does creation suffer because of human sin?
9. Why do we do the evil we do not want to do?
10. How does love fulfill the law?
11. Why are health and salvation so closely related?
12. Why is it important to pray before reading the Bible?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Romans 8:35, 37, 38.

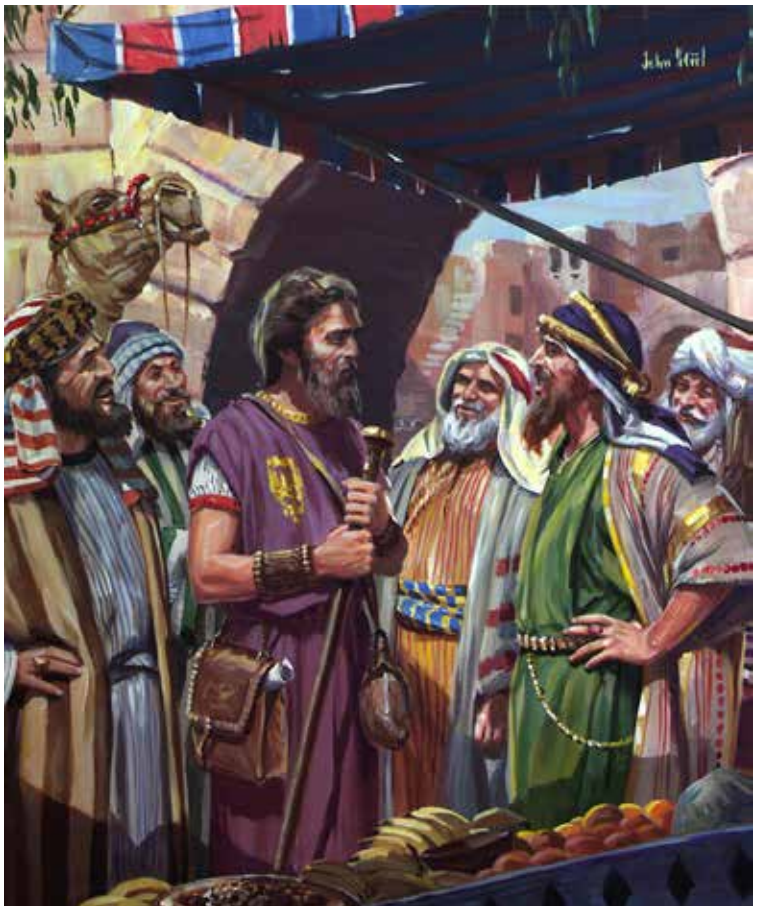
[35, 37, 38] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? … Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? … No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers… shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father, because we know that nothing can separate us from Your love. Whether tribulation, famine, peril, sword, or anything else, You will help us to overcome them all. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Make a wall. On one side, write “God Almighty,” and on the other side, place the children. Then break down the wall.

DAY 329 (November 24)

TOPIC: Problems Faced by New Believers in Corinth Are Discussed



This lengthy letter, addressing spiritual matters, was written in Greek to the believers in Corinth, Greece, probably around 55 AD. Paul established this church when he preached and lived there for a year and a half. Ancient Corinth was an international city—migration, money-making activities, major sports events, grand parties, and immoral practices like fornication, adultery, and moral decay were prevalent. Paul writes to the leaders and members to address the problems faced by the believers. These same problems exist in our churches today.

First, there were disputes among the members of the Corinthian church—they were quarreling with each other. Paul says the Jews seek signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom, but they should seek Jesus Christ crucified. Some claimed to belong to Paul, others to Apollos, and others to Cephas (Peter), prompting Paul to ask, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul or in the name of Jesus?"

Paul emphasizes that they are merely workers in God's field or servants of Christ. He says they have been beaten, gone hungry, been humiliated, and become the scum of the earth so that Christ may be glorified—not themselves. We must be careful not to quarrel like people of the world. Even today, we must avoid disputes with others, seek solutions, reconcile, and maintain peace when playing, working, or interacting with others.

Paul also addresses the immorality within the church—there was a man who took his father's wife as his own. This shameful and grievous sin prompted Paul to instruct the church to separate the man and impose disciplinary measures so that he might be helped and saved.

He advised them not to associate with sexually immoral people, the greedy, swindlers, or idolaters, as these will not inherit the kingdom of God. He reminded them that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and that they are not their own. Therefore, whether they eat, drink, or do anything else, they must honor God with their bodies because they were bought at a high price—the blood of Jesus.

This means we cannot consume anything harmful, such as cigarettes, unhealthy food, or alcohol. We cannot do whatever we please with our bodies because we are God's creation and are accountable as stewards of our lives.

Paul mentions that some people ate food sacrificed to idols, which he declares as sinful. For him, the most important thing was to know nothing else except Jesus Christ crucified.

Paul discusses the Lord's Supper in detail, explaining that before partaking in this sacrament, one must examine themselves and confess any wrongdoing. The bread represents the body of Christ, and the wine represents His blood—by partaking, we proclaim His death until He comes again. This sacrament also symbolizes sanctification.

Paul gives his personal advice, saying it is better not to marry, but if one cannot live without a partner, it is better to marry.

It is sinful to live with someone without a legally recognized marriage. Whether it is a traditional, church, or government marriage, it is ideal to have a church wedding for the blessing of the union. Paul notes that remaining unmarried can sometimes allow for more focus on God's work.

However, for those already married, they should not leave their spouses. If someone is married to an unbeliever, they should not divorce them, as their faith could lead to the spouse's salvation. However, believers should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Husbands and wives must live with love and humility. Everyone should avoid the impurity of living with someone outside the bonds of a God-ordained marriage.

Paul also addresses the issue of believers suing each other in secular courts. He asks, "Can't you settle these matters within the church? Don't you know

that the saints will judge the world?" If we will judge the world and even fallen angels, how much more should we be able to handle minor disputes among ourselves?

Paul speaks about the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit to each person for the benefit of others—some have the gift of teaching, others singing, words of wisdom or knowledge, healing, performing miracles, prophecy, distinguishing spirits, or speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit distributes these gifts as He wills.

Therefore, we should not be envious of others' gifts because God knows what is best for each of us, and we all have unique gifts. After discussing spiritual gifts, Paul emphasizes the importance of love. Without love, all gifts are meaningless in God's work.

True love is not just a feeling or emotion—it is a divine principle. God is love, and Jesus came to demonstrate God's love. Love is the greatest commandment—loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Paul explains that love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered, and does not keep records of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. The three enduring things are faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Paul discusses the resurrection, stating that at the last trumpet, the dead will rise, and our perishable bodies will be transformed into imperishable ones. Death will be swallowed up in victory. This message offers comfort to those grieving the loss of loved ones.

In chapter 16, Paul discusses the collection of offerings to support the ministry. Giving is an act of gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice, a sign of our trust in God, and an expression of love for Him and our neighbors. Following God's principles of giving opens the windows of heaven's blessings (Malachi 3).

Life is challenging for everyone in this sinful world. However, Christians find peace not because of a lack of troubles but because Christ is with them through their trials. Paul himself was overwhelmed beyond his strength but relied on God's help.

As Christians, we should comfort others with the comfort we have received

from God. Only God can provide true help and strength. As Matthew 24:13 says, “He who endures to the end will be saved.”

🌻Follow Jesus’ example of starting the day with prayer. Just as Jesus found wisdom and strength in prayer, young people should seek quiet moments with God daily. In every step, God says, “I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, ‘Do not fear; I will help you.’” (Isaiah 41:13).

🌻Questions:

Why is it wrong to marry a close relative?

Why shouldn’t believers take each other to court?

Why can’t we save ourselves through our works?

What does it mean that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?

Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4-8—what are the characteristics of true love?

What does the Lord’s Supper represent?

Why is everything meaningless without love?

Why did Paul ask the Corinthians if Christ was divided?

How should a believer approach legal disputes with another believer?

Should those who steal from the church be taken to court or forgiven?

How will the dead be raised?

In what way would you like God to open the windows of heaven for you this month?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1.

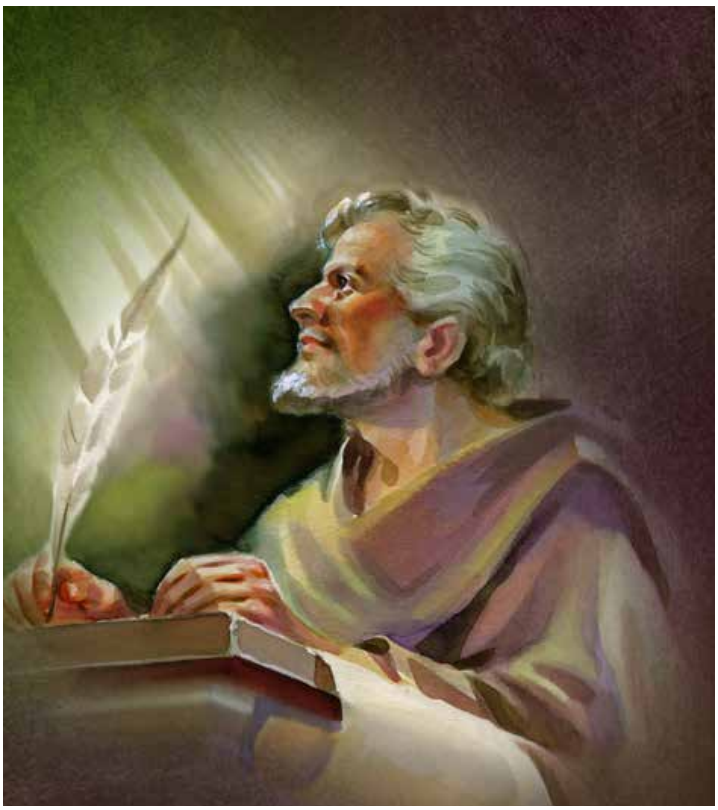
[1] Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. … Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving us Your love and for loving us. Help us to be patient, kind, humble, respectful, free from envy or grudges, and full of faith. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

DAY 330 (November 25)

TOPIC: When we are weak, then we are strong.

(2 Corinthians)



The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians in Greece, defending his apostleship and the gospel. His writings suggest he had written about four letters to the Corinthians, but only two have survived to this day. Paul was given his apostleship directly by Jesus Himself. He asserts that he is not inferior to the greatest apostles in any way, though he considers himself nothing. He writes a letter of rebuke like a father, so that when he comes, he will not have to be harsh, using the authority the Lord gave him to build up rather than tear down. Paul postponed his visit to Corinth to lessen their sorrow because some had misunderstood him and made him weep. His desire was to draw people to Christ, but others wanted to hide their evil deeds and divide the church.

Paul commends the Corinthians for disciplining the man who had sinned by living with his stepmother and urges them to forgive and restore him to fellowship. This is to prevent Satan from taking advantage of their lack of forgiveness and love, as the offender might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. False prophets existed even then—people who claimed to follow Moses and Jesus but taught that Jewish laws such as sacrificial offerings still applied. Even today, false prophets exalt themselves, focus on their ministries, and seek offerings more than caring for the flock of God. We are urged to avoid these false prophets and instead be the fragrance of Christ before God. Someone once said that while Jesus fed 5,000 people, false prophets seek 5,000 followers to feed themselves, traveling in extravagant cars and even private jets.

Paul emphasizes that those who follow and serve God will face suffering at some point, but God is the comforter of all who are in trouble, especially those who receive Him and seek to do His will. In every trial and difficulty, we should remember that God is Almighty, and nothing is impossible for Him. God can also use other believers to comfort those in trouble. We can intercede for our friends or relatives facing difficulties. Joseph's suffering in Egypt strengthened and purified him. Although Paul and his companions faced many hardships, they considered their afflictions light and temporary compared to the glory of Christ. He advises us to focus on the unseen eternal things rather than the temporary things of this world. He encourages us to walk by faith, not by sight. Even if people think they are crazy for preaching the gospel, it is because the love of Christ compels them—they do not want people to perish.

Jesus reconciled us to God through His death. This alone is a compelling reason to live for Him rather than for ourselves. We are called to live holy lives without blemish, spots, or wrinkles. Since God is holy, we must also pursue holiness and peace with others. Paul urges the believers to set aside offerings for the poor and needy, reminding them that God will reward their generosity. He praises the Macedonian believers for their generosity in supporting God's work, trusting that God would meet their every need. Let us give as we are blessed—not only material things, for God owns everything, but also our hearts, our entertainment, and our time. It is our choice what and how much to give to Him. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. Let us not merely fill our minds with Scripture while allowing our hearts to be corrupted by sin.

Paul emphasizes that Christians should be humble, knowing that many misunderstand humility as weakness. True humility is having the mind of Christ. Paul teaches that marriage is an institution established by God and warns against marrying unbelievers. "Tell me who your friend is, and I will tell you who you are." Birds of a feather flock together. Many also consider social media their friend, which raises the question: How much time do we spend on it, and what do we consume there? Are we sharing the gospel digitally as well? An unbeliever values different things from a believer. Just as oil and water cannot mix, so too the kingdom of God cannot mix with the kingdom of the enemy. The gospel remains hidden to those who are perishing because the god of this world has blinded their minds. Paul emphasizes that our sufferings are small and temporary compared to the eternal kingdom of heaven. Someone once said that when we get to heaven, we will struggle to remember our earthly sorrows because they will pale in comparison to the beauty of heaven and the joy of seeing God face-to-face. Isn't this good news that should bring a smile to us as pilgrims in this world?

Therefore, let us focus on the unseen things because the visible is temporary, but the unseen is eternal. Today is the acceptable time and the day of our salvation. Jesus, though rich, became poor for our sake so that we might become rich through His poverty. Paul recounts the many hardships he endured: beatings with rods, stoning, shipwrecks, dangers from rivers, robbers, and his own people, as well as hunger, thirst, fasting, cold, and lack of clothing—all for the sake of the gospel. He says he boasts in these sufferings, not because it is pleasant, but because when he is weak, he is strong in Christ.

Paul reveals a powerful truth about taking captive every thought and demolishing arguments that rise against the knowledge of God. This truth should be explained clearly to children so they understand it well. To prevent pride due to the abundance of revelations, God gave Paul a thorn in his flesh—a messenger of Satan to torment him. Paul pleaded with the Lord three times to remove it, but God told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, Paul chose to boast in his weaknesses so that Christ’s power might rest on him. He takes pleasure in his weaknesses, hardships, and troubles because when he is weak, he is spiritually strong and able to overcome the enemy.

Paul was a hardworking man. He did not burden the church financially but supported himself by making tents. Since the church was in its early stages, Paul spent time explaining his experiences in ministry, as many were speaking against his work. He disliked boasting but emphasized that if anyone should boast, it should be in knowing the Lord.

Let us learn from Paul that if we are in Christ, we are new creations; the old has passed away, and we have begun a new life as children of light. A powerful promise in this letter is found in 2 Corinthians 1:20: “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” The Bible is God’s precious garden, and His promises are treasures. We must receive the Scriptures as God’s Word to us, as though He were speaking directly to us. Let us believe God’s promises. We should not rely on our feelings as proof of our acceptance by the Lord but instead take hold of His promises and claim them as our own. Believe that you have received what you asked for, and it will be yours. Through faith, let us hold onto Christ, and He will empower us. Let us thank God for our Savior.

If Jesus needed to pray while on earth, how much more should we pray? When Jesus was on earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He instructed them to present their daily needs to God and cast all their burdens on Him. The assurance He gave them—that their prayers would be heard—is also an

assurance for us today.

Questions: Why didn't God remove Paul's thorn? Why should a believer not marry an unbeliever? Why is it important for believers to give offerings? Why should we focus on the unseen things?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 2 Corinthians 5:6,7.

[6,7] Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight).

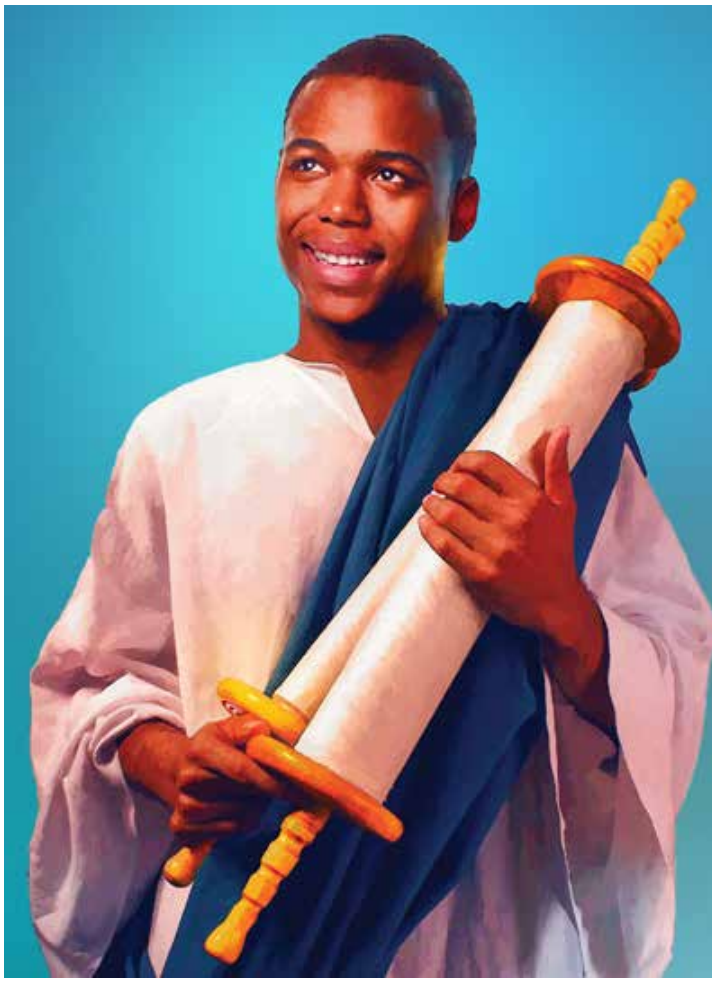
Prayer: Thank You very much, our Father. We pray that You help us live by faith, knowing that You love us and that Your promises are completely true. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: For little children, you can teach the principle "we walk by faith, not by sight" through a "blindfold" activity, where children with eyes covered trust a leader to guide them along a path. Explain what faith means!

DAY 331 (November 26)

TOPIC: The Fruit of the Spirit

(Galatians 5)



Galatia is part of modern-day Turkey. Paul traveled there during his missionary journeys, preaching about Jesus for the first time in churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. His spiritual child, Timothy, was from Derbe. Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to explain that his apostleship came from the Lord and not from man. His emphasis was that salvation does not come from human works, as many Galatians believed that circumcision and becoming a Jew would lead them to heaven. He told them that those who insisted on circumcision or following the works of the law did not even keep the law themselves but were obsessed with external practices. Paul questioned their reasoning, asking if anyone could be saved through good works or circumcision. No one can! Every human being is sinful—whether in small or great ways.

It is only the act of Jesus on the cross that saves us. Paul declared that if anyone preached a different gospel from the one he taught them, let that person be accursed. He reminded the Galatians that they began their spiritual journey well but became entangled in the works of the flesh. He challenged them by saying that if they believed cutting a small part of their body (circumcision) would save them, then they should go ahead and cut the whole thing off. Even Peter was misled by this issue. After spending time with Jewish believers in Galatia—those of the circumcision group—Peter began to avoid eating with Gentile Christians to please the Jews and care more about

what they thought.

Paul rebuked Peter, who realized his mistake—that prioritizing human opinions over God's guidance distorts the Word when preaching to the Gentiles. It is Jesus alone who saves. Certain religious practices, such as bodily marks, pilgrimages, or rituals, cannot save us. God is our salvation—seek Him and accept Him first, and then good works will be the fruit of our faith. God does not discriminate between Gentiles and Jews, men and women, free people and slaves, the rich and the poor, the tall and the short, the black and the white.

Paul saw some people misusing the grace of God—a problem that persists today. Many claim that because they are saved by grace, breaking the law does not matter. It is true that we are all saved by faith alone—our faith in God and His Son, not by our works. However, being saved by grace does not mean we should continue doing evil. We must crucify our sinful desires, surrender to the Son of God, and abandon our sinful ways to embrace a new life. Paul said, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel." Anyone preaching a different message should be accursed. We are not justified by the works of the law, for no one can be justified by works alone.

We all need to be justified because we often fall and sin. Those who have faith are the children of Abraham, the father of faith. Many Jews boasted of being Abraham's descendants, but Paul reminded them that if they belonged to Christ, they were truly Abraham's children. We are the children of Sarah—the children of the promise—not the children of Hagar, meaning we are free and should not enslave ourselves to the works of the law. Paul said the Galatians started their spiritual journey well but were now ruining it by focusing on fleshly works like circumcision. He urged them to walk by the Spirit, and they would not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

Galatians teaches us about the fruit of the Spirit, which every child of God should possess. It is one fruit with many aspects: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Memorize these characteristics! The opposite of the fruit of the Spirit is the works of the flesh: boasting, provoking one another, envy, witchcraft, idolatry, divisions, gossip, sexual immorality, impurity, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, drunkenness, gluttony, and similar things. Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We should always act with love and restore those who fall into sin with gentleness, bringing them back to Jesus. At the same time, we must be

cautious, lest we also fall into temptation. We should carry one another's burdens and help each other as brothers and sisters, for we have one Father.

Paul reminds us that God sees everything we do—both in secret and openly. Do not be deceived—God is not mocked. Whatever a person sows, that is what they will reap. Those who sow to please the flesh will reap destruction, while those who sow to please the Spirit will reap eternal life. No one can plant spinach and harvest cannabis. May God help us run the race, forgetting what lies behind and focusing on the great reward Jesus has prepared for us. While others strive for perishable trophies, let us not chase after houses, bicycles, cars, wealth, fields, livestock, fancy clothes, or toys—but let us pursue eternal life in Jesus.

There is no better university than sitting at the feet of Jesus, waiting quietly to hear His voice through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as in Paul's time, Satan still works today to deceive and destroy people's souls through false teachings. Be wary of anyone who teaches a message contrary to the Bible. This means you must know the Bible's teachings thoroughly so that when Satan's agents bring false doctrines, you will recognize and reject them. This is a matter of life and death—so take it seriously!

Let us have joy, and whatever our needs or troubles may be, let us tell God without hiding anything. If we feel sadness, anger, or gratitude, let us speak to God because He cares deeply about our lives.

Jesus Prayed for Strength to Endure Temptations. Few people follow the Savior's example of praying diligently and constantly to God for the strength to endure life's trials and fulfill daily responsibilities. Christ, the Captain of our salvation, through His suffering and sacrifice, set an example for all His followers that persistent prayer and vigilance are essential for representing His love for fallen humanity.

Questions:

Why are we not saved by circumcision, our tribe, or our religion?

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

What are the works of the flesh?

Why was Paul astonished about the Galatians?

Why must we let go of anger, filthy language, gossip, drunkenness, and

revenge?

How can you avoid quarrels?

Do you think your own righteousness or actions can earn you salvation?
Sing the song “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less Than Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness.”

Do you know the 28 fundamental beliefs? Mention 10 of them!

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Galatians 5:22-26.

[22-26] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for today. Go before us as we go to school. We pray for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Activity: Memorize the fruit of the Spirit, and draw fruits, writing the nine traits on them, or use one large fruit such as jackfruit or watermelon to show the different traits.

DAY 332 (November 27)

TOPIC: The Message of Relationships

(Ephesians)



Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome. If we were to memorize one book out of the 66 books of the Bible, this would be the one! This book contains everything—creation, the first coming of Jesus to earth and His death for us, and His second coming. It covers everything from Genesis to Revelation! During this time, Paul also wrote letters to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Second Timothy. The members of the church in Ephesus, located in modern-day Turkey, were Gentiles (non-Jews). Timothy was their pastor, and this church was the first of the seven churches John wrote about in Revelation. This letter does not seem to address specific issues among the members.

Ephesus was known for the great temple of the goddess Diana (Artemis). In this city, metalworkers became angry with Paul when he preached about Jesus because they lost their market for selling metal idols of Diana. Paul sent Tychicus to deliver this letter. He urged the Ephesians to live according to the calling they had received from God. This book overflows with joy in knowing Jesus and having fellowship with other believers. It is our opportunity to know God, understand His love, and become part of His family. We should

be encouraged that through His grace, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

This book is somewhat similar to Colossians. Paul reminds the people that he is an apostle and a servant of Christ, and that unity in the body of Christ is important—whether among parents, husbands, wives, slaves, or children. Paul encourages us to follow God as dearly loved children and to live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. He advises against speaking foolishly, living shamefully, or engaging in arguments because these things are not pleasing to God. His advice is to live wisely, making the most of every opportunity because we live in evil days—do not waste time on meaningless things.

He tells wives to submit to their husbands as they submit to the Lord because the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. Each wife is to respect her husband as the leader of the home. He tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it. There is a certain respect we owe to each gender as part of humanity, but it is important to note that the submission of a wife is directed to her husband—not to all men.

The body and its parts are an example of unity within the Christian church—each part is important and dependent on the others. The head, lungs, or heart cannot claim to be more important than the mouth, feet, hands, or kidneys. Paul warns the church elders against false teachers who spread a false gospel. He urges them not to abandon their first love—the passion they had when they were new believers.

The Holy Spirit seals us and gives us assurance of our salvation, so we do not fear being lost. The church must be distinct from the world. Christ is one, there is one Spirit, one baptism, one hope, one faith, and one God. By grace, we are saved through faith—not by our works (Ephesians 2:20). It is a gift from God, so no one can boast.

Paul instructs children to obey their parents as they would obey the Lord, because it is right. This is the first commandment with a promise—that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. Fathers are advised not to provoke their children but to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves are told to obey their masters with respect and sincerity.

Masters are also instructed to treat their slaves well and not to threaten them because both slave and master share the same Master in heaven, who shows no favoritism. Paul tells us to let go of selfish desires and sinful

behaviors as if removing filthy clothes and instead to put on new garments of righteousness. We should avoid anger and arguments and not let the sun go down while we are still angry. We must leave behind old ways such as stealing, lying, and disobedience, and instead work hard to support ourselves and help others. We should speak words that uplift and encourage others and focus our minds on what is good.

Jesus is the peace and foundation of the entire church. We must be the light of the world, walking in love.

🌼 Paul concludes his letter by urging us to put on the seven pieces of the armor of God so that we may stand against the schemes of the devil. This is especially crucial for us today as we live in the final days of earth's history. Every day we are in a spiritual battle—these battles take place in our minds. It is a fight between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Every minute, we must choose whether to follow God or the devil. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

🌼 We are called to wear the whole armor:

1. The Belt of Truth – to stand firmly in God's truth.
2. The Breastplate of Righteousness – to protect our hearts and live righteously.
3. The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace – to walk in readiness to share the good news.
4. The Shield of Faith – to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one.
5. The Helmet of Salvation – to guard our minds with the assurance of salvation.
6. The Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God, which is our offensive weapon.
7. Prayer – to stay alert and continually intercede for all of God's people.

Interestingly, the armor protects the front but not the back—perhaps a lesson that retreating from defending Christ makes us vulnerable to attack.

🌼 May Jesus Christ continue to dwell in our hearts. He has brought us into His family so that we may understand how wide, long, high, and deep His love is—a love that surpasses all knowledge.

🌹 Make it a habit to pray Ephesians 3 every week! It says:
🤲 "For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches,

He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Often, we limit God’s blessings by asking for too little. Instead, we should pray boldly—God can and will bless us beyond what we ask or imagine! Let us pray like Jabez, saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed!” May the Lord bless you today, beyond all that you ask or think. Let us pray for one another.

Through Christ, the cry of humanity reached the heart of the merciful Father. Christ’s union with God provided divine power to overcome and give life to the world. This experience should be ours as well.

Questions:

Why should children obey their parents?

Why should husbands love their wives?

Why should wives submit to their husbands?

What advice is given to employers?

Why should servants obey their masters?

What are the pieces of the armor of God?

How can you put on the armor of God in your daily life?

What image does the prayer in Ephesians 3 give you?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Ephesians 6:10-12.

[10-12] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the armor You have given us. Help us to know that You enable us to stand against all the schemes of Satan. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit.

DAY 333 (November 28)

TOPIC: Rejoice in the Lord, again I say, rejoice

(Philippians)



Philippi was home to Lydia, the seller of purple cloth, and the jailer who, after his conversion along with his household, started a church. Paul had a vision at night of a man standing and pleading with him to come to Macedonia to help the people. Philippi was a city in Macedonia, Europe. The people of that city loved Paul and supported him more than other churches. Epaphroditus was Paul's helper and a friend of the Philippians. He went to Rome to deliver greetings from Philippi, but he became seriously ill. After prayer, God healed him, and he returned to Philippi with a letter for the believers. Paul advises them that no one should steal their joy!

The enemy wanted to imprison Paul to silence him. However, the letters he wrote while imprisoned became a blessing to the churches he had helped establish—and to us as well. Although Paul wrote Philippians while in prison, the book mentions the word "joy" approximately 20 times within its 104 verses. Knowing that believing in Christ includes suffering for Him, Paul considered all other things as rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8). Paul encourages us, like the believers in Philippi, not to be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, to present our requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippi was under Roman rule, enabling them to support Paul effectively during his imprisonment. Paul did not like to receive financial help from his spiritual children because he did not want to burden them. As a spiritual father, he believed it was his duty to support his children. However, he accepted the Philippians' gifts because of their unique relationship, knowing they gave sincerely and with great love. Even today, we may encounter situations where someone insists we accept food or other items—either sincerely or to test us, hoping we will refuse so they can keep their possessions. Let us give without stinginess or reluctance.

Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the ultimate and perfect example for believers. Although He was with His Father in heaven, He left all His glory and humbly came to live among us, enduring injustice for our sake. Although He was God, He made Himself nothing and took on the nature of a servant. Paul urges us to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus—the attitude of doing things without seeking recognition, payment, or boasting. God exalted Jesus and gave Him the Name above all names, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow—in heaven and on earth—and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. We pray to acknowledge Him as victors, not as those who are defeated.

Paul reminds us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. What a joy to know that He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Let us be ready to believe, even if it means suffering for Him. May God help us not to rely on our own righteousness but on His. Our greatest desire should be to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Although some preach Christ out of envy or rivalry and others out of goodwill or love, the important thing is that Christ is preached in every way—whether from false motives or true. Paul does not consider himself to have already attained the goal. Instead, he focuses on one thing—forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has called him. Let this be our goal today—to strive for the prize that Christ will one day give us.

Let us learn to be content in every situation—whether in plenty or in want, in abundance or in need. For godliness with contentment is great gain. We came into the world with nothing, not even clothes, and when we die, we take nothing with us to the grave. God is the One who strengthens us and meets our needs every day. Paul thanks the Philippians for sending Epaphroditus with financial assistance. He says his life is for Christ, and dying is gain for God's work, as he was imprisoned for Christ's sake. Paul declares that he does not want to waste time on anything else but knowing Christ. He encourages the Philippians to live each day in anticipation of Jesus' return.

Paul rejoices that the gospel is being preached and takes joy even in his sufferings. He encourages others to rejoice as well, calling the church in Philippi his joy and crown. He says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice." This is a beautiful song—let's sing it! Since we live in a world full of troubles, Paul emphasizes that instead of worrying about our problems, we should pray, give thanks, and present our requests to God. Although He already knows our needs, telling Him gives Him room to work in our lives according to His supreme authority.

Then comes the ultimate filter for everything in our lives. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. This verse is worth memorizing. It is the standard for every decision and action in our lives—whether singing, dressing, pursuing a degree, engaging in a sport, choosing friends, or anything else. Before doing anything, ask yourself: Is it true? Is it noble? Is it right? Is it pure? Is it lovely? Is it admirable? If the answer is "No," avoid it. If the answer is "Yes," embrace it.

Paul encouraged the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord—a message that applies to us today. The way to stand firm is by keeping our eyes on Christ and remembering that this world is not our home. It is remarkable that someone in prison would tell the church to rejoice! But Paul's perspective teaches us a crucial lesson—our inner attitude does not need to reflect our external circumstances. Paul was filled with joy because he knew that no matter what happened, Jesus Christ was with him. It is easy to become discouraged by unpleasant situations or overburdened by trivial matters. Ultimately, true joy comes from Christ dwelling within us. He is near, and when He returns, we will fully experience this great joy. The One who lives in us will accomplish His final purposes for us. Soon, brothers and sisters, we will be going home—let us rejoice!

It is not enough to hear, read, or even know God's Word well. We must also put it into practice. What do we wear? What music do we listen to? Who are our friends? Do we take time for worship? We can trust God to meet our needs always—whether for daily provision or the courage to face death as Paul did.

However, we must distinguish between our wants and our needs.

🌻Paul invites us to separate ourselves from worldly influences. If we obey His Word, we will be strong and useful. The disciples sought Jesus and told Him everything, and He encouraged and taught them. If we come to Jesus today and present our needs, He will not disappoint us.

🌻Questions:

Where was this letter written? Why is it called the letter of joy? What is the mindset of Christ? Why does Paul forget what is behind? Why is contentment important? What things are we told to think about? What should be the ultimate filter for our lives?

God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus👦👧

Key Text: Philippians 4:8.

[8] Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for giving me a spirit of gratitude. Help me filter the things I think about. Guard my thoughts to meditate only on those that are pure, just, lovely, and of good report. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Find a sieve or filter. Write on papers words that are pure and impure, true and false, lovely and unlovely, good and bad. Then pass these papers through the filter. The bad traits should be on large papers that cannot pass through the sieve.

DAY 334 (November 29)

TOPIC: As we have received Christ, let us walk in Him.

(Colossians)



We do not know exactly how the gospel reached Colossae, perhaps through other cities. Thessalonica was a major city with a port in Macedonia, Greece. Many members there were new converts and Gentiles. Paul writes to them with counsel on living a godly life. Epaphras of Colossae was a minister and a friend of Paul in the gospel. This letter mentions that false teachings had begun to infiltrate the church, possibly through confusion of doctrines. Epaphras reported the problems occurring in the church at Colossae. This letter was probably written alongside the letters to the Ephesians and Philemon. False teachings had entered the church, and Paul takes time to explain that Jesus is sufficient for our lives—for salvation, intercession, and sanctification. It is Jesus—not astrologers, sorcerers, or fortune-tellers—who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jesus Christ was the agent through whom the Godhead created everything in heaven and on earth. This includes angels and Lucifer, who became Satan and crucified Christ on the cross. That Jesus would allow a being He created to nail Him to the cross to save humanity demonstrates His extraordinary love for mankind. May God help us to perceive this immeasurable love so that we respond by loving Him with all our hearts, souls, and minds.

Jesus is God, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. By Him, all things were created—things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. He existed before all things, and in Him, all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that He might have supremacy in everything. He is the mediator through the shedding of His blood on the cross. Therefore, let us be vigilant that no one takes us captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Let us clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other as the LORD forgives us. Let us put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Paul wanted us to understand that we cannot attain heaven by merely following the law—only Jesus gives us eternal life. He reminds the Colossian believers to hold on to what they were taught by Epaphras, the founder of their group, and to walk in Christ just as they received Him, being rooted and built up in Him to remain firm. Let us persist in prayer, being watchful and thankful, and pray for God's workers so that doors may open to proclaim His Word. Paul encourages the members to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Even God sings—Zephaniah 3:17. Music is an essential part of a believer's life. Martin Luther, a German pastor and reformer of the Scriptures, also reformed church music. Many people have received the gospel message through songs. We must sing songs that convey the truth of God's Word, for there are songs with false teachings and rhythms that stir our minds toward darkness or fleshly desires. The moral power of a song cannot be overstated. The history of biblical songs is full of recommendations regarding the use and benefits of music. While music is often misused to serve evil purposes, becoming an agent to lure people into temptation and sin, when used correctly, it is a precious gift from God. It is meant to elevate our thoughts to higher themes, strengthen us, and uplift our spirits. The Israelites sang in the wilderness. Angels sang when they announced the birth of Jesus. Singing is an act of worship—nothing soothes the heart like praising God. Songs are weapons against sorrow and despair. We can work with joy while singing and glorifying God. Music also helps us learn Scripture in a simple and memorable way.

Paul reminds us all to walk in wisdom, making the most of every opportunity. Our speech should always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that we may know how to answer everyone. We should not speak rashly, discourage

others, or cause them sorrow, but rather speak with wisdom. Our thoughts and words preach a powerful message.

We must be cautious of false teachings. Christianity is a way of life—a relationship within God's family—not just a religion. In our daily lives at school, home, work, and in the community, let us set our minds on heavenly things. Let us put away anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language, and lies. In Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile, foreigner or native, slave or free, rich or poor, black or white, short or tall, thin or stout—Christ is all and in all. Like in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul emphasizes that wives should submit to their husbands as is fitting in the LORD. A wife who disrespects her husband discredits Jesus and influences children to develop bad character.

Husbands should love their wives sincerely without bitterness or harshness. Children should obey their parents, for this pleases the LORD. This behavior serves as a powerful testimony to believers and non-believers alike. Parents are urged not to provoke their children lest they become discouraged. A person who deliberately provokes a child to anger or mocks them maliciously often demonstrates emotional immaturity. Let us avoid such evil. Servants should obey their earthly masters with reverence for the LORD. Whatever we do, we should do it wholeheartedly as if working for the LORD, knowing we will receive an inheritance from the LORD as a reward, for we serve Christ Jesus.

Many of us have domestic workers or assistants—whether a nanny, gardener, driver, laundry worker, cook, or laborer. Put yourself in their shoes. As children, we witnessed others mistreating household workers through insults and dishonest actions. Such behavior should be avoided by anyone who loves God. Our workers should have fair working hours, rest, just wages, and be treated with kindness, as though we were serving Jesus. Let us be gentle, patient, and forgiving, just as the LORD forgave us. We should allow the Word of Christ to dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to God.

Whatever we do, we should do it in the name of the LORD Jesus. Let us focus on heavenly things rather than earthly concerns, persisting in prayer day and night, giving thanks, and redeeming the time, knowing that Jesus is at the door. Tychicus delivered this letter to the Colossians.

What a precious opportunity it is to love, serve, and obey Jesus. May God help us maintain undivided loyalty and faithfulness to Him.

For the consecrated worker, there is great comfort in knowing that even Christ, during His earthly life, sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of grace. Through this fellowship with God, He went forth to strengthen and bless others.

Questions: Who is Jesus? Why should children obey their parents? Why should husbands not be harsh toward their wives? Why does it please the LORD when wives submit to their husbands? Why is it important to avoid meaningless arguments and disputes? How can we mistreat those who work in our homes? Why is it a sin to oppress workers? Why is it wrong to disobey your employer or cause trouble in the household where you are employed?

GOD BLESS YOU GREATLY, CHILD AND YOUTH OF JESUS

Key Text: Psalm 119:105-106

[105-106] "Your words are sweeter to my taste than honey, and Your law gives me understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your Word, which is sweet to my taste and a light to my path. Help me to hate falsehood and love Your truth. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Memorize all 66 books of the Bible using a song.

DAY 335 (November 30)

TOPIC: Pray Without Ceasing

(Thessalonians)

The city of Thessalonica, or Salonika, is located in Greece. Paul thanks the believers for their faith and love for God, expresses his desire to visit them, and prays for them due to the hardships they endure. He encourages the believers to live holy lives for Jesus Christ. "We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. The gospel did not come to you in words only but also with power and in the Holy Spirit." Paul commends them because their faith has spread everywhere—they turned to the living God from idols and now await Jesus' return in the clouds. Paul emphasizes that their ministry there was not in vain. Thessalonica was a bustling port city, especially known for trade. Paul urged the believers to live lives of godliness and purity, reminding them of the second coming of Jesus.

It is essential to understand that their relationship did not end with the Thessalonians. After following Paul's teachings, they became examples to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia. These followers later became leaders—those who had been taught became mentors to others. Paul emphasizes that the gift of salvation is only the beginning of our spiritual journey; once we believe in Christ, we are called to grow in faith, hope, and love.

Paul tells the believers that, as ministers of Christ, they did not seek human glory from them or others, nor did they burden them as apostles. Instead, they were gentle among them, like a nursing mother caring for her children. He prays for their hearts to be strengthened and blameless in holiness before God our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. Paul thanks God continually and advises everyone to pray without ceasing. This includes both formal and informal prayers—whether you are lying down, walking, standing while waiting for a bus, or kneeling in private prayer. Read the prayer booklet we have translated. Public prayers should not be too long, as they may discourage others. The secret to victory is private prayer. What matters most in prayer is to pray sincerely, with zeal and diligence, not merely out of routine or pretense.

The new believers in Thessalonica expected Jesus to return while they were still alive. When they saw their fellow believers dying, they were shocked and disheartened because they thought they would live until Jesus returned in



the clouds. This fear still troubles people today, for no one escapes death. Paul wanted to explain the meaning of death so they would not think that believing in Jesus was in vain.

Trusting in God and His Word concerning the resurrection is not a fantasy but a real event that will happen. Our confidence in what God will do in the future—raising us from the dead—comes from seeing what He is doing in our lives now. Paul tells the believers that those who have died will be raised and be with Jesus when He comes again. “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you do not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will always be with the Lord.”

Therefore, encourage one another with these words of truth. Paul expanded on this teaching about death in his letter to the Corinthians, saying it will happen like lightning. The saints will hear the voice of the Son of God calling them to rise. All the dead in their graves will hear His voice and come forth. The poor, the imprisoned, the overweight, the short, the rich, and the humble—all their perishable bodies will put on imperishable, immortal bodies. Then it will be fulfilled: “Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?” Jesus will come to restore what was lost. What should we do while waiting for these events? According to Scripture, when a person dies, they do not immediately go to heaven. That is why the graves will open, and the dead will come out to meet Jesus. The soul cannot exist without the body. A living soul or a person is the breath of life united with the body. Neither the body alone nor the breath of life alone constitutes a person.

Paul speaks about faith, hope, and love. He assures us that since Jesus was resurrected, we should have no doubt—this is the blessed hope. Christ Himself, who is the resurrection and the life, will grant it to us. He encourages the believers concerning Jesus’ second coming: “The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” While people are saying, “There is peace and safety,” destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. However, we are not in darkness for that day to surprise us like a thief. We are children of the light and of the day—not belonging to the night or to darkness. So, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate

and the hope of salvation as a helmet. Whether we are awake or asleep, we should live together with Christ, encouraging and building one another up. Let one hand hold on to faith in Jesus while the other manages our daily duties here on earth.

🌻Again, Paul emphasizes rejoicing and praying without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances. He prays that the believers be kept blameless until the coming of the Lord. He reminds them that this is God's will in Christ, not to grieve the Holy Spirit, to hold on to what is good, and to avoid every form of evil. This letter, along with the letter to the Corinthians, answers every believer's questions about death and what will happen when Jesus returns. People will be resurrected with bodies, not as floating spirits going to heaven.

🌻Prayer Strengthened Jesus for Trials. Christ, our Savior, was tempted in every way as we are, yet He was without sin. He took on human nature and, being found in appearance as a man, had human needs that required fulfillment—physical fatigue that needed relief. It was through prayer to His Father that He was prepared and strengthened for His duties and trials. Day by day, He followed His cycle of responsibilities, seeking to save souls, and He would spend entire nights in prayer for those being tested.

🌻Questions: What does it mean that those who have died in Jesus will rise to eternal life? Why is it important to keep our eyes on the crown that Jesus will give us rather than anything else? What does it mean that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief? What does it mean to give thanks and pray without ceasing?

GOD BLESS YOU GREATLY, CHILD AND YOUTH OF JESUS 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13,14.

[13,14] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord. We pray for those who are grieving because of bereavement. Give them hope to believe that You died and rose again, and that You will come to raise all the dead who believed in You. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Activity: Bring a photo of a family member who has died, such as a grandfather or grandmother, and share about this according to age.

DAY 336 (December 1)

TOPIC: If anyone is not willing to work, let them not eat

(2 Thessalonians)

The purpose of writing this book was to comfort and encourage people during times of persecution. If mobile phones had existed, they might have eased these hardships by allowing regular communication! In the Second Letter, Paul anticipates the positive outcomes of his work among the Thessalonians. During the Second Coming, believers will be delivered from their oppressors through the help of God in Christ (1:5-10). Paul's aim in this passage is not to rejoice in revenge (1:8-9) but to encourage those who have been persecuted and oppressed (1:5-7). The Second Coming will enable the Thessalonians to be "with the Lord." At that time, their oppressors will be cast away from the presence of the Lord—not because He hates them, but because their behavior cannot withstand the glory of God's presence.

Most Western or English-speaking churches have not experienced such persecution in recent times. Paul expresses gratitude that the church continues to grow despite the suffering of God's people. He also sends warnings to those who are lazy and have an unhealthy outlook. Some had stopped working and were living idly, relying on others because they believed Jesus was returning soon and there was no need to work. Paul insists that they should not take advantage of other Christians to meet their needs, as that is equivalent to exploiting others.

Humanity was commanded to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, so Paul instructs that these idle believers be separated from other members until they repent. However, once they repent, they should be welcomed back as brothers and sisters. Laziness is a serious problem. Here, the apostle uses strong words, saying that if someone is unwilling to work, they should not eat. The lazy must eat their own food, not wander around town begging from others when they have the strength and ability to work. Some only engage in small, lazy activities when they are capable of doing more substantial work to support themselves and even help others. Many people own land but do not use it. Anyone with land cannot starve—God's plan for Israel was that everyone should have land so that poverty would not exist.



The character of children raised according to the scriptures in rural areas is far better than that of children raised in urban areas. Everyone should learn to farm, work diligently, and earn a living instead of idling in town or the village without a job.

۞ Work is essential, whether it involves household chores such as sweeping, farming, mopping, ironing, cleaning windows, washing livestock, doing the dishes, herding animals, cooking, cutting trees, or cultivating fields. Every child should learn to work. Look up age-appropriate tasks online, then plan and identify tasks you can do. Besides believing in Almighty God and His Only Son, Jesus Christ, the next most important thing is to work. Work was given by God even before the fall of humanity into sin—humans were assigned work before marriage!

Paul emphasizes the importance of prayer to receive God's strength to overcome or endure trials. He says we must always thank God for believers because God chose us from the beginning for sanctification through the Spirit.

۞ Paul also speaks about the mystery of lawlessness—the Antichrist—who exalts himself above everything called God and seeks to be worshiped, claiming to be God. This mystery of rebellion is already at work. Those who oppose Christ will be destroyed by the breath of God's mouth. Even the wicked and those who are perishing because they refuse to love and accept the truth will face judgment. Paul advises that everyone should live orderly lives, not

according to mere traditions. We should not live carelessly but have plans, including writing things down to avoid forgetting—whether it is reading God's Word, household tasks, schoolwork, or other responsibilities.

🌻 So, how should we live in today's world? The apostle says, "Therefore, beloved, since you look forward to these things—a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells—be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot or blemish, and blameless." We must be people who hunger for righteousness, who are meek, merciful, peacemakers, and who love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus came to serve and minister to others. Therefore, our greatest desire while we await His return should be to BE LIKE HIM—that is, to REFLECT HIM.

🌻 Paul often dictated his letters through secretaries, but a few letters, like this one, he wrote personally, stating at the end, "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters; this is how I write." The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Communication with others is a great blessing, whether through phone calls, face-to-face conversations, or letters.

Do your work as someone who is awaiting the second coming of Jesus and who desires to hear Him say upon His return: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matthew 25:23)

🌻 The nighttime prayer sessions that the Savior spent on the mountain or in the wilderness were vital in preparing Him for the trials He had to face in the days ahead. He felt the need to be refreshed and strengthened both spiritually and physically so that He could withstand Satan's temptations. Those who strive to live like Him will feel the same need.

🌻 Questions:

1. What is the best way for you to communicate, and why?

2. Why should a person who does not work not eat?

3. What tasks do you perform or help with every day?

4. What kind of work did Jesus do while living on earth?

5. Why is it important to have order and planning in your activities?

6. What work did Paul himself do?

7. Who is the Antichrist?

8. What does it mean to be like Jesus?

GOD BLESS YOU GREATLY, CHILD AND YOUTH OF JESUS 

Key Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:2, 3.

[2, 3] Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Prayer: Thank You Heavenly Father for the good family You have given me. Help me to be kind to people and to do what is right. Help me not to be deceived when the antichrist comes.

Activity: Write down about 10 sentences that are true and false, for example: “Clouds are made of sheep’s wool,” “Birds fly in the air.”

DAY 337 (December 2)

TOPIC: The Character of a Pastor and a Deacon

(1 Timothy)



Paul's letters make up more than half of the New Testament. Paul wrote a pastoral letter to Timothy. The letters to Timothy and Titus are still considered letters for church leaders today. Timothy is instructed on how to serve as a pastor or minister of God. He is guided on the conduct expected of pastors and deacons, including their words, thoughts, intentions, and mindsets. Timothy, a believer from Ephesus and Lystra, traveled with Paul during his church visits. Paul wrote this letter during a period when he had been temporarily released from prison.

Timothy received the gospel from his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. His father was Greek. The church in Ephesus was being infiltrated by false teachings of Gnosticism—worshipping other gods besides the heavenly God. Some people believed they had more knowledge than others, leading to arguments and distrust. These teachings separated the body from the spirit,

claiming that the body was evil while the spirit was righteous. Paul instructed Timothy to remain in Ephesus to help eliminate these teachings and bring discipline to the churches. He is told how to choose good leaders and set an exemplary model. He is also advised on how to assist struggling members and to warn others not to teach different doctrines.

Paul expresses gratitude that, despite being formerly a blasphemer, persecutor, and an aggressor, God's mercy saved him because he acted out of ignorance. He says, "It is a trustworthy statement that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost."

Paul advises Timothy that everyone should offer prayers, supplications, intercessions, and thanksgiving. He emphasizes that there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity—Jesus Christ. He encourages people to lift holy hands in prayer and instructs women to dress modestly and behave with humility, avoiding extravagant hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive clothing. Women are instructed to remain quiet and not to exercise authority over men, as Adam was created first, then Eve.

Paul explains that if someone desires to be a pastor or overseer, it is a noble task, but they must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. They must manage their own household well and ensure their children are respectful. For if someone cannot manage their household, how can they take care of God's church? They must not be recent converts, lest they become conceited and fall under the devil's condemnation. Furthermore, they must have a good reputation with outsiders.

Similarly, a deacon must exhibit the same qualities as a pastor. They must be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain, and they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These servants should be tested first, and if they are found blameless, they may serve as deacons. Those who serve well gain an excellent standing and great confidence in their faith. Deacons must not be slanderers but trustworthy and capable of carrying out their duties responsibly. Paul warns that in the last days, people will follow deceitful spirits and hypocritical liars who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from certain foods based on human traditions rather than God's word.

Paul encourages Timothy, saying, "Let no one despise your youth," but to be an example to the believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. He urges Timothy to teach, rebuke, and correct while maintaining personal

integrity and the truth of the gospel. When correcting older men, he should treat them as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women with absolute purity. Widows with children or grandchildren should first learn to fulfill their family duties. Those without family support should be cared for by the church.

A widow who qualifies for church support should be over 60 years old, known for good deeds, such as hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, and helping the afflicted. Lazy widows who gossip and exploit others should be taught to be self-reliant. Believers with needy relatives should assist them to prevent burdening the church. Those who work hard in preaching and teaching should be provided for, as Scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” However, leaders must not exploit or burden their members with unreasonable demands.

Paul insists that accusations against elders should be supported by two or three witnesses and that judgment should not be rendered hastily. He warns against hastily laying hands on anyone for ministry and urges Timothy to keep himself pure. Although Timothy is advised to drink a little wine for his stomach’s sake, Paul emphasizes self-control.
Employers should treat their workers fairly and not exploit them. Workers should be granted fair wages and reasonable working hours. Paul rebukes those who, in their pursuit of wealth, neglect the well-being of others. He emphasizes that the love of money is the root of all evil, and many have strayed from the faith due to greed. Believers should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.

Questions: Why did Paul write to Timothy? What character should a pastor have? What character should a deacon have? What false teachings will arise in the last days? How should an elder be corrected? How should a young person respond when corrected? How can you share the truth of God without arguing? Why did Paul want Timothy to set a good example despite his youth?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 1 Timothy 4:12.

[12] Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Prayer: Lord, thank You so much for what You give us. We pray that our childhood and youth may be an example, so that people may not despise us or speak evil against Your work. Help our speech and conduct, that we may have love and pure faith as we read the Scriptures and teach others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: What does it mean for your youth not to be despised? How should our words and conduct be? How should our love, faith, and purity as children or youth be?

DAY 338 (December 3)

TOPIC: Victors Will Receive Crowns of Victory

(2 Timothy)



Paul wrote this letter during his second imprisonment in Rome. Although he had been released temporarily by Nero and continued to spread the gospel, he was arrested again and eventually executed under Emperor Nero (according to historical records). Nero was a cruel ruler, and historians document that he killed his mother, his wife, and later his brother with poison to secure his power. In this letter, Paul encourages Timothy to be a brave soldier of Christ, to hold firmly to the faith, and to teach the truth of God's Word faithfully. Paul gives Timothy counsel as a worker in God's ministry. He tells Timothy not to be intimidated because of his youth compared to the older church members. Since Timothy may have been overseeing older members, Paul advises him not to be afraid to guide them if they needed correction.

Jesus and the gospel must always come first, and Timothy should not fear members who try to intimidate the pastor or fellow believers. "GOD FIRST" should be our motto as believers! Paul also asks Timothy to bring him his coat and scrolls, as it was during the cold season. Paul experienced loneliness in prison since he was not allowed the freedom he had when writing his first letter to Timothy. This was his final letter before being executed for his faith. Many friends abandoned him, including Demas, Hermogenes, and Phygelus. Alexander the metalworker strongly opposed Paul's teachings, and Paul warns Timothy to be cautious of people like him. However, Onesiphorus did not feel ashamed of Paul's chains. Instead, he visited Paul in prison and refreshed his spirit by providing care. Even today, we should not forget those who are imprisoned.

Titus and Tychicus had traveled, leaving only Luke, the physician, with Paul. Paul loved Timothy like a son and regarded him as a faithful worker in God's ministry. Paul was saddened by the persecution facing the churches under the harsh rule of Emperor Nero. He instructs Timothy to guard the faith, protect the gospel, and continue preaching it despite suffering. Paul recalls Timothy's sincere faith and prays for him night and day, urging him to fan into flame the gift he received through the laying on of hands. Even today, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control.

Paul had no legal counsel to defend him, but God gave him strength to testify courageously, even before the authorities. Though those in power were moved by the Spirit, like Pilate, they prioritized preserving their positions and public approval. What position or reputation are you trying to protect today? Paul tells Timothy to rely on God's grace through Christ. Although Paul suffered greatly, he was not ashamed because he knew the One in whom he believed and was convinced that God could guard what he had entrusted to Him. Paul emphasizes the need for determination—no soldier entangles himself in worldly affairs, and an athlete must follow the rules to win the prize. Likewise, a farmer works hard to enjoy the harvest. Despite Paul's imprisonment, the Word of God is not chained and continues to spread. If we endure hardship, we will also reign with Christ.

Paul warns against quarreling over words and urges Timothy to present himself to God as an approved worker who correctly handles the word of truth. Some, like Hymenaeus and Philetus, spread false teachings, claiming that the resurrection had already taken place. Paul instructs Timothy to flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. He must avoid foolish arguments, as the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but gentle, able to teach, and patient. Paul warns that in the last days, people will display open sin without shame.

He describes the characteristics of people in the last days: lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Paul advises Timothy to avoid such people. These individuals worm their way into households and captivate weak-minded people burdened with sins. Like the magicians Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses, these people resist the truth. However, they will not get far because their folly will become evident to everyone.

Have you encountered people like this? May the Lord help us avoid such

evil traits! Paul encourages Timothy to follow his teachings, patience, love, and endurance. Anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will face persecution. Paul commends Timothy for knowing the Holy Scriptures from childhood, which have made him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Paul exhorts Timothy to be prepared in season and out of season, to correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. A time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but will gather around themselves teachers to suit their desires, turning away from the truth toward myths. Paul encourages Timothy to keep a clear mind, endure hardships, and fulfill his ministry. Paul expresses confidence as he faces death, declaring that he has fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. He looks forward to receiving the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award him—and not only to him but to all who long for His appearing.

The Prayer Life of Jesus Reveals the Secret of Spiritual Power
The Savior's life on earth was one of constant communion with God. Through this fellowship, He revealed the secret of spiritual power.

Questions:

1. Identify the characteristics of people in the last days.

2. Do you exhibit any of these last-day traits?

3. How can you overcome these negative characteristics?

4. What is the meaning of "All Scripture is God-breathed"?

5. Why is every Scripture useful?

6. Who abandoned Paul during his imprisonment?

7. How can you fight the good fight and keep the faith today, as Paul did?

8. Why did Paul encourage Timothy not to let others despise him for his youth?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 2 Timothy 3:15.

[15] All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

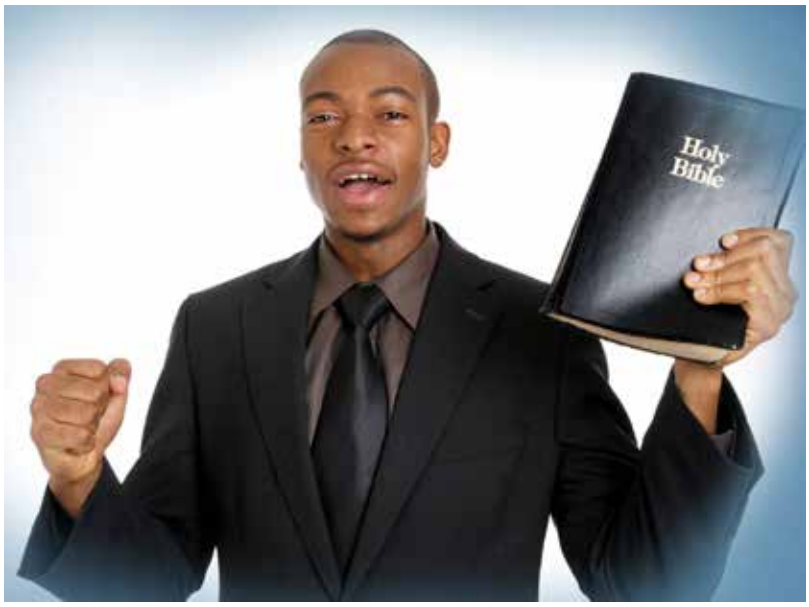
Prayer: Thank You Lord for Your Word, which gives us teaching, correction, guidance, and discipline so that we may be complete in every good work. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Prepare a treasure chest with teaching tools:
Bible for doctrine
Red X sign for reproof
Arrow sign for guidance
Straight path drawing for training in righteousness

DAY 339 (December 4)

TOPIC: The Character of a Pastor and an Elder

(Titus)



The letter to Titus was written to Titus, a church elder or young pastor who was a convert whom Paul helped bring to Jesus Christ. This role closely resembles that of Timothy. Indeed, these instructions apply to every believer or church member today. When Paul went to Jerusalem to discuss the Gospel for the Gentiles with the leaders in Jerusalem, he brought along Titus, a Gentile believer in Christ. Titus was a fellow worker with Paul but was not circumcised like Timothy or the Jews. Paul also sent Titus to Corinth to resolve problems. Titus worked with Paul again after Paul gained some relief from his imprisonment in Rome. Titus also worked in Dalmatia, which is modern-day Yugoslavia or Serbia. Titus was seen as a person of integrity and faithfulness in his work.

Paul preached on the island of Crete and laid hands on his disciple and companion Titus, appointing him to shepherd the flock there before leaving. He wrote this letter while in Corinth or Nicopolis. Paul says he left Titus in Crete to set in order what was lacking and to appoint elders as spiritual leaders in every city. Some had come with teachings that confused the believers by saying they must follow Pharisaic laws. Paul outlines the character and qualifications to consider when choosing church leaders. An elder must be a believer, blameless, not accused of corruption or rebellion. The Cretans had a reputation for moral decay and depravity; even one of their prophets and poets said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12). Paul affirms that this testimony is true.

Paul gives Titus authority from God to rebuke them sharply so that their faith may be sound and not be destroyed. He emphasizes that they should

not heed Jewish myths because although these people claim to know God, their actions deny Him. They are detestable and disobedient. A bishop or pastor—and indeed all spiritual leaders—must be above reproach because they represent God. Paul lists qualities they should not possess: they must not be self-willed, quick-tempered, drunkards, violent, or greedy for dishonest gain. Instead, a bishop should be hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others with sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Likewise, older men should be temperate, dignified, self-controlled, and sound in faith, love, and endurance. Older women should live reverently, avoiding slander and drunkenness, and should teach what is good. They should train younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, and to be kind and submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God is not maligned. Even the Gentiles respect their husbands, as this is a command from God.

Young men should be urged to be self-controlled and to set an example by doing what is good. In teaching, they should show integrity, seriousness, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose them will be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about God's people. Slaves or employees should be taught to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back or steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted. This way, they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is important to obey the authorities set to govern the nation, and every Christian should learn not to be slanderous, quarrelsome, but to be gentle and show true humility to all people. We were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us—not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, arguments, and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Titus 3:3-8 summarizes the entire gospel!

Paul emphasizes that we must renounce evil and live godly lives. Why?

Because the grace of Jesus has been revealed to all people, teaching us to reject worldly desires and live sober, righteous, and godly lives as we await the blessed hope—the second coming of Jesus Christ. Remember, the same character traits required of pastors apply to every believer who loves God! This is because God's laws are the same for all humanity. Indeed, God's grace has appeared to us all! Above all, we must guard our hearts diligently, for from it flow the springs of life. The human heart that is not transformed is a frightening thing. While acts of kindness and love occur daily, evil also abounds everywhere we look. In the face of ongoing conflicts, political corruption, and widespread violence, we must acknowledge that where oppression is present, corrupted human hearts are at work. The Bible does not have many positive things to say about hearts that have not been surrendered to Jesus Christ. God says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

The heart God refers to here is not the physical organ pumping blood, but the center of our thoughts, the seat of our reasoning and moral consciousness. Jesus clarified this when He said, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (Luke 6:45). Our thoughts drive our actions—whether good or evil. The mind is what God seeks to renew in the battle against selfishness and evil. What a blessing to know that our minds can be transformed by the healing Word of God!

Jesus prayed to prepare for special tasks. Before significant moments—such as appointing apostles, delivering the Sermon on the Mount, His transfiguration, His trial, crucifixion, and resurrection—He spent whole nights in prayer. We must also set aside time for meditation, prayer, and spiritual refreshment. We often underestimate the power and effectiveness of prayer.

Questions:

Why should slaves or employees obey their masters?

Why is it important for a Christian not to be slanderous or quarrelsome?

What is the blessed hope?

What qualities should an elder, bishop, and older women have?

Why should we not let anyone despise our youth?

Does your life align with Titus 2:7-8?

Why should we guard our hearts and minds?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Titus 2:11-14.

[11-14] For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Prayer: Holy One who dwells in the highest heavens, thank You so much for Your grace which has appeared to all people. We thank You for teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and we know that by Your grace we will live soberly, righteously, and godly in our world today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Act out the qualities of a Christian leader, such as being gentle, respectful, and generous.

DAY 340 (December 5)

TOPIC: Forgive Onesimus and Accept Him as a Brother

(Philemon)

Paul wrote this letter along with the one to the Colossians at the same time. From its introduction, we see that he was with Onesimus and Tychicus while writing these letters in prison in Rome. Paul wrote to Philemon, a believer from the city of Colossae, who loved Jesus and was hospitable to strangers. Philemon owned slaves—a common but unfortunate practice during those dark times. One of his slaves, Onesimus, had stolen from him and run away. Under Roman law, such an act was punishable by death.



At that time, a slave was considered the property of their master, who had absolute authority over them. Most Romans had slaves to assist with household chores, farming, and business. Slaves did not receive wages but were provided with food, clothing, and shelter. Onesimus lived a hidden life, fearing discovery. However, he encountered Paul and, through his ministry, became a converted Christian. Onesimus began to serve Paul, but Paul felt it was right to reconcile him with his master, Philemon. This would allow Onesimus to live a new life

without fear.

Paul spoke with Onesimus, who became willing to return to his master. Paul then wrote a letter to Philemon, pleading for forgiveness and urging him to accept Onesimus as his brother in Christ, thus preparing Philemon's heart to welcome him back. Onesimus may have been ready to return but unsure how to begin. Paul wrote with wisdom and love, using persuasive words to appeal to Philemon.

Paul identifies himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus, writing alongside Timothy and other co-workers in Christ. He expresses gratitude to God, always remembering Philemon in his prayers because of the comfort and encouragement Philemon had provided to many saints. Philemon was a wealthy man, and after his conversion, he supported many believers in need, including those preaching in Colossae.

Paul acknowledges Philemon's love and kindness towards the brethren and all people, and because of this, he writes with confidence. As an elder and spiritual father, Paul pleads on behalf of Onesimus, whom he has "fathered" spiritually during his imprisonment in Rome. He tells Philemon that although Onesimus was once unprofitable and unreliable, he has now become useful both to Paul and to Philemon. While Paul could command him, he instead appeals in love and wisdom.

Paul describes Onesimus as his very heart. Out of love, he would have liked Onesimus to remain with him, but legally, Onesimus belonged to Philemon as a runaway slave. Paul requests Philemon's permission and urges him to accept Onesimus back—not merely as a slave but as a beloved brother in the Lord. Paul argues that if Philemon considers him a partner in faith, he should welcome Onesimus as he would welcome Paul himself. Paul even offers to repay any debt Onesimus owes, writing the letter in his own hand, and gently reminds Philemon of the spiritual debt he owes to Paul.

Paul concludes the letter by expressing confidence that Philemon will do even more than he asks. Although the letter does not reveal Philemon's response, we can assume he followed Paul's plea and accepted Onesimus back—not just as a slave but as a brother in the Lord. At that time, a slave was considered property, receiving no wages and often suffering under harsh masters. This letter calls on those in authority—employers, political leaders, and parents—to treat their workers and subordinates with kindness and compassion.

Employers should protect their employees' welfare, provide fair compensation, and support their personal development. Workers should not

be exploited or abandoned without assistance. On the Sabbath day, employees should be given rest from their duties. Likewise, employees should not steal from their employers or engage in deceit, such as spreading false information or creating conflict within the employer's family. Every action will ultimately be judged.

🌻If the Savior of humanity, despite His divine power, felt the need for prayer, how much more should weak and sinful human beings feel the necessity of earnest and continual prayer! When Christ faced His greatest temptations, He fasted and surrendered Himself fully to God through prayer and complete obedience to the Father's will, emerging victorious. In these last days, those who bear witness to the truth must follow the example of Christ, our greatest model of prayer and faith.

🌻Questions:
Why did Paul write this letter?
Why did Paul want Onesimus to stay with him?
Where did Philemon live?
How does this letter apply to us today?
Can you imagine what happened between Philemon and Onesimus after receiving the letter?
Why is enslaving others a sin?
It is said there are more slaves today—both children and adults—through human trafficking across Africa and other regions like the Arab states. How can you help these modern-day slaves?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

In modern words – Read this letter:

Philemon, my dear friend,
I could command you with my authority and force you to do what I want, but instead, I, Paul—an apostle writing from prison for the sake of the Gospel—am appealing to your heart. (Remember, you owe me your very life—but I won't press that point.) Instead of using my position to compel you, I am encouraging you through love.

Your kindness and love are well-known, and they have been a great comfort to me. I know you well and trust that you will grant me this favor.

Believe it or not, I have become a spiritual father here in prison! My spiritual child is Onesimus—your very own servant—who was once useless to you, but now he is incredibly useful to both of us. Honestly, I do not want to send him

back because he is such a help to me, and I have come to love him like my own. In a way, he is filling your place here in easing my hardships in prison—something I know you would do if you were here.

But now, I am sending him back to you—not as a slave, but as a beloved brother in Christ. Please receive him as you would receive me. Open your heart to him because, as my spiritual child, he is a part of me.

I hope to visit you soon.

Yours in faith,
Paul

Key Text: Philemon 1:19, 21.

[19, 21] I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. …Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Prayer: Holy Father who dwells in the highest heaven, help us to be peacemakers. Help us to forgive others when they steal from us, and help others to forgive us when we wrong them, so that we may stop doing evil. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Talk about the wrong of stealing. Discuss how to forgive someone if they steal something from you.

DAY 341 (December 6)

TOPIC: Jesus is superior to all.

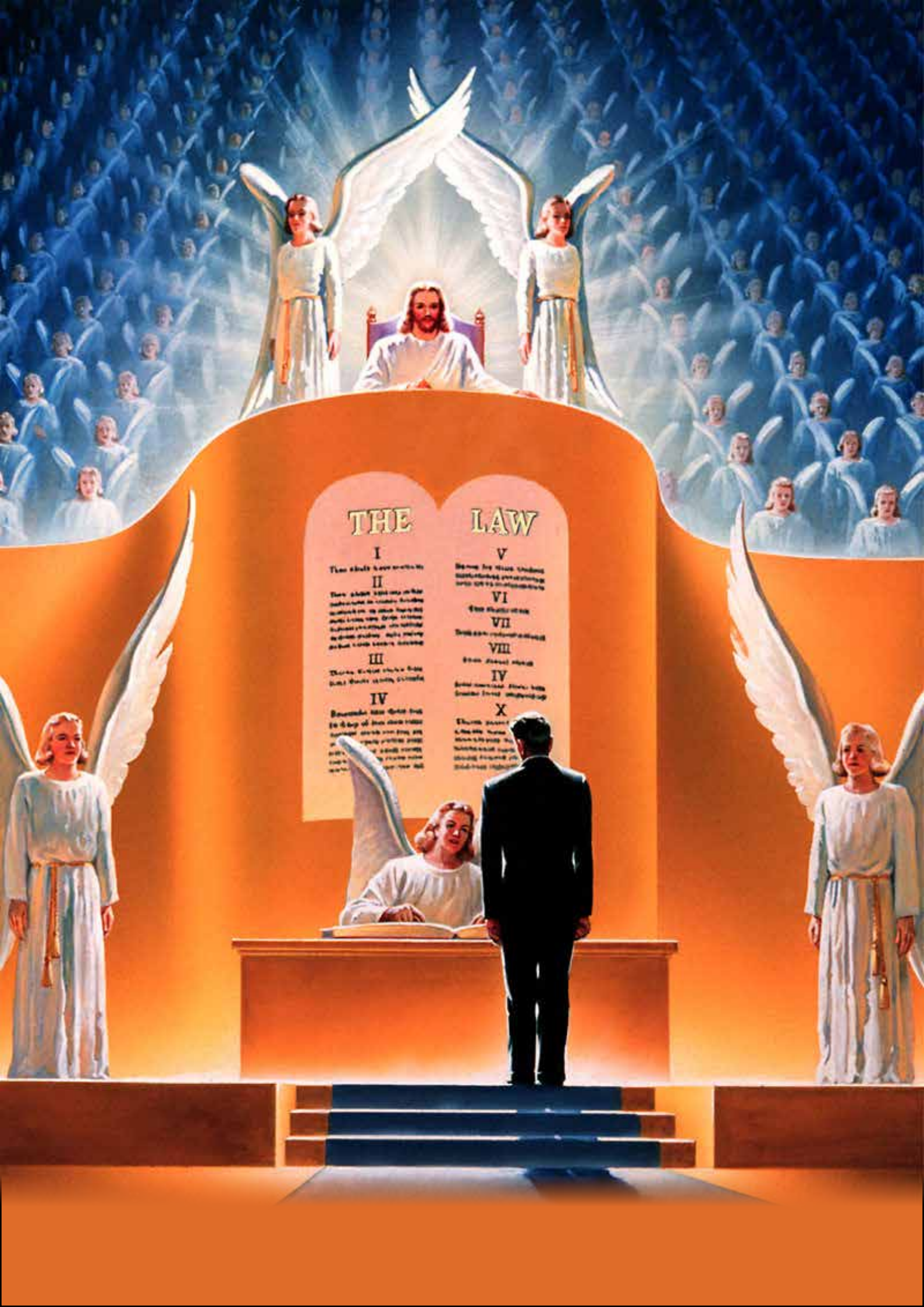
(Hebrews)

The Hebrews are the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. This longest letter of Paul was written to believers who were Hebrews by origin, and even today, it carries many teachings for us. Jesus, the apostles, and the first Christians were Hebrews. They lived within the culture of the Jewish religion, attending the temple, praying, and offering sacrifices. The entire sacrificial system, as a symbol of salvation, needed to be understood by each of them. God established this system to deliver us from the grip of Satan.

Jesus came and died for our sins to remove our guilt. It was difficult for those who had been in Judaism when they converted to Christianity. They had to abandon the practices of sacrifices and other rituals after Jesus' death. This letter explains the mission or purpose of Jesus the Messiah and clearly outlines His work today. Many attribute this letter to Paul due to its language and writing style, although its authorship is not definitively known. This letter was written to explain the end of the Old Testament sacrifices after the temple was destroyed by General Titus in 70 A.D. The thick veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom after Jesus died, and even the lamb that was about to be sacrificed ran away! The ultimate sacrifice, the true sacrifice of Jesus, had been offered, and it was fully sufficient.

In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through prophets and other means, but now He speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. We must pay close attention to this because even the words spoken by angels were important. How shall we escape if we neglect the message of Jesus, the Son of God? The Jewish economy heavily depended on sacrificial animals; people earned money by selling livestock. Even the temple received revenue from these sacrifices. They completely forgot that the animal sacrifices were merely a symbol or shadow of the true sacrifice that Jesus would offer by dying on the cross.

The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superiority and greatness of Christ as the perfect, blameless sacrifice and as our true and ultimate High Priest. Unlike other priests who had to offer sacrifices first for their sins and then for the people's sins, Jesus, being without sin, offered Himself once and for


THE LAW
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IV
X

all on our behalf. The priesthood of the Levites or the descendants of Aaron and all human priests has many shortcomings. Christ is perfect and holy—only His sacrifice can remove our sins. It was necessary for Jesus to be made like us, His brothers and sisters, in every way so that He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest before God and make atonement for our sins.

Therefore, today, if we hear His voice, let us not harden our hearts as the Israelites did, wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Read Leviticus 16 and Exodus 25, as they are closely related to this book. Leviticus and Exodus provide a shadow, type, or picture of Jesus' death, which is the true act that removes our sins. Today, we know that we have a High Priest—Jesus—who has entered heaven and sympathizes with our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet He did not sin. Let us, therefore, approach Him with grace and confidence to receive mercy and find help. Jesus is superior to angels and all sacrifices. Let each of us, by faith, look to heaven and envision Jesus in the Most Holy Place, interceding and advocating for us.

In the past, people worshipped gods made of wood and stone, but today, people have modern idols such as technological devices like phones, televisions, computers, food, children, opinions, beauty, appetite, clothing, cars, houses, and other possessions. What idols do you have? There is only One who deserves to be number one in our lives—God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus has everything superior—He is the superior High Priest, the bearer of a superior covenant, the giver of a superior hope, and the ultimate sacrifice. Place Jesus in every aspect of your life, and everything will be well.

The book of Hebrews frequently quotes the Old Testament. This book relates closely to the sacrificial system, much like the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament. Sin entered through one man and was removed by one man—Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must pay careful attention to what we are being told so that we do not miss the promise of entering His rest. Let us press on toward perfection because He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, for He always lives to intercede for us.

This book also tells us that just as the Israelites had a temple or tabernacle in the wilderness, there is also a temple in heaven with the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9 and Exodus 25). This is the original and real sanctuary, while the earthly tabernacle of Moses was only a copy or shadow of the heavenly one. In the wilderness tabernacle of Moses, the priest offered sacrifices every morning and evening (Exodus 39:29), and once a year, the High Priest would enter to make atonement for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16). However, our High Priest, Jesus Christ, in the heavenly sanctuary, does not use the blood of animals like bulls or goats but His own blood, offered through His

death on the cross once and for all.

Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands to offer sacrifices but entered the true Most Holy Place to appear before God on our behalf. He has entered once for all, not every year. Having been offered as a sacrifice once, He took away the sins of all people, and He will appear a second time without sin to those who eagerly await Him. Paul urges us not to neglect gathering together in fellowship each week, not to remain in our homes without attending worship, but to encourage one another as we see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). This book is essential for all believers, as it explains the ongoing priestly ministry of Jesus in heaven today. He is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. In His role as our High Priest, He provides us a way to approach God the Father in prayer.

Paul wrote to the Jews to remain faithful because they were wavering. Some were falling back and wanting to continue with outdated sacrifices that could no longer help them. Even today, many Jews continue to offer sacrifices, waiting for the Messiah. But we know that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, and He lives today, interceding for us as our High Priest. Faith is the assurance of things we hope for, even though we do not see them. The elders of faith believed in God despite facing trials and hardships—their actions aligned with their faith. From Abel, who offered a sacrifice because he understood the plan of salvation and how the lamb represented Jesus, the Lamb of God, we are called to believe and trust in Christ's perfect sacrifice.

Enock walked according to God's instructions, as did Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, Job, John, and many others who journeyed this path of faith. They trusted in the city that God had prepared for them. Although they did not receive the heavenly city and the new earth until they fell asleep in death, they knew they would be resurrected one day and receive the promise that God had made to them—because God is faithful and true. If you are overwhelmed with thoughts of giving up due to the hardships you face, read Hebrews 11 and see how these people endured incredible trials through their faith, including Jesus Himself, but their reward is great. The list of faith in Hebrews 11 is still being written today, and it is our prayer that we may also be counted among them. Let us run the race with patience and encouragement.

The Bible mentions the word "faith" 247 times, and only twice in the Old Testament, yet here we also see the faith of the Old Testament being brought forth! If we were still required to offer sacrifices today, could we manage it? I think life would be far too expensive. But Jesus has done it all for us! And God is not ashamed to be called our God. So why should we be ashamed of

Him before others when we are weak and empty?

The writer tells us about the excellence and greatness of Christ and His work on the altar as our High Priest. The scriptures speak about the Levitical priesthood and highlight the shortcomings of the Old Covenant and its sacrifices compared to the perfection and holiness of Christ. Let us read the Word of God because it is alive and powerful, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates and divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before Him. Let us ask God to help us value this sacrifice and to have the boldness to seek His forgiveness and live in a way that honors Him.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, so let us lay aside the burden of sin that so easily entangles us. Let us run with patience, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before Him—being with us in heaven—He endured the cross, despising its shame, and is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood for our faith, and our lives are not as hard as we might think. Let us be ready for the Lord's return. Strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees. Pursue peace with everyone and holiness, for without these, no one will see God. Let us worship God in a way that pleases Him.

Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were there with them. Do not love money, but love God, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Remember that we do not have a lasting city here, for everything is temporary, but we look forward to the city to come—the heavenly one. We are advised to obey government authorities because they watch over our souls; let us make their work joyful and not burdensome.

May the Great Shepherd of the sheep—Jesus, our High Priest—help us to be perfect in every good work, so that we may do His will. What amazing love! He, who is equal to God and greater than the angels, did not consider equality with God something to cling to. Instead, He emptied Himself, took on the form of a servant, and became human. He humbled Himself and obeyed God. God spared no effort or cost to secure our salvation. If we value this amazing love and this great salvation, why wouldn't we be willing to leave everything behind to receive His gift of salvation? Let us accept this message and offer the sacrifices we need to, ensuring that nothing stands between us and our Savior. Lord, we pray that You help us! All glory belongs to You forever and ever.

Jesus Prayed Early in the Morning
Early in the morning, He often found a quiet place to meditate, study the Scriptures, or pray. With the sound of singing, He welcomed the morning light. Through songs of thanksgiving, He filled His hours with joy and brought heavenly comfort to those weary from their daily labor and the broken-hearted.

Questions: Why is Jesus better than the animal sacrifices that were offered? Why is it important to show hospitality to strangers? Why is it important to go to church? Why should we visit those in prison? Why should we respect government leaders? What is faith? What kinds of idols do people have today? Why does human priesthood have many shortcomings? Why should you read Hebrews 11 when you feel discouraged by life's challenges? How can a person make their opinions, philosophies, or views become their "god"?

May God Greatly Bless You, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Hebrews 1:1-4.

[1-4] God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son … who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Prayer: Thank You Lord that You are above all, greater than angels, priests, and every creature. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Create a small booklet of the heroes of faith from Hebrews 11.

DAY 342 (December 7)

TOPIC: Faith Without Good Deeds is Dead

(James)



This letter is from James, the brother of the LORD Jesus and one of the 12 apostles. James was not a believer until Jesus resurrected and appeared to him. James was the leader of the Jerusalem council—the first council of believers who followed Jesus Christ. He knew a lot from childhood, having lived with the LORD Himself. Have you ever wondered what he knew about Jesus as his brother? This is not James the apostle, the son of thunder, or the first apostle to be killed by Herod in 44 AD. When the Scriptures mention the brothers of Jesus, James is listed first.

Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection, and Paul refers to him as a pillar of the church in his letters because of the work he upheld. When Paul converted, he went to see him in Jerusalem. When Peter was released from prison, he told his friends to inform James. Jude, who wrote the epistle, was also a brother to James. James writes to the 12 tribes scattered abroad, addressing issues of law, community morals, faith and deeds, growth in faith, and the works of the fruit of the Spirit. He emphasizes that our words should align with our actions—it is easy to speak but challenging to walk in faith. Our words should match our lifestyle. It is not just about being a Christian but

about walking with Christ. Remember, even Satan believes and trembles at the existence of God. When Christ walked on earth, demons acknowledged Him and trembled. Therefore, we should be doers of the Word and not just talkers. He discusses doing good but focuses on being good.

🌻 James says it is a joy to face trials because testing produces patience and perfection. He advises us to ask for wisdom from God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, but we must ask in faith without doubting. We should not be double-minded, tossed by the wind. Anyone who endures trials will receive the crown of life. However, if tempted, one should not say, "God is tempting me," because temptation comes from one's own desires. God only gives good things, not evil. If anyone thinks they are religious but cannot control their tongue and speaks recklessly, they deceive themselves.

🌻 The Christian faith requires self-control and moderation. The tongue is a small organ but can set a fire like hell. Just as animals like horses and ships are guided by small bits and rudders, so is the tongue. Teachers are held to a higher judgment because God has entrusted them with greater responsibilities, so they should use their tongues with wisdom from above. Adults should never speak words that discourage children by calling them names like "dog" or "fool." Children may believe these labels, causing them lifelong harm.

🌻 Adults or children may act foolishly, but that does not mean they are fools. If we can speak kind words to some people, we should learn to speak kindly to everyone, or remain silent. Gossiping about God's servants in front of children brings a curse upon oneself. Even if those servants are wicked, such discussions should be left to adults. Communication is only 7% verbal—the remaining 93% is conveyed through our tone and body language. Sometimes, our looks and facial expressions communicate more powerfully than words.

🌻 True religion requires us to guard ourselves against worldly corruption, especially careless speech. Animals like lions, elephants, and snakes can be tamed, but the tongue cannot—it is a deadly poison. We should be mindful of our speech, not speaking blessings at one moment and curses the next. The same mouth should not produce both sweet and bitter words. The tongue fosters jealousy, strife, and confusion, and Satan thrives in such environments. Today, technology amplifies this issue, so we must be cautious about what we write on computers or phones and the pictures we post.

🌻 We often speak out of anger or without thinking. It is wise to let anger subside before sending messages. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul reminds us that evil resides within us, but we must not let it spill out through our words. We

should ask God to cleanse our thoughts so that our words will also be pure. James warns against favoritism—if a wealthy person with gold rings enters the church and is given a seat of honor while a poor person in shabby clothes is told to sit on the floor, that is discrimination.

God has chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. To fulfill the law means to love others—our neighbors. If we break one commandment, we are guilty of breaking the entire law, for the same God who said, "Do not steal," also said, "Do not murder." Faith without works is dead. If you see someone without food or clothes and only say, "Go in peace, stay warm and well-fed," you have done nothing to help them. Even Abraham was justified by his actions when he offered his son Isaac.

James discusses conflicts arising from selfish desires. We do not receive because we do not ask, or we ask with wrong motives. We must resist the devil, and he will flee from us. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Humble yourselves before the LORD, and He will lift you up. James reminds us that if our deeds are evil, we are no better than non-believers. True religion involves helping widows, orphans, the poor, and the needy while keeping ourselves unpolluted by the world.

James advises us not to boast about tomorrow because life is like a vapor that appears briefly and then vanishes. We should do good when we know it is right, for failing to do so is sin. Faith without deeds is dead. He warns oppressive employers who exploit workers and fail to pay fair wages that their wealth will rot and testify against them. The cries of these workers have reached God's ears.

True religion is also reflected in how we treat our servants and animals. Be it overworking a donkey or underpaying employees who toil tirelessly while our families relax, such injustice cries out to heaven. James concludes by urging us to pray in times of trouble, sing songs of praise when cheerful, and call church elders to pray and anoint the sick, for the prayer of faith will heal them.

Someday in heaven, we will understand how our trials were intricately linked to our salvation and how these light afflictions worked for our eternal good. God provides wisdom to endure trials, strengthening our weak areas. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful, as seen when Elijah prayed, and rain ceased for three and a half years, and when he prayed again, the rains returned. If someone strays from the faith, we should encourage them to return, for restoring one soul saves them from death.

🌼 Jesus Had a Special Place for Prayer:
You should have a private place for prayer. Just as Jesus had specific places for fellowship with God, we too need such places to commune with Him.

🌼Questions:

Why is faith without works dead?

What is the problem with the tongue if misused?

Who should a sick person call?

What warning is given to employers who exploit workers?

What benefit do trials bring?

As Jesus' brother, what unique knowledge might James have?

Who are the wise people who do not need to ask God for wisdom?

How can we communicate using our eyes, tone, or body language?

How can we avoid speaking harmful words?

List words that heal and words that destroy.

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: James 2:16-18.

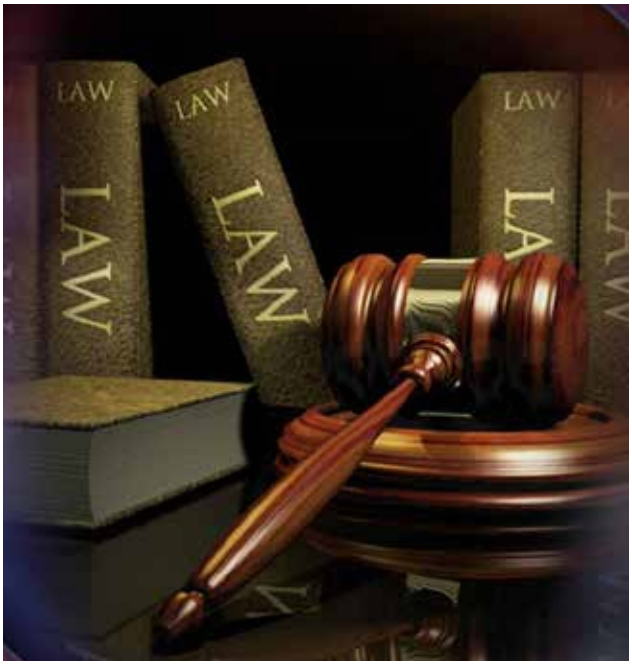
[16-18] And one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Prayer: Dear Almighty God, help us not to be people of empty words, but that our faith may be joined with works. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Role play of a needy person asking for food or something necessary, and others who claim to love God respond by saying: "Go in peace, may the Lord feed you," etc.

DAY 343 (December 8)

TOPIC: The First Letter of Peter



Peter was an apostle of Jesus and one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. He was one of the first leaders of the Christian church in Jerusalem. He wrote to the believers, encouraging them to rejoice when they are persecuted because Christ also suffered for them, and when He was persecuted, He did not retaliate with insults. It seems Peter witnessed these things with his own eyes. He was drawn by Jesus' love and was willing to do anything for the LORD. He emphasized that it is better to suffer for doing good than to suffer for breaking the law or doing evil. Peter wrote this letter while in Babylon, with John Mark reminding us that we have been purchased with precious blood and not with perishable things, and therefore, we should rid ourselves of deceit and all evil. He urges us to keep our minds focused on what is good.

Peter's letter was addressed to all believers in general, emphasizing the spirit of unity and love after they had been scattered due to severe persecution. Peter himself knew much about suffering, as he was beaten, threatened, and imprisoned. He accepted these without resentment or discouragement but continued to obey God and live a victorious life. His purpose was to encourage those facing trials because of their faith and to call them to live holy lives. Peter asserts that holiness is important, even during suffering and pain. It is common for believers to be imprisoned or even killed for their faith. Peter says that everyone should be ready to testify to anyone about the hope that is within their heart.

Let us be watchful because our accuser, the devil, is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Therefore, we must be vigilant and alert, not giving him any opportunity or forgetting that we are in a great battle. Peter says that times of suffering are times of rejoicing because we share in Christ's sufferings. Suffering can also serve as a lesson, revealing flaws in our character

that need correction. Eternal life is promised to all who love God. Peter worked with both Jews and Gentiles, traveling to various regions, and even reached Rome around 60 AD, just as Paul did.

In the past, Peter denied Jesus, but he later gained courage and considered it an honor to die for Christ. Historians say that Peter was also killed in Rome under Emperor Nero, just like Paul. Although this letter is brief, it contains great teachings on faith. He urges us to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, and He will lift us up, casting all our worries and troubles on Him because He cares deeply for us. We should live holy lives because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and not with perishable things.

Therefore, we must put away malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. Let us remember that we are sojourners and pilgrims, and we must avoid the desires of the flesh—things we see and desire to possess, and things that make us prideful and feel superior to others or even to God Himself. Jesus is the Living Stone, the cornerstone needed to build a strong house. We are all children of the King, for our home is in heaven, so we must live uprightly. Let servants obey their masters, even the harsh ones, because if they do wrong and are punished, they deserve it. However, if they do good and are punished, they suffer for Christ. Wives should submit to their husbands, as this is God's command.

Peter provides guidance on how we should adorn ourselves, saying we should not focus excessively on outward appearances, such as gold jewelry, wigs, braided hair, or expensive and attractive clothing. Instead, we should adorn ourselves with the inner beauty that does not fade—qualities of gentleness, calmness, patience, and obedience, which are of great value in God's sight. This does not mean we should wear dirty or shabby clothes. Rather, we should not prioritize external appearances for human approval, as God knows the hearts. Gold, diamonds, and many precious stones that people wear were created by God and will even exist in heaven. However, the problem arises when these things become temptations or idols. The principle is to use our money, time, and resources for God's glory.

When we adorn ourselves with earrings or show off for attention, it corrupts the inner person. Especially when we quarrel to protect these possessions when someone tries to help us, it reveals a form of idolatry. This is not the time to spend large sums of money on clothes or adornments when there are pressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Personally, as an African and a Christian, I have realized that I am always poor and without enough money, even if I were a billionaire. I have many people to support. There

are three billion people who have never heard the gospel, particularly in the 10/40 window (1040window Joshuaproject.org).

Every day, I meet people with severe needs for health, clothing, shelter, or food. There are people on the streets without shoes, clothes, or food. I cannot justify spending $500 on a suit, tie, or jewelry while many are perishing spiritually and physically. This is my personal testimony because I want others to live eternally, rather than living in luxury while so many have not heard the message of the cross. Five people dedicated themselves to sharing the gospel with me when I was in darkness so that I could hear the good news, which will soon be closed.

This is the time to be like the apostles—offering everything as a sacrifice to help others prepare for the soon return of Jesus. Everything is temporary—perhaps seventy or eighty years for humans—but eternity is forever. Likewise, husbands should live with their wives wisely, giving them honor as the weaker vessels, because they are co-heirs of the grace of eternal life. Husbands who mistreat their wives may have their prayers hindered. This applies to everyone under our care—if we neglect them, God will not hear our prayers.

Those who love Jesus must love one another, be humble, and repay evil with good. We should strive for goodness and not plan or engage in evil. Always be ready to answer anyone who asks about your faith with gentleness and humility, not with pride or religious arguments that drive people away. Employees should respect their employers, and children should honor their parents. Peter concludes by urging church elders to shepherd God's flock properly, not under compulsion or for financial gain.

Spiritual leaders should not seek shameful profit. We have witnessed servants of God asking for money for personal gain, telling people they will pray for them if they pay, or selling prayer items like anointing oil or cloths—this is wrong. Both leaders and members should practice humility and service. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Questions:

Where was Peter when he wrote this letter?

Why should spiritual leaders shepherd God's flock faithfully?

Why should we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand?

Why should husbands live with their wives wisely?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7.

[5-7] But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for this ladder of Peter. Help us to grow spiritually and have good character. Help us to discern false prophets who twist Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss Peter's ladder, step by step, until the end.

DAY 343 (December 9)

TOPIC: The Second Epistle of Peter.



Peter wrote this letter as he approached the end of his life, just before being executed in Rome by Emperor Nero. Peter saw false teachers and prophets spreading doctrines without the foundation of faith in Christ, infiltrating the church with their teachings. He exhorts Christians to grow in faith and become courageous so they can identify false teachings or apostasy. He says these false religious teachers will exploit people with fabricated stories.

Peter tells us that they did not follow cleverly invented stories when they spoke about the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He recalls the time when Jesus was transfigured in radiant glory. Peter was very close to Jesus—eating, walking, and accompanying Him everywhere. He says he personally heard the voice from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

This voice came from heaven when he was with Jesus on the holy mountain during the transfiguration. We, as Christians, have also been given the sure prophetic word of God—the Scriptures. The Scriptures are like a light shining in a dark place, and we do well to pay attention to them until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts when Jesus returns. Peter emphasizes that the Scriptures did not come by human will but through people who were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Peter reminds us that if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell to be held for judgment, and if He did not spare the ancient world but saved Noah—a preacher of righteousness—and seven others when He brought the flood, He will likewise bring judgment in the last days. He also condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes but rescued righteous Lot, who was distressed by the depravity around him. Similarly, God will deliver the godly from trials and keep the unrighteous under punishment. Among the unrighteous is Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. Such people are like wells without water and clouds driven by a storm.

Those who have escaped the corruption of the world but are entangled again and overcome are in a worse condition than before. They are like a dog that returns to its vomit or a washed pig that returns to wallow in the mud.

Peter quotes the Old Testament 35 times. He addresses concerns about the delay in the Lord's return, assuring believers that the Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness. Instead, He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, unexpectedly for those who are not watching. On that day, the heavens will disappear with a roar, and the works of humanity will be burned up.

Therefore, we ought to live holy and godly lives as we wait for the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Since we are looking forward to this, we must make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him. We should continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God desires us to move forward, and He enables us to do so. By trusting in God's promises, He will help us fulfill them in our lives. Thus, the return of Jesus will not catch us unprepared like a thief in the night. Are you ready to meet Jesus in the clouds?

Have you heard of Peter's ladder? When using a ladder, we climb from the bottom to the top. This reflects our Christian journey. Therefore, make every effort to add virtue to your faith, knowledge to virtue, self-control to

knowledge, perseverance to self-control, godliness to perseverance, brotherly kindness to godliness, and love to brotherly kindness. If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no way to prove genuine faith without trials, and only genuine faith saves. Are you going through the furnace of trials now? Remember, our God is the Master Deliverer—He will ensure you are refined without being burned! There is a difference between temporary and eternal matters. The believers addressed in this letter were strangers, temporary residents, and pilgrims, waiting for their eternal inheritance. Their trials were temporary, but there is great joy ahead—some of which can even be experienced now amidst trials. Some people had not fully understood the reality of God's work and His love, but now Jesus is fully revealed. Our human lives are fragile and fleeting, but lives founded on the Word of God will endure forever.

However, anyone who lacks these qualities is blind, shortsighted, and has forgotten that they were cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, for if you do these things, you will never stumble. In this way, you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The church today is being tested by false teachings. Our safety is found in the Scriptures alone. Everyone should be able to discern between true and false teachings to avoid deception. To detect counterfeit currency, we study the genuine—not the fake. Similarly, to identify false teachings, we must study the Bible so that when false doctrines arise, we can distinguish them. For a long time, Satan, through his agents—false prophets and teachers—has attacked the church of Christ. He has introduced heresies that many have accepted into the church.

One such heresy is "theistic evolution," which claims that God created the world through evolution. Another is the belief in a secret rapture, where believers will be secretly taken to heaven. These doctrines are recent innovations. Another dangerous teaching is that the soul leaves the body at death and goes to either heaven or hell, remaining alive apart from the body (see Ezekiel 18:4). Additionally, there is the false teaching that the first day of the week, rather than the seventh, is the holy day. God personally descended on Mount Sinai and proclaimed the Ten Commandments, including the command to keep the seventh-day Sabbath (see Exodus 19, 20), which Jesus affirmed by observing it (see Luke 4:16).

In these last days, false prophets have become more aggressive. Many,

including young children, claim to be prophets or apostles and demand money from people. This was rare in the past but is now widespread. Some treat it as a business to satisfy their greed. Jesus warned us, saying, “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24). Satan deceives to destroy. Only through a personal relationship with Jesus and a deep knowledge of the Scriptures can we avoid being misled. Let the Holy Spirit be our teacher as we study the Bible.

The disciples were deeply impressed by Jesus’ prayer life and communion with God. One day, after being absent for a short while, they found Him immersed in prayer. Unaware of their presence, He continued praying aloud. Their hearts were profoundly touched. When He finished, they said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

Questions:

Who is compared to a pig that returns to the mud?

What is our safeguard against false teachings?

Mention three Old Testament events that Peter refers to.

How did the Scriptures come to us?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7.

[5-7] But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for this ladder of Peter. Help us to grow spiritually and have good character. Help us to discern false prophets who twist Your Word. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss Peter’s ladder, step by step, until the end.

DAY 344 (December 10)

TOPIC: Behold the Amazing Love!

(1 John)



John was the beloved and youngest apostle of all. He witnessed Jesus' transfiguration in glory and saw Elijah and Moses when they came to comfort Jesus. He was an eyewitness to these events. It is possible he was a close relative of Jesus, particularly on His mother's side, as suggested by Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56, and John 19:25-27. His mother, Salome, was related to Jesus' mother.

Jesus entrusted His mother to this apostle rather than to His biological brothers. John was present in the Garden of Gethsemane, witnessing Jesus' sweat falling like drops of blood. John wrote the Gospel of John, which describes the life of Jesus, and the book of Revelation, which was a vision given to him on the island of Patmos. By the time he wrote his letters, John was an elderly man speaking to beloved members of the church, whom he called "little children." In his letters, John reminds us of God's great love and that we are His children.

When a child understands God's love, they will be joyful, thankful, and love both God and people. God cares for us deeply, which is why He sustains us. John wants us to remain close to God, which helps us trust Him more. In his old age, John lived in Ephesus. It is possible that his letter was directed to the church there. At the time, the church was divided, and John wrote to help them distinguish between the true teachings of faith and false ones.

Some did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah or that He came in the flesh.

Others claimed they did not need Jesus as their Redeemer and Advocate, arguing they could relate to God directly without Him. This letter is, in a way, a summary of the Gospel of John. As a spiritual elder, John wanted believers to hold firmly to the faith because stepping away from faith leads to deep darkness. God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all. Today, there are even more false teachings and spiritual darkness than in Paul's time. We must remember that God is light, and there is no darkness in Him.

If we claim to have fellowship with Him but walk in darkness, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us—we are simply liars. The Lord tells us that even if we fall off the path, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. However, if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

John addresses the "little children," meaning all of us who are God's children, saying we should not sin. But if we do sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ—who intercedes for us and wipes away our sins. Knowing God means walking in His ways and keeping His commandments—His Word. We cannot claim to know and love God while living however we please. Those around us will see through that and call us hypocrites.

John emphasizes that he is not giving a new commandment but the same commandment of love. We should not hate others because anyone who hates their brother or sister is in darkness and lacks light. John writes to children because their sins are forgiven through Jesus' name and because they now know the Father. He writes to fathers because they have known God from the beginning. Finally, he writes to young people because they are strong, have overcome the evil one, and the Word of God lives in them. These messages are deeply encouraging.

John wanted believers to be 100% assured that their faith and hope in Jesus would secure eternal fellowship with Him. He warns us not to love the world or the things in it. The desires of the world do not come from God. The world and its desires will pass away, but whoever does the will of God will live forever. The Antichrist is coming in the last days, but even now, there are many antichrists. Anyone who denies Jesus Christ and the Father is an antichrist. Furthermore, anyone who elevates themselves above God or thinks they are better than God is also an antichrist. How do we recognize this attitude in ourselves? We ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to us, as this was the problem with Eve—she believed she knew better than God and disobeyed His instructions.

If we do not follow God's instructions while claiming to believe in Him, we become antichrists. Christ did not break God's law. We must be careful not to be misled by false teachings that are not rooted in God's Word. John emphasizes that Jesus is not just a good person—He is the Son of God. Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. Throughout his letter, John repeatedly emphasizes God's love and instructs us to love one another. Christianity without Christ's divinity ceases to be Christianity. John's letter invites us all to share in fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This "fellowship" refers to a partnership, a shared relationship. The Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, invites us to enter into fellowship with Him!

For our light to shine, we must sincerely confess our sins and ask God to cleanse us. Upon careful reflection, we will see that we have sins to confess and be purified from. This may include the sin of impatience, doubting God's promises, selfishness, or pride. In short, because we fall short of Christ's character, we have sins to confess and be cleansed of. Let us pray that God gives us the spiritual insight to see ourselves as He sees us.

When John first followed Jesus, he was hot-tempered, ambitious for status and respect, and eager for revenge. Yet, Jesus' love transformed him. John loved Jesus, but he had flaws—he was willing to change. Are you willing to be transformed today to reflect Jesus? The Holy Spirit speaks to us just as He did to John, warning and guiding us. John insists that we love not just with words but with actions. He exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God!" Being God's children means adopting His character, and when He is revealed, we will be like Him. Those who remain in Him do not continue in sin but confess and turn away from it. Do not be surprised if the world hates you—God loved us first, not the other way around.

We cannot claim to love God, whom we have not seen, while hating people we do see. Therefore, we are urged to love one another. God loves us all, which is why He gave His only Son to die for us. John declares the profound truth: "God is love!" The term "love," used to describe how God cares for us, is a limited human attempt to express the divine truth of God's care.

Biblical scholars and linguists suggest that the concept of love encompasses over 23 attributes, including mercy, grace, justice, patience, kindness, goodness, comfort, hope, and peace. We must avoid false spirits because they have already come into the world and will continue to come through false prophets. We are called to test these spirits—do they acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God? If not, they are the spirit of the Antichrist. John

encourages the “little children” to pray with confidence, knowing that if we pray according to God’s will, He hears us.

Questions: Why did John write his letters? Why should we love in action rather than words alone? What does it mean to be children of God? What category does someone belong to if they hate their brother? Why is it important to love others before claiming to love God? What does the Bible mean when it says, “God is love”? What helped to calm John, the Son of Thunder?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 1 John 3:1.

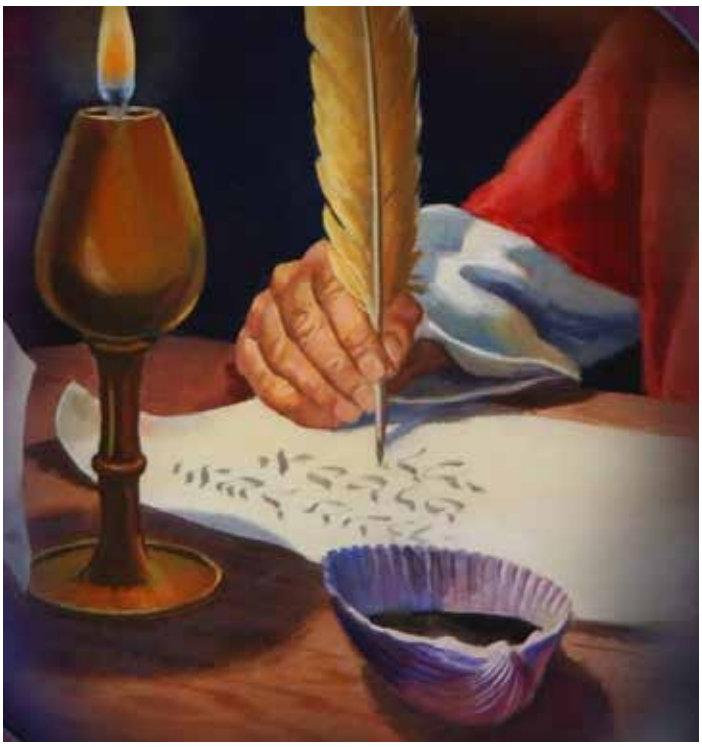
[1] Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for John’s letter. We are grateful that we are Your children. We pray that we may resemble You, so that when You come we may say, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him.” In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss 1 John 1:5-10. Find light such as a torch or candle and explain: “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” Contrast this with darkness.

DAY 345 (December 11)

TOPIC: The Second Epistle of John



John writes a letter to the chosen lady, with the main message being that we should love one another. His urgent message concerns believers with false teachings. These are not worldly people with deceitful teachings, but believers. Worldly teachings are easy to identify and avoid, but the teachings from believers require wisdom to discern because they contain much truth mixed with a little falsehood. Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Jesus has taken on humanity forever! John says this deception is from the Antichrist.

Often, this deception greatly harms the church because it comes from church leaders. Leaders cause many to stumble through their influence, leading people away from God's truth. False teachings, or misleading knowledge, sometimes come from those close to us. Through their lifestyles or actions, they suggest that fearing God is not a priority, and we tend to believe them. Sometimes, these individuals hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, repent, and return to the faith. However, those they mislead often stray too far and fail to return.

A married woman once said she could no longer follow God's ways because her husband had embraced false teachings. He stopped attending church, insisting they should stay home and "fix themselves," claiming fellowship with other believers was unnecessary because they were part of "Babylon" or confusion. When they stayed home, they grew weary and abandoned even their home worship. The Lord's Day became just another ordinary day without any worship. They began to argue with each other, and even their children abandoned the faith.

Eventually, the wife passed away, and it is believed she was lost because there was no evidence of her repenting or returning to her former faith—though only God knows her final fate. Five years later, her husband decided to return to the faith and rekindle his first love for God. Many wondered what would happen on Judgment Day, considering he had a strong faith when they married but led his wife astray. Now, the husband had returned, but the wife never got the chance. Indeed, you cannot rely on someone else's spiritual journey. This situation also occurred with King Manasseh. He misled thousands through false worship but eventually repented after being taken captive. Although he returned to God, he had already caused many to stumble.

False teachings often involve exaggerating or presenting partial truths. For example, at funerals, people may claim the deceased will go to heaven, even if they lived a life of open sin. While it is understandable not to speak ill of the dead, it is better to remain silent than to overpraise and declare someone's eternal destination when their life clearly opposed the faith. While our loved ones are still alive, we have the opportunity to guide them to live according to God's will. That way, those who love Jesus will not have to lie at their funeral just to create a comforting narrative, knowing fully well that their life glorified Satan.

There will be three surprises in heaven: First—How did I make it here? It will be a marvel because we often fall into sin. Second—Where are those I expected to see in heaven? And third—Why do I see people here whom I thought would be in hell?

John says that if someone comes to you without bringing true doctrine but instead deceives people, do not welcome them into your home or even greet them. For if you greet them, you share in their evil works. These words are serious. Often, we engage with such people, listen to their deceptions, and waste our time. Television, computers, and other modern technology contain a mix of knowledge and falsehoods, requiring us to filter their content—especially for children. Anyone who loves and seeks God should avoid time-wasting distractions. Wasting time through excessive engagement with modern devices like videos, phones, computers, and other electronic gadgets is one of Satan's strategies to divert us from spiritual and physical success.

In those days, false teachings known as Gnosticism also emerged. Gnostics believed that salvation came through knowledge. They held that the spirit was inherently holy while the body was evil. They denied the humanity of Jesus, claiming that the body was corrupt. According to their false belief, the body and spirit were separate, and the spirit had greater value, making it acceptable to mistreat the body. This was their erroneous doctrine.

John is called the Apostle of Love. He emphasizes loving one another because God is love. Whoever loves is born of God and knows God. It is impossible to have the selfless love that the Bible commands without the Holy Spirit. The evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is the ability to love (see 1 John 4:12-13), for love is the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). It is through this fruit that we recognize the true children of God.

Satan will try to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24). Deception in these last days requires God's grace and a solid knowledge of the truth to avoid being misled. Can you believe that in this final hour of earth's history, some Christians no longer believe in the Trinity? Some former faithful Christians now believe that God took millions of years to create the world through evolution.

A Scotland Yard officer was once asked how they could detect counterfeit currency. It was assumed that they spent much time studying fake money. However, the officer explained that instead, they devoted their time to thoroughly studying genuine currency. This way, whenever a counterfeit bill was placed next to it, the difference became obvious. Similarly, we must deeply study the truth found in the Bible so that whenever false teachings arise, the difference will be clear. This requires diligent Bible study, sincerity, and prayer.

If we do not love, we do not know God. John has much to tell us, but he ends this brief letter here. Private prayers, family prayers, and public worship gatherings are all important. We must live out our prayers and cooperate with Christ in His work.

Questions: To whom does John write his letter? What is John's primary purpose in this letter? Are there any false teachings in your school or home that do not align with God's Word? How can we have God's love without compromising the core teachings of faith? How can we avoid superficial love in words only? Can we love God without obeying His commandments?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 2 John 6, 7, 9.

[6, 7, 9] This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. …Whoever abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank You for Your commandments. We pray that we may walk in them, protect us from the deception of the antichrist, and help us to abide in the doctrine of Christ. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Let the children participate in a game of "Truth or Deception," where they identify statements as true or false. Prepare true and false statements about Jesus, God, or Christian living (e.g. "Jesus is the Son of God" is true; "We can do anything we want and still be good Christians" is false). Read each statement aloud and ask the children to decide if it is 'truth' or 'deception.'

DAY 346 (December 12)

TOPIC: I Pray That You May Prosper in All Things

(3 John)



John writes this letter to encourage his fellow worker Gaius in the ministry he is doing. He says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." Physical health helps us maintain spiritual health. The Greek word "Desozo" refers to both health and salvation. Living up to 70 years is insignificant compared to salvation, which is eternal life. Through our brains, we come to know or understand God. Although we do not know much about Gaius, we do know that John loved him dearly. Gaius is also praised for his gift of hospitality and generosity.

For instance, if we smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or entertain impure thoughts, these actions damage our brains and prevent us from understanding God's Word or His plan for us. The brain is the battleground between God's angels and Satan because our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Studies show that, on average, people begin smoking or consuming alcohol before the age of 15. When we are sick, it is difficult to help those in need because we ourselves require help and often become discouraged and exhausted, relying on others for assistance.

However, we do not present a positive image to those who do not know God if we harm our health by engaging in destructive habits. The commandment "Do not kill" also includes not harming our bodies. Every tool produced in a

factory comes with instructions for its proper use. Similarly, God has provided guidelines for taking care of our bodies, which are found in the Bible. You cannot pour salt into a petrol tank without expecting to damage the car—likewise, we should be mindful of what we consume. Avoid consuming unhealthy, refined, or overly processed foods with high sugar and fat content. It is best to eat two balanced, affordable meals a day, preferably homegrown, delicious, and easily accessible. If you engage in strenuous physical work, such as farming, you may eat three times a day, but most people do not perform heavy labor. An ideal schedule includes having breakfast around 10 a.m. and the second meal around 4 p.m.

Refined sugar, meaning sugarcane juice stripped of its nutrients, and refined oils are harmful. Avoid imitation foods advertised on television and instead consume natural foods created by God. It takes approximately 14 ears of corn to produce a tablespoon of oil. God's plan was for you to eat 5 ears of corn and feel satisfied, but a plate of French fries represents about 28 ears of corn. Refined foods lack nutritional value and fail to satisfy hunger despite their volume.

Another example is cheese. A small piece of cheese, the size of your palm, requires about 20 liters of milk to produce—this is wasteful and promotes unhealthy weight gain. Never refine grains—eat whole wheat and brown rice. Learn simple home remedies and use them whenever possible. Understand when to use conventional medicine, which provides crucial diagnostic tools and often saves lives in emergencies. Both conventional and alternative medicines are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible recognizes both professional and natural healers. Both groups should work together without greed, focusing instead on helping and serving God's people. Those who love God, whether practicing conventional or alternative medicine, should strive to reduce healthcare costs, improve health, and earn a living. We will discuss ten health principles—commonly called the "Ten Natural Remedies"—which are essential for physical and spiritual well-being.

These are simple practices God gave us to follow daily as preventive measures to reduce illness. Westerners use the acronym "NEW START," which stands for:

Nutrition (Healthy diet)

Exercise (Physical activity)

Water (Hydration)

Sun (Sunlight)

Temperance (Moderation)

Air (Fresh air)

Rest (Rest)

Trust in Divine Power (Faith in God)

🌻Other essential principles include gratitude and praise, avoiding complaints, cleanliness, work, a positive attitude, service, entrepreneurship, and farming. In Swahili, you can organize these principles in any way that helps you remember them.

🌻10 Important Health Practices

1. Water: Children should drink 4 glasses of water daily, while adults need 8-12 glasses. Water cleanses the body internally (by drinking) and externally (by bathing). Avoid drinking water during meals—wait an hour or two. Ensure your water is clean by boiling and filtering it.

2. Sunlight: Aim to get at least an hour of sunlight daily (morning sun). Sunlight helps produce vitamin D, reduces cancer risks, and boosts the immune system.

3. Trust in God: Trusting in God reduces fear, anger, anxiety, and despair, all of which improve health. A cheerful heart is good medicine. Knowing God has forgiven us, forgiving others, and seeking forgiveness brings emotional healing.

4. Nutrition: Approximately 80% of health issues stem from poor diet. The five

essential food groups are:

Fruits (at least five daily)

Vegetables

Whole grains

Legumes (beans, lentils)

Nuts and seeds (e.g., coconut, cashews)

5. Exercise: Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes to an hour daily. Walking is ideal, but any exercise is beneficial.

6. Fresh Air: Breathe deeply 4-5 times daily and spend time outdoors. Keep your home well-ventilated.

7. Temperance: Avoid harmful substances (cigarettes, alcohol) and use good things in moderation. Do not overeat or overindulge.

8. Rest: Children should sleep for 10 hours, adults for 8 hours, and infants for up to 20 hours. Follow the biblical principle of working six days and resting on the seventh.

9. Community Service: Serving others fosters joy and reduces selfishness. Helping at home and supporting the needy promotes physical and mental well-being.

10. Gratitude: Those who express gratitude and praise live longer, healthier lives. Always say “thank you,” “sorry,” “please,” and “excuse me.”
There is a place for both conventional medicine and lifestyle adjustments. True healing also involves restoring our spiritual relationship with our Heavenly Father.

John warns Gaius about Diotrephes, who was arrogant and dictatorial, hindering the gospel and refusing to welcome fellow believers. John commends Demetrius as an example of goodness and faithfulness.

We must always be vigilant and prayerful. Neglecting prayer and spiritual duties opens the door to sin. Every Christian faces temptations, and no one is immune. We must be governed daily by God’s Spirit; otherwise, we will fall under Satan’s control.

Questions:

Who wrote this letter?

Why is physical and spiritual health important?

What are the ten health principles?

What is the difference between Diotrephes and Demetrius?

Why is gluttony a serious issue?

Why is it important to follow God’s health plan?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: 3 John 2.

[2] Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

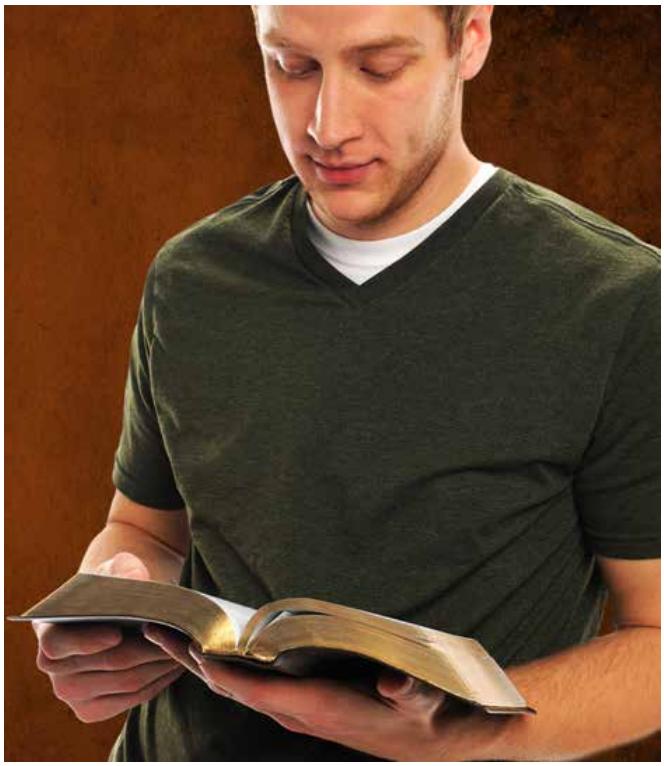
Prayer: Thank You Lord that You care about our health. Help us not to use things You have forbidden, and to use those things You have said are good for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Draw the eight health principles, and also the things that are not good to use (e.g. Coca-Cola, coffee, alcohol) and the things that are good to use (e.g. fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts). Talk about healthy living.

DAY 347 (December 13)

TOPIC: GOD can keep us from stumbling if we allow Him

(The Epistle of Jude)



This letter is addressed to all believers and was written by Jude, the brother of Jesus. He writes to those who are called and loved by God the Father and who are kept for Jesus Christ. Jude says he felt compelled to write to warn them about false teachings that were creeping in secretly. He urges them to contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints because certain individuals, who were marked for condemnation long ago, have secretly slipped in. These people pervert the grace of God into immorality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

He reminds us that God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, yet many of them perished in the wilderness because of their unbelief. Although they experienced God's goodness, their lack of faith led to their destruction. Similarly, we must walk with God daily. We cannot rely on yesterday's experience with God for today; otherwise, we will backslide. It does not matter if our parents were believers—each of us will give a personal account before the judgment seat. God has no grandchildren, only children. We must seek Him daily and live according to the Holy Spirit.

Jude emphasizes the importance of obedience. He gives the example of angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling; these angels are bound in eternal chains. He also references Old Testament examples, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, whose people were punished for sexual immorality and perversion. From Jude's letter, we also learn that Moses was resurrected and taken to heaven. Michael the archangel disputed with the devil over the body of Moses. The devil accused Moses of

sin, but Michael simply said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Jude discusses the way of Cain—the first murderer and rebel—who chose to follow his own ideas instead of God’s instructions. When God required a lamb as a sacrifice, Cain offered crops instead, representing his own righteousness. True obedience means doing things God’s way, not ours. Cain thought he was doing God a favor by offering his own produce rather than asking his brother Abel for a lamb. The lamb symbolized Jesus, who would die on the cross. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Cain was warned that sin was crouching at his door, but he ignored the warning.

Those who follow their own teachings rather than God’s instructions are like clouds without rain—useless. They are like trees that bear no fruit and are uprooted twice, destined for destruction. Jude also mentions the rebellion of Korah and the greed of Balaam, who led others astray through falsehood and selfish ambition. Such people cause divisions in the church and places of worship.

Jude reminds us of Enoch, who was taken to heaven without dying. Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone and convict all the ungodly of their wicked deeds. Everyone will be judged according to their works. Jude warns us against grumbling and complaining, as the Israelites did during their 40 years in the wilderness. Complaining displeases God, even when He is providing for us. Just as no parent enjoys being constantly criticized by a child despite their best efforts, God is not pleased when we grumble. The Israelites reached the borders of Canaan three times before they finally entered.

1. The first time, they sent spies to Jericho but did not enter.

2. The second time, they reached Kadesh Barnea but were bitten by serpents and fell into immorality with Midianite women, due to Balaam’s scheme.

3. The third time, they finally crossed the Jordan and entered the Promised Land.

In the last days, there will be mockers who follow their own ungodly desires, rejecting the authority of God. Such people cause division because they are not led by the Holy Spirit. Jude urges us to separate ourselves from such people and to pray in the Holy Spirit.

We are called to have compassion on those who doubt and to save others by snatching them from the fire—just as we would rescue a child from danger.

This message is especially important for us living in the final days of earth's history, to protect us from being misled by false teachings. Jude concludes his letter with an encouraging promise: God is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy. To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, now and forevermore. This is a powerful assurance! Do we truly believe that God can give us victory over every sin that troubles us? Many of us struggle with this idea and make excuses for our failures, blaming our human nature or external influences. But God does not accept these excuses. He longs for people through whom He can reveal His character to the world—people who would rather die than commit a sinful act.

While it is true that Jesus covers us with His robe of righteousness, this does not allow us to continue in known sin. If God excused sin, Satan would be the first to object, saying, "It's not fair, Lord! If you excuse them, you must excuse me too." And Satan would have a valid point. If we continue in sin without repentance, Christ's sacrifice for us is in vain. We must allow Jesus to save us from our sins, not in our sins. When we fully surrender to Jesus and rely on Him for guidance and strength, He will hold us with a hand that will never let go (1 Corinthians 1:7-9).

False prophets who deceive others for money or personal gain will not escape judgment. On that day, they will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and drive out demons in Your name and perform many miracles?" But Jesus will reply, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:22-23 NKJV). To avoid being deceived and destroyed along with them, we must study the Bible diligently to know the truth.

Pray Always – Cultivate the habit of speaking to the Savior throughout the day—when you are alone, while walking, or during your daily tasks. Let your heart be constantly lifted in silent prayer for help, light, strength, and wisdom. Let every breath you take be a prayer.

Questions:

To whom did Jude address this letter?

What did Enoch see in his vision?

What sin did Cain commit?

What is wrong with complaining and grumbling?

For whom did Michael contend with the devil?

What is Jude's relationship to Jesus?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Jude 1:24, 25

[24,25] Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

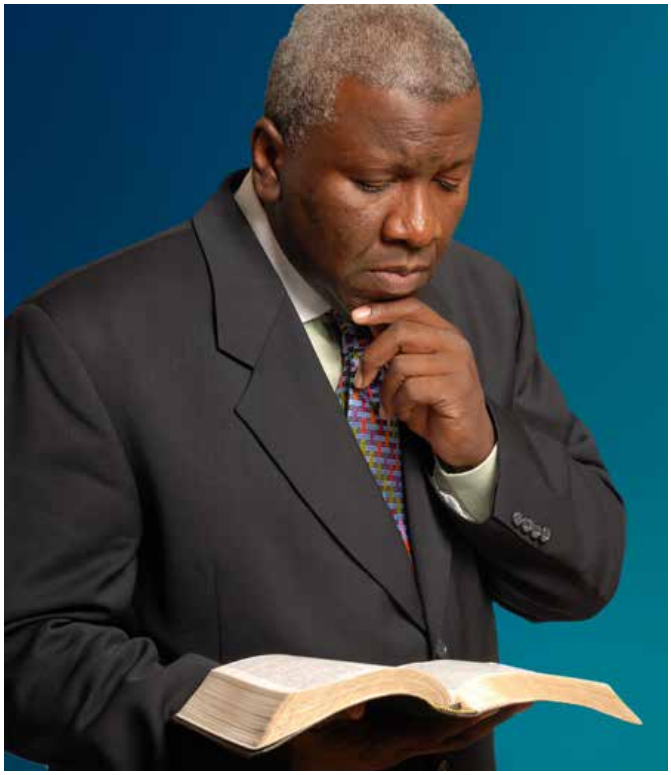
Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You can help us not to stumble or fall, and present us faultless. Glory, majesty, dominion, and power belong to You from eternity past, now, and forevermore. Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of a fence at the top of a cliff compared to a hospital below. Explain that the "fence on top" represents being strong in your own faith, while the "hospital below" represents helping others who have fallen.

DAY 348 (December 14)

TOPIC: Blessed is the One Who Reads

(Revelation 1-2)



❁ A gospel choir once sang, "I have read the end of the book, and I have seen that our side is the one that wins!" The book of Revelation is the last book of the Holy Scriptures. When someone begins reading a book—especially one about battles, problems needing solutions, or mysteries without answers—they are eager to know who will be the victor or how the story will end. Today, we are in a battle. Our thoughts are like a battlefield filled with missiles and heavy conflicts. We have chosen the team of the Almighty God who lives in heaven. You can read the book online or purchase it from literature evangelists—it is called The Great Controversy. It reveals how intense the battle we are facing truly is.

❁ After reading the first three chapters of the Bible (Genesis 1, 2, and 3) and Revelation 12, you will see that the battle began 6,000 years ago. In the book of Revelation, those who stand with God will be victorious. Praise the Lord! Do not seek answers to your questions from fortune-tellers, astrologers, scientists, television, computers, friends, witches, or worldly people—only the Bible holds the truth! The prophecy of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, reveals God's promises and His love. It is not simply knowledge about events or the beast. If we focus more on events and describing the beast than on God's promises and character, we lose our way. As you read, be careful not to grasp at other things instead of holding onto the promises of God's grace. He says to be watchful and stay alert for eternity, for the One who is coming is on His way! Prophecy reveals God.

۞ Do not waste your time seeking answers from fortune-tellers. By using the Bible, you can understand the entire history until the end. You will know that the wicked and those aligned with Satan will be on the losing side—even if they themselves are unaware. Why not ask God every day to give us all the strength we need, to pour out our hearts for true repentance, and to dedicate ourselves by studying the Scriptures, praying, and sharing the good news with others? It would also be wise to join a fellowship that follows the teachings of the Scriptures as they are.

۞ The book of Revelation, as its name suggests, is a revealed book—it is understandable. We may not understand everything at once because God reveals His Word to us day by day, but He has shown us enough to secure our salvation. Again, Revelation is no longer a mystery or hidden. Many who read this book find that it reveals what the prophet Daniel was shown long ago. The book contains 407 verses, 278 of which are drawn from the Old Testament. Thus, the New Testament alone cannot stand without the Old Testament. The New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament—they are inseparable. For example, the four horses reappear in the book of Zechariah, and the four creatures with faces like an eagle, an ox, a man, and a lion are also found in Ezekiel 1.

۞ When Daniel wanted to understand more of the prophecy he had received, he was told, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." This prophecy was sealed until the time of the end—and we are now living in that time. Almost all prophecies have been fulfilled. The ones remaining will not take much longer. Let us ask God to reveal His truth to us and take time to study this book, for it has already been revealed. We are living in the time Daniel was told about—a time when this book would be more clearly understood than in the days of John and Daniel.

۞ Jesus comforted John and told him not to worry because He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End—He who is, who was, and who is to come. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The Jews would say "Aleph and Taw." God is everything—He lacks nothing. He is Almighty. The apostle John, whom Jesus loved, received this message while exiled on the island of Patmos, near Turkey, when he was about 100 years old. This island is located in the Aegean Sea.

۞ About 60 years had passed since Jesus' death and resurrection, and John wondered why Jesus had not yet returned. He was exiled under the Roman ruler Domitian. It is said that he was tortured many times but was not killed. Around 90 AD, John was the last surviving apostle. Tradition holds that he was once placed in a vat of boiling oil but miraculously survived. John loved to

speak about love.

۞ This apostle of love often told both children and adults, “Little children, love one another,” for love fulfills the law, moves us from death to life, and leads us to eternal life. Read 1 Corinthians 13 again! John wrote to us that “GOD IS LOVE.”

۞ The destruction of Jerusalem by General Titus in 70 AD had already occurred by this time, and the Roman government had begun to persecute Christians. The Romans continued to persecute believers until 197 AD. A Christian named Tertullian defended believers who were falsely accused of breaking the law. He argued that these Christians were different from other criminals because their persecution was based on false accusations.

۞ Instead of spreading fear, the persecution strengthened the believers’ courage. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. How do you respond when someone mocks your faith? Do you lose hope and deny Jesus, retaliate in anger, or stand firm in your faith?

۞ John began the book by saying, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, saying, ‘Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.’”

۞ John saw Jesus in His glory, shining brightly and standing among seven golden lampstands. John fell at His feet as though dead, but Jesus reassured him, saying, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

۞ Although John, now an elderly man with wrinkles on his face, felt lonely as his friends had died, he still remembered the years he spent with Jesus.

۞ God will judge the world and reward those who have trusted and obeyed Him—these are His saints. Jesus Himself orchestrated John’s vision to reveal what must soon take place. Blessed is the one who reads, hears, and keeps the words of this prophecy, for the time is near.

۞ Jesus addressed the church in Ephesus, commending their perseverance and opposition to evil but warning them to return to their first love. Those who overcome will eat from the tree of life.

Questions:

1. On which island was John when he received the vision?

2. Who is the Alpha and Omega?

3. Which side will win the battle between God and Satan?

4. What counsel was given to the church in Ephesus?

5. Can the characteristics of the seven churches reflect different stages of the Christian church throughout history?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 1:1-3

[1-3] The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the book of Revelation that has been revealed to us. Please help us to read, hear, and obey what is written in it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Give the children a map of Turkey (ancient Asia Minor). Let them find the seven churches mentioned in Revelation and mark their locations: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

DAY 349 (December 15)

TOPIC: The Seven Churches of Asia Minor

(Revelation 2-3)

۞ 2. The Church of Smyrna: Represents the period from 100-331 AD, a time of persecution.

Commendation: You are poor and afflicted, yet you are rich because you know Me. You endure insults and suffering.

Encouragement: Do not fear what you are about to suffer. You will be thrown into prison and tested through tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Warning: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Reward: Whoever overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

۞ 3. The Church of Pergamum: Represents the period from 331-538 AD.

Commendation: You dwell where Satan's throne is, yet you hold fast My name and have not denied My faith, even during the days when My faithful witness Antipas was killed for My sake.

Rebuke: There are those who hold to the teachings of Balaam, who taught Israel to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality. Others hold to the teachings of the Nicolaitans.

Warning: Repent! He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Punishment: If you do not repent, I will come and fight against you with the sword of My mouth.

Reward: Whoever overcomes will receive hidden manna and a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

۞ 4. The Church of Thyatira: Represents the period from 538-1500 AD.

Commendation: You have good works of love and faith. You show patience in service, and your later works are greater than your first.

Rebuke: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, misleading My servants into sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to



idols.

Punishment: I have given her time to repent, but she refuses. I will cast her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent. I will strike her children dead. I will repay each according to their deeds.

Warning: Hold fast to what you have until I come. He who has an ear, let him hear.

Reward: Whoever overcomes will have authority over nations, ruling them with an iron scepter. I will give them the morning star.

5. The Church of Sardis: Represents the period from 1500-1830 AD.

Commendation: There are a few who have not soiled their garments. They will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. I will never blot out their names from the Book of Life but will acknowledge them before My Father and His angels.

Rebuke: You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of God.

Advice: Be watchful and strengthen what remains and is about to die. Hold on to what you have received and heard—obey it and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know the hour of My coming.

Warning: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

6. The Church of Philadelphia: Represents the period from 1830-1840+.

Commendation: You have little strength, yet you have kept My word and not denied My name. You have patiently endured.

Reward: I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. Those from the synagogue of Satan will come and bow down before your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world. Whoever overcomes will become a pillar in the temple of My God, and I will write on them the name of My God.

Advice: I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have, so no one may take your crown. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (This period corresponds with the time when many believed Jesus would return based on the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, but it actually referred to the investigative judgment).

🌻 7. The Church of Laodicea: Represents the period from 1844 until today.

Rebuke: You are neither cold nor hot—I wish you were either one or the other. Because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of My mouth. You say, "I am rich, I have acquired wealth, and do not need anything," but you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

Advice: Buy from Me gold refined in fire so you can become rich, white garments to cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to anoint your eyes so you may see. I rebuke and discipline those I love. Be earnest and repent. I stand at the door and knock—if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with them.

Reward: Whoever overcomes will sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

🌻 Jesus says He stands at the door and knocks, waiting to be welcomed. Are you ready to invite Jesus to be your Savior, Teacher, and Friend? Do not leave Him waiting outside—tell Him, "Jesus, I am happy to welcome You to live in my heart forever!" But you must know His voice because you would not open the door to a stranger—you might be invaded by someone else!

🌻 John thought he was old and that his usefulness was over, but he was only beginning a great work! The message of this book is that God is the One who controls the future. If we try to control the future ourselves, we cause chaos. If Satan controls the future, he will use it to destroy us. But Revelation teaches that the future is in the hands of the One who loves us and desires the best for us. This is good news!

🌻 The prophecies of the Four Horsemen, the Seven Seals, and the Four Trumpets align with these seven churches—they are repetitions and expansions. For further study, refer to resources such as Amazing Facts, God Cares by Mervin Maxwell, Salvation in Symbols & Signs by Ivor Myers and James Rafferty, and Gems of Revelation by Patrick Jones.

🌻 Secret Prayer Works Anywhere, Anytime. Pray in your room, and as you go about your daily tasks, let your heart be lifted to God continually.

Questions:

What are the seven churches of Revelation?

What are the good qualities of the Church of Sardis?

What are the faults of the Church of Thyatira?

What rewards are given to the Church of Philadelphia?

What warnings are given to the Church of Smyrna?

What problems does the Church of Laodicea face?

How can we avoid being “spit out” and become overcomers?

Have you welcomed Jesus into your heart today as He knocks?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 2:4, 5

[4,5] Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, we ask forgiveness for our sins. Help us not to leave our first love. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: Give children paper to write a letter addressed to one of the seven churches.

DAY 350 (December 16)

TOPIC: Who is worthy to open the scroll?

(Revelation 5, 8-10)



❁ John was shown the throne of God and His heavenly seat of power. He saw marvelous and amazing things. There were 24 elders and four living creatures, each with a unique face. The first had a face like a lion, the second like an ox, the third had a face like a man, and the fourth had a face like an eagle. These creatures had many eyes in front and behind, representing the Spirit of God, who sees everything. They sang, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY."

❁ John then saw the Glorious One sitting on the throne. In His right hand was a scroll written on both sides and sealed with seven seals. An angel asked, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.

❁ John wept because no one was found worthy to open or examine the scroll. However, one of the 24 elders told him, "Do not weep! Behold, the LION of the tribe of JUDAH, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." Then, the Lamb who had been slain—JESUS CHRIST—came and took the scroll. At this, the living creatures and the elders fell down before Him. Each held a harp and golden bowls full of the prayers

of the saints, and they sang a new song.

۞ The song declared: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because You were slain, and with Your blood, You purchased for God persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.” Tens of thousands of angels (10,000 × 10,000 × 1,000) also joined in, singing in chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise!” The elders responded with “Amen” and bowed down to worship Jesus. (In those days, the Hebrew numbering system only counted up to 10,000—our modern concept of millions did not exist. In some languages back then, the largest number they could count was three, after which they simply said “many.”)

۞ When the seals are opened, they bring troubles, suffering, and turmoil. John saw four horses—white, red, black, and pale. Although the exact meaning of the horses was not given to John, history reveals that they represent different periods the church went through.

The white horse represents the early church during the time of Roman rule. The rider symbolizes Jesus Christ Himself, with the color white signifying purity and the church’s faithfulness in its first love.

The red horse represents the period of persecution and martyrdom.

The black horse symbolizes the era of spiritual darkness and false teachings that misled many.

The pale horse represents a mixture of truth and falsehood, reflecting a compromised church.

۞ Later, John saw 144,000 people who had received a special seal. They were dressed in white robes, and when asked, “Who are these?” the answer was given: “These are those who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” This means that they possess pure, blameless characters—not because they are inherently good but because they have accepted Jesus, confessed their sins, and have been cleansed and sanctified by His grace.

۞ These people serve God day and night in His temple. He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They will never hunger or thirst again, and the Lamb will be their Shepherd, leading them to springs of living water. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Are you ready to follow the Lamb wherever He goes?

🌻 Revelation also mentions seven trumpets, which signal the final events of the world. Let us pray that we are not among the wicked—kings, rulers, mighty men, rich and poor—who will hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, begging the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. That final day will be dreadful. Who will be able to stand without the garment of God's grace and mercy?

🌻 This is how Enoch walked with God—through constant prayer and communion. Silent prayers, like precious incense, rise before God's throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome someone whose heart is anchored in God.

🌻 Questions:

1. Who was able to open the scroll and break its seals?

2. Why did people hide in caves and among the mountains?

3. Why will the chosen ones follow the Lamb wherever He goes?

4. What are the characteristics of the 144,000?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Revelation 5:2-6

[2-6] Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for my friends and family. Thank You for redeeming us. You alone are worthy, Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Make a scroll and a king's crown, then act out a play showing that only the Messiah is able to open the scroll—and what the scroll contains.

DAY 351 (December 17)

TOPIC: How Satan and His Angels Fell to Earth

(Revelation 12)



❁ There was a war and rebellion in heaven, as we have seen in this book, in Genesis 3. Satan was cast down along with one-third of all the angels in heaven. He came to the garden and deceived our first parents, Eve and Adam. Satan is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, so let us be watchful and diligent—reading the Word of God, praying, and sharing the message with others, for the Lord's Day of judgment is drawing near.

❁ The saints will judge Satan and his angels. Even now, they are not happy; they argue among themselves, asking their leader, "Why did you cause us to sin and be cast out of heaven? Why did you deceive us?" Satan and his angels were given time to repent, but due to pride, they refused to abandon their evil ways. Even today, when we sin, we must confess immediately to avoid being lost on the last day due to pride, or facing the consequences of this world. The eternal fire and punishment of death were prepared for Satan and his angels—not for humans.

In the Bible, the dragon refers to Satan, or the Devil. The Devil has come down with great wrath, knowing that he has a short time to deceive people. He is called the accuser of the brethren because he accuses people before God, as he did with Job, recounting their sins—but his day is coming. When Satan reminds you of your past sins, confess them with true repentance, and remind him of the punishment that awaits him soon.

You still have a chance today to choose God, but one day your opportunity will end. Satan no longer has a chance. He was given time, but the door of mercy was closed for him, and his day to repent ended. Today, if you hear God's voice calling you, do not harden your heart. Choose God and the Lamb of God, who died for you. Isaiah 12 and Ezekiel 28 discuss more about Satan. He is referred to as the king of Babylon or Tyre, but when you examine the characteristics mentioned, you realize they are not human but those of the Devil, who was created as the morning star—Lucifer.

He was perfect until sin was found in him through pride and rebellion, desiring to exalt himself above God, even though he was merely a created being. God made angels to be slightly above humans but never above God. Angels should not be worshipped. The Word of God shows that every time an angel was worshipped, the angel would say, "Stand up, I am your fellow servant—worship God." Angels were created because we are told that through Him, all things were created—things in heaven, on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, or powers—all things were created through Him and for Him.

Therefore, angels, like humans and all creatures, have a beginning—but God has no beginning or end. Billions of angels exist today to assist with our salvation; they are God's servants helping us with our spiritual welfare. Elijah was given food by an angel and was strengthened emotionally, spiritually, and physically to continue his journey when the wicked queen Jezebel sought to kill him. Today, many people have adopted teachings about angels that are not based on the Light of God. Sometimes, they fail to distinguish between angels of light and angels of darkness. We must understand that angels exist, as the Bible clearly teaches, and this is the only absolute Truth. The Word mentions angels and their works over 300 times. Angels were created by God, and they exist. Though only a few have seen them, many of us have been saved from difficulties through their intervention.

Angels have been used to rescue us. Perhaps you have heard stories of people being saved or assisted in miraculous ways by angels—whether seen or unseen. Some have encountered angels by being hospitable to strangers,

welcoming angels without knowing it. Our father of faith, Abraham, is an example of someone who welcomed angels unknowingly. Angels do not marry or reproduce. Angels in heaven will not have our experiences. We are told there are songs or things they will not fully understand as humans do because they were not redeemed by the death of Jesus like we were. Angels are more powerful and capable than humans—but they do not possess the wisdom, power, and knowledge of God. This is why Jesus said they do not know the day or hour of His return.

❁ Angels eat, as seen when Abraham offered them food, and we are told the Israelites ate manna, which is the food of angels. Angels sang at Bethlehem when Jesus was born, announcing the good news. Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation and were present at His resurrection and ascension. Angels worship God and Jesus at the throne, and their joy is to be near God. They marvel at His love—especially after witnessing the fall of their fellow angels and how Jesus came to die for us. Their doubts about God's love were forever erased at Calvary when Jesus died, and they knew that God is Love, a truth we should never doubt.

❁ The book of Revelation describes the sealing of the saints—those who cease to worship worldly things, idols, traditions, and practices contrary to true worship as outlined in God's Word. These will be people who keep all of God's commandments and have the faith of Jesus. They will reflect the love of God. Angels marvel at how weak we are, yet how lazy we can be in seeking God, who can do far beyond all that we ask or imagine.

❁ Angels have ranks—Michael is the highest. Perhaps after Lucifer fell, Gabriel took his place. While we do not know for sure, we see Gabriel being sent on major missions, such as announcing the birth of Jesus. There are two main types of angels: Seraphim and Cherubim. Seraphim have six wings, and Cherubim have four wings (see Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 10). To avoid worshipping or following fallen angels, understand the difference between angels of light and angels of darkness. Our refuge is the Word of God, which helps us discern. Miracles and signs should not come first—God's Word should.

❁ God has warned us about the works of fallen angels, which include the deeds of the flesh described in Galatians. Although Isaiah 13 says Satan seeks to overthrow nations and the kingdom of God through disasters, tribulations, lies, and cunning schemes—Jesus is the ultimate victor. One day, Satan will be judged and destroyed because "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." The Bible says, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb," which means Jesus Christ. Those who love God or Jesus Christ do not prioritize their own lives—they put God first and are willing to die if it is His

will. Salvation, power, and authority belong to God.

🏵 Questions:

What is the difference between Seraphim and Cherubim? What are the duties of angels? What false teachings exist about angels? Who is the dragon? Why is it a sin to worship angels?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: Revelation 12:7-9

[7-9] And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for Your gifts. Please help me to avoid the dragon and always choose You, for the dragon has nothing good for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Discuss the subject of war, then act out a short play about the heavenly war. Emphasize the power of choice, sing songs about Jesus and His victory, and strengthen faith in Him.

DAY 352 (December 18)

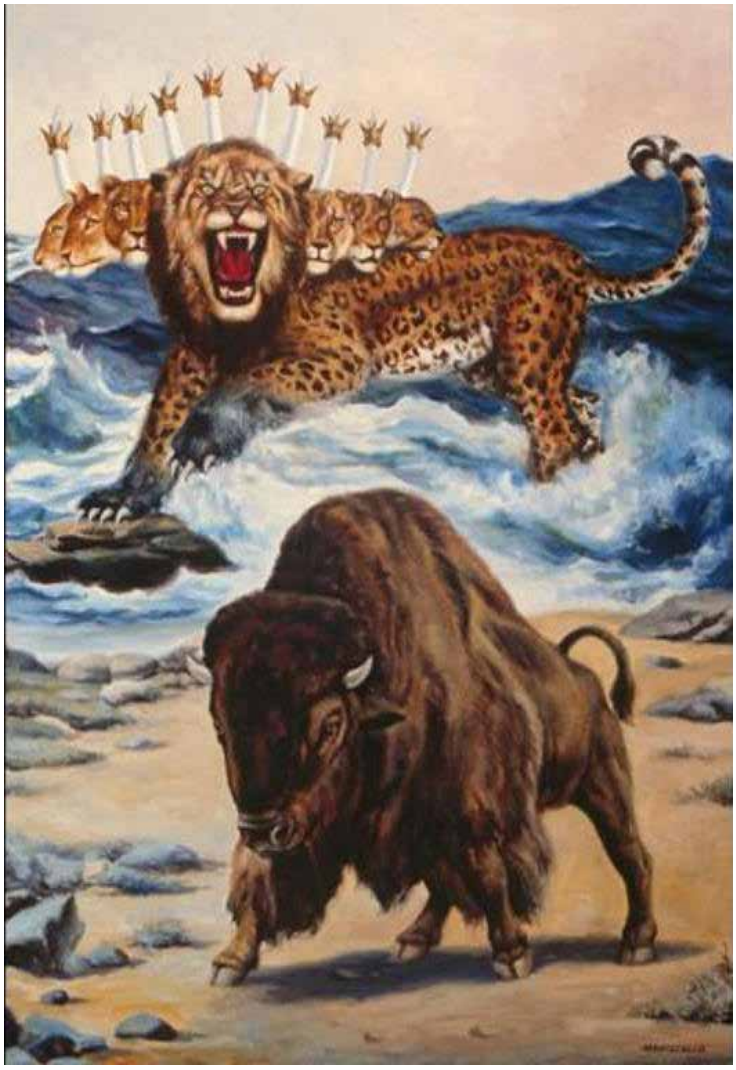
TOPIC: The First and Second Beast

(Revelation 13)



❁ Here, it speaks about two beasts. The first beast rises out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. It resembles a leopard, with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. It receives its power from the dragon, meaning Satan, who gives it great authority. People worship the dragon because he gives power to the beast. The horns represent kingdoms. It is said that this kingdom will open its mouth to blaspheme against God and will wage war against the saints of God. In prophecy, the sea represents a place with many people. This power is linked to the one described in Daniel 7, which refers to the Roman Empire.

❁ Everyone whose name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will worship the beast. The scripture states that this kingdom will persecute people for 1,260 years or 42 months (42 x 30 = 1,260 days). The Bible says, "It was given power to wage war against the saints," and that all who dwell on the earth will worship it—those whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb, who was slain from the foundation of the world. "If anyone has an ear, let them hear," meaning God will give wisdom to those who seek Him, so they will not worship anyone but Him. We cannot serve two masters. Through our



words, thoughts, actions, and intentions every day, we serve either God or the devil.

۞ Ask yourself today—who do you want to serve? The first beast comes from the sea, which often symbolizes an area with many people, while the second beast comes from the earth, meaning it emerges from a place with fewer people. This second beast is also a kingdom or power, speaking like the dragon or Satan and exercising the authority of the first beast. It causes the entire world to worship the first beast. It misleads those who live on the earth. It forces all people—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead. The two horns represent two powers, the state and the church, which were initially separate. Historians believe this second beast resembles the rise and actions of the United States of America.

۞ During this time, people will not be able to buy or sell unless they have the mark, the beast's name, or the number of its name, which is 666. This is something to pray about so that God may give us understanding. Many believe that this kingdom or leader is the antichrist. Based on the descriptions, their character shows opposition to Christ. We should not fear these things but instead pray for God's guidance during the end times because He is ultimately the victor. Prophecies are given so that when they come to pass, we may know that He is true. Before the fulfillment, we may not understand clearly, and even while it is happening, we may be confused. However, once it is fulfilled, the meaning will become clear.

۞ An example is the prophecy of Jesus' birth. Many people did not understand it fully at the time. They thought Jesus had come to establish His kingdom immediately, without realizing He would first suffer, die, and rise again. Today, as we read His Word, we are blessed to know the truth clearly. The apostles

did not understand as much as we do today. In those days, the Word of God was not widely available, and people had to copy it by hand. Now, anyone can access it easily. Pray and ask God to help you get a Bible and read it every day. Return to your family altar, morning and evening. It is said that only 40% of believers pray in the morning and evening—we must be among those who pray earnestly and ask God to raise a mighty prayer army. Our refuge is in God's Word and in God Himself, not in words of fear or intimidation.

❦ It will not help us to understand every prophecy if we do not obey and live according to God's will.

❁ Obedience to God's voice and a transformed heart are what matter most. God reveals only what we need to know for our benefit, so we are not overwhelmed. The greatest question is this: "Am I an antichrist?" The Bible states in Thessalonians and Revelation 13 that the antichrist will come—or is already present—but we may not recognize who he is. Ask yourself today, "Am I an antichrist?" Could you be opposing Christ through your thoughts, words, deeds, or intentions?

❁ God does not only record our actions and words but also the intentions of our hearts. One day, we will all stand before Him to give an account of everything we have done.

❁ Prayer Brings Us Into the Presence of God Himself—Whether offered in a public gathering, at the family altar, or in private, prayer places us directly before God. Through persistent prayer, young people can establish a foundation so strong that even the most powerful temptations will not pull them away from their faith in God.

❁ Questions:

Read Revelation 13 and explain these two beasts.

How can you recognize whether you or someone else is an antichrist?

What is the number that people must have to buy or sell?

How many years or months was the beast given to wage war against the saints?

What are the reasons prophecies are given to us?

Describe the first beast.

Describe the second beast.

Who is the antichrist?

What differences exist between the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 13:16-18

[16-18] He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred sixty-six.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for warning us about the two beasts of Revelation 13. Help us not to worship them or follow the evil one. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: List good deeds and bad deeds, and then choose which side a person would want to be on.

DAY 353 (December 19)

TOPIC: The Four Angels and the 144,000 Saints

(Revelation 14-17)



John was shown again the 144,000 people, who had the name of God on their foreheads, playing harps and singing a new song that only these 144,000 knew. These 144,000 were those who lived without blemish, holy and faithful, and they followed the Lamb wherever He went. They were redeemed humans, the firstfruits for God and the Lamb. No deceit or lies were found in their mouths, for they were blameless. It appears that these are the faithful ones found alive at the time of Jesus' return, who will not experience death.

Then John saw an angel flying in the sky, holding the eternal gospel, proclaiming the true worship that God desires. This angel preached to those living on earth, to every nation, tribe, language, and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of

water.” Another angel followed, giving a warning about false worship, saying, “Babylon the Great has fallen, has fallen! That great city, because she made all nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

A third angel came, announcing punishment for false worship, saying, “If anyone worships the beast from Revelation 13 and his image, and receives a mark on their forehead or on their hand, they will also drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.” The angel declared that this would be the punishment for all who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Here is the patience of the saints who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The angel said, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they will rest from their labors, and their works will follow them.”

John then saw the Son of Man—Jesus—ready to harvest the elect because the harvest was ripe. The harvesting for eternal life began. Then he saw four angels harvesting, representing the four corners of the earth: south, north, east, and west. He continued to describe the seven angels with the seven last plagues, pouring out bowls of great disasters. Let us pray to God and be on His side so that we do not receive these plagues, just as the Israelites who trusted God in Egypt were spared from the seven deadly plagues.

When the seventh angel poured out his bowl, a loud voice came out, similar to when Jesus died on the cross, saying, “It is finished.” There were flashes of lightning and great thunder. Every island fled away, and the mountains were no longer found. A great hailstorm fell, and the wicked were struck by these hailstones and blasphemed God because the plague was exceedingly severe. Therefore, we must commit ourselves to obeying God and studying His Word, so that instead of blaspheming Him, we may praise, thank, and glorify Him, saying, “Great are Your works, You have brought us far and saved us from troubles and all wrath.”

John was then shown a prostitute sitting on a scarlet beast, holding a golden cup full of abominations to God. On her forehead was written: “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.” This woman was drunk with the blood of the saints. In the Word of God, prostitution represents false teachings. Being drunk with the blood of the saints means persecuting or killing believers. The people who follow the prostitute or false teachings are said to have their names not written in the Book of Life.

Jesus has defeated Satan. To share in His victory over Satan, we must fully

commit ourselves to Him, just as the three Hebrew boys—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—did (Daniel 3). In other words, our total dedication to Jesus and our faithfulness in spreading the gospel ensure that we will share in His victory over Satan. This victory will be ours!

The horns symbolize kingdoms, which give power and authority to the beast. This beast will make war against the Lamb but will be defeated because the Lamb is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. In the end, all who oppose Him will be destroyed.

✓ A. TWO OPPOSING SYSTEMS

1. King Trajan of Rome visited Babylon in 116 AD, shortly after John wrote Revelation. He found only ruins. Therefore, John was not referring to the literal city of Babylon.

2. According to Genesis 11:9, Babylon means "confusion." In the End Times, the religious system will mix truth with falsehood, causing spiritual confusion.

3. On the other hand, a pure woman represents a religious system built on Truth.

✓ B. TWO TYPES OF WINE

1. Babylon has committed fornication with kings and merchants. The church has left its rightful Husband (Jesus) and joined unlawfully with state powers.

2. She has adulterated the pure wine of the Gospel and given her own wine to the nations. She has abandoned following Christ in favor of relying on government support.

3. However, the pure church remains faithful to her Husband. She continues to offer only the pure wine—the precious blood of Christ, which washes away sins (Matt. 26:28).

4. God calls His children to come out of Babylon (Rev. 18:3-4).

✓ C. TWO WAYS OF THINKING

1. Symbolic Babylon and her daughters have replaced God's Word with human traditions and ideas.

2. There are two types of religion: one that follows God's Word and trusts

Jesus, His grace, His sacrifice, and His salvation, and another that relies on human authority, leaders, and traditions.

3. Babylon has always sought to destroy those who uphold the pure faith (Rev. 17:6).

✓ D. TWO DIFFERENT LEADERS

1. Babylon sits on many waters (Rev. 17:1, 15) and is supported by a scarlet beast (Rev. 17:3). It is built on human systems, so its leader is a human or a human institution (2 Thess. 2:4).

2. However, the pure church is built on the Rock—Jesus Christ, our Savior (Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Cor. 3:11). Its leader is Jesus (Col. 1:18).

3. In the last days, a church-state system—spiritual Babylon—will arise again. It will have a spiritual leader claiming to speak for God and attempting to take His place.

✓ E. TWO WAYS OF WORSHIP

1. Idolatry was one reason for Babylon's fall. Idolatry was introduced into the early church (4th century), leading Christians away from true worship.

2. However, the pure church obeys all of God's commandments (Rev. 12:17), including the second commandment, which forbids making and worshiping idols (Ex. 20:4-6).

❁ Questions:

Why should we fear and glorify God?

Why is the prostitute described as wicked?

What did the three angels say?

What changes do you see in the world today that indicate the Lord's return is near?

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 14:6, 7

[6,7] Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

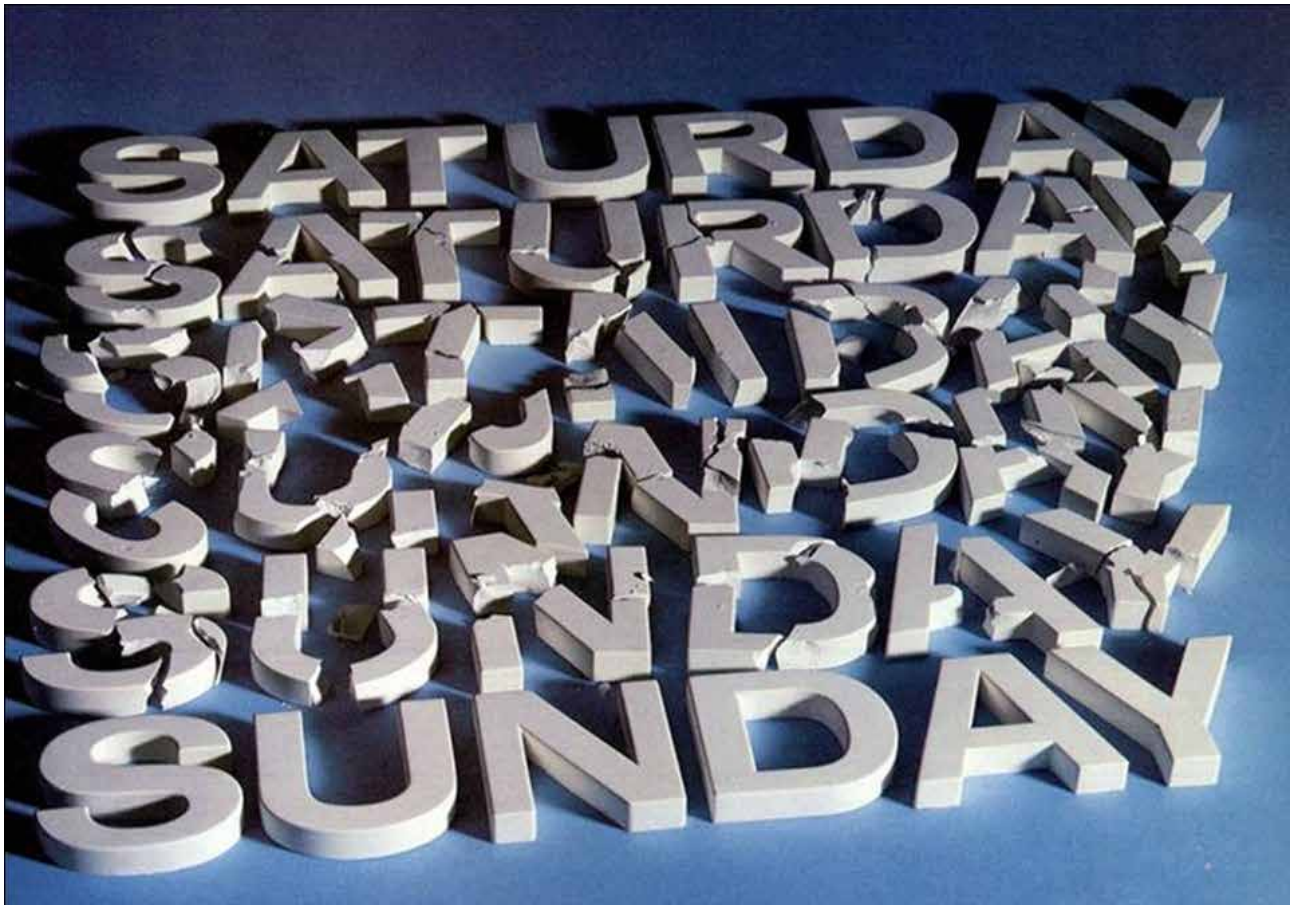
Prayer: Thank You, Father, we ask to worship You and give glory to You, for You made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Draw the three angels. Watch a video of the three angels and visit the Three Angels for Kids website.

DAY 354 (December 20)

TOPIC: Avoiding False Teachings

(Revelation 18-20)



John saw an angel descending from heaven with great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his glory. He said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great; she has become a dwelling place for demons, a prison for every unclean spirit, and a cage for every unclean and detestable bird." He heard a voice calling people to come out of Babylon and not share in her sins, for her sins have reached heaven. Babylon represents evil teachings, deceit, and doctrines contrary to the Bible that God has given us. It also symbolizes the chaos of evil, like what happened at the Tower of Babel when languages were confused, and people scattered.

Although we may not understand the interpretation of some Scriptures in the book of Revelation, as children of God, we must focus on avoiding false teachings that are not in the Bible. If a teaching is not found in the Bible, we should not follow it. The Bible should interpret itself, and we should pray

before reading it. Human traditions should be avoided. If the Bible says to follow something, that is what we should do. We should read it, memorize it, cherish it, meditate on it, believe it, and obey it in action. This book seems to speak about judgment from beginning to end. John says, “Rejoice over her, O heavens, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has pronounced judgment on her behalf.”

For someone who loves God, judgment is a good thing and not a cause for sorrow because God covers them with His grace. Being on God’s side means obedience and faith in Him, and it guarantees victory—He has already scored the winning goal. John sees a great multitude in heaven, of God’s creatures, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our Lord, for His judgments are true and just.” Here, God will judge all evildoers, including the great prostitute and the wicked kingdoms. The twenty-four elders and the living beings worshiped God, praising Him from the smallest to the greatest. People rejoiced and sang, “Hallelujah! The Lord Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory.”

The righteous wear fine linen, which represents righteous deeds, and it is said, “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.” You and I are also invited—praise be to God. We are told here that Jesus has a name written on His robe and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. The leaders of evil and mighty men, slaves and free people, small and great, all received punishment. Those who refused to follow God were captured, along with the beast and the false prophets who deceived people. These false prophets led others to receive the mark and to worship anything other than God.

An angel came down from heaven, seized the dragon—that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan—and bound him for a thousand years. This binding may mean that he will be restricted from deceiving people. John saw thrones and those who had been killed for the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God. They were resurrected and lived again—this is the first resurrection, the resurrection of the righteous. This first resurrection is one of blessing and joy for the saints, who will not experience the second death. The first death is the physical death we know on earth today. The second death is eternal destruction or separation from heaven. Jesus died both the first and second deaths to save us from this eternal punishment.

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released and will try to deceive people again. He will attempt to wage war against the saints and the beloved city—the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. He will try to bring evil one last time, surrounding the camp of God’s people and the city.

But fire will come down from heaven and devour them. The devil, along with the beast and the false prophet, will be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur.

John says he saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. The book of life was also opened, and everyone was judged according to their deeds. All our actions are recorded—nothing is hidden. Every thought, desire, word, ambition, feeling, and deed is clear before God. If we confess our sins, they are erased through the blood of Jesus, which has the power to cleanse. The sea gave up the dead, and the earth was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown away because all who chose God will live forever. But anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Our prayer is for God to help us surrender completely to Him and live according to His plan so we can reach heaven. Here is some advice for our music ministry as we prepare on earth:

1. Church music should reflect reverence and respect during worship, as this is when we meet God. It should align with the Holy Scriptures and not include messages that contradict the Bible.
2. Musical instruments should be played harmoniously and should not overpower the lyrics, which convey God's message.
3. Music should express joy and enthusiasm in being before God (Revelation 7:12).
4. There should be harmony between the message delivered and the arrangement of voices, offering a clear and specific lesson.
5. Choir members and singing groups should wear uniforms or modest, respectful attire that presents them well before people and before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
6. Music and singing in Scripture are equivalent to thanksgiving offerings to God for creation, His protection, and eternal salvation. Look at how the choir of 4,000 people served as ministers to the Lord.
7. Let us restore the old Adventist music paths (Jeremiah 6:16). May God bless you.

Private prayers should be personal and confidential. In private prayer, everyone has the freedom to express their desires and speak openly to God. It is a time to pray for family and friends and present personal challenges and trials. Corporate worship is not the place to disclose personal matters.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the first death and the second death?
2. What will Satan and his followers try to do after a thousand years?
3. What does it mean that death and Hades were thrown away?
4. What does Babylon symbolize?
5. What is in the book of life?
6. What is the fine linen garment?
7. Why should we follow God's Word and not human traditions?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 18:2

[2] And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the warning You have given us. We do not want to be in the dwelling of demons, but in Your dwelling. Protect us, Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Let one child shout the words of the key text loudly, while the others fall to the ground! Then compare two things: generosity and greed.

DAY 355 (December 21)

TOPIC: Hell (Part 1)



GOD has many ways to help us by setting barriers or boundaries to save us. Hell may be the final barrier to help us be saved. Many people have read and spoken about hell. There are various opinions about this place. Some have imagined what hell is like without considering what the Scriptures say. Can you describe hell as you understand it? What do the Holy Scriptures say about hell? Do the Scriptures want us to know about hell? If so, what do they want us to know, and why should we know?

We cannot write Bible stories for young people without addressing this topic because it is important. This is because there is an end to our journey after judgment. There are only two destinations: heaven and hell. GOD's love is mentioned over a thousand times in the Scriptures, and many people read and stop there. However, GOD's wrath is mentioned 584 times in the Bible. The wrath of the Lamb in Revelation 6 is puzzling because we are used to

the Lamb being gentle. Yet, we must understand that the Lamb is also the Lion of Judah. GOD is love, but He hates sin because it destroys the lives and happiness of His creatures through murder, robbery, immorality, disease, tribal wars, and rape.

If the Bible tells us about going to heaven if we choose to, then there is also a need to talk about going to hell. There are only two choices or kingdoms—heaven and hell—and these are definite realities. Today, we will look at a few scriptures about hell or the punishment of the wicked. In other words, humanity is given the opportunity to make choices in life, with two options presented: life or death. Whoever chooses life chooses paradise (heaven), and whoever chooses hell chooses fire and eternal destruction. Everyone has the freedom to choose because God does not force His creatures to do anything. He did not create robots who would love and serve Him without free will. He gave us all the freedom of choice, which is both a blessing and a risk—we can follow Him or turn away from Him! However, when we use our free will wisely, we grow spiritually, and our love becomes genuine and continues to grow—it is not fake or counterfeit!

Many people have read about GOD's wrath and become fearful. Fear can be beneficial because it helps us set things right. What we must remember about hell is that it was not created for human beings. It was prepared for Satan and his angels, who were given time to repent but refused to do so. Hell is not eternal fire or eternal punishment because GOD did not promise eternal life to the wicked. GOD gave His only Son as a sacrifice so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Many have said that GOD is a consuming fire. When GOD tries to embrace sinners with His love, they will experience torment because GOD is a consuming fire to sin. However, when He embraces the righteous, it will be an embrace of joy and love. Surely, no one in heaven will want to live with someone who has not changed their bad behavior. Every child or elder is tired of the evil in this world and does not want to encounter it in heaven—otherwise, it would not be heaven! Imagine your neighbor in heaven stealing from you or attacking you while you are enjoying yourself—that would not be heaven, but somewhere else. What should GOD do, then, to eliminate selfishness so that everyone can live joyfully and peacefully in heaven without sorrow? Can you answer this question, considering that even you would not want to find evil in heaven, even if it came from a close friend or relative?

I have heard many people joke about hell, saying they will have many friends there and will spend time shaking hands and chatting. I think that will not happen. According to Scriptures like Daniel 12:2, it will be a place

of extreme shame, where those filled with shame, weeping, and gnashing of teeth will not even be able to look at one another, let alone shake hands. It will be a place of unimaginable cries and blame. Even Satan's angels will blame their leader for leading them there. Moreover, those in the lake of fire, as described in Revelation 21:28, will include those who are detestable, liars, hypocrites, the proud, the hateful, murderers, thieves, gossipers, sorcerers, and all evildoers. You may think your sins are not as severe as these, but sin is sin, and all will face punishment before being destroyed. There will be no desire or opportunity for greetings, jokes, or laughter in hell.

JESUS said in Matthew 5 that anyone who is angry with their brother is subject to judgment, and whoever insults their brother is in danger of the fire of hell. If your eye or any part of your body causes you to sin, it is better to remove it and enter heaven with one part missing than to go to hell with your whole body. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. He told the scribes and Pharisees that they make a convert who becomes twice the child of hell as they are.

It is a certainty that those who trust GOD, obey Him, and truly repent when they sin (because no one is without sin) will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven where there is no more death. But the wicked—those who do not trust GOD, obey Him, or repent of their sins—will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast (of Revelation 13), the false prophet, and the dragon (Satan) are. There, they will suffer day and night (Revelation 20).

The Bible mentions hell or the punishment of the wicked only briefly. GOD emphasizes His love and relationship with His people. Although we do not know much about hell, from the little the Bible reveals, we understand that it is not a place anyone would want to go. In English, when people dislike someone, they say, "Go to hell." This alone is enough to show that it is not a desirable place.

It is a terrible place—worse than anything bad we have ever heard or experienced—but JESUS died on the cross, enduring all the pain, so that you and I can avoid the torment of hell and not perish forever. The way to hell is broad, while the way to heaven is narrow. The path to hell requires no self-denial. You can do whatever pleases you if you want to go to hell. Nowhere in the Scriptures does it say that a Christian or believer who fears the LORD can do whatever they want.

A believer who genuinely loves GOD cannot do whatever they please, but only what the LORD directs or desires. A Christian is someone who follows and obeys the Scriptures. On the broad path, you can do whatever you like,

including breaking the Ten Commandments of GOD.

❁ On the broad path, you can lie, steal, disrespect your parents, or take the name of the LORD God in vain. You can have other gods and worship them. You can neglect honoring the Lord's Sabbath, stop praying, skip worship services, or fail to read the Holy Scriptures. You can be as greedy as you want. You may refuse to help the poor and the hungry, be quarrelsome, and disobedient. The broad path accommodates all kinds of garbage or behavior—anything goes—but its punishment is the worst imaginable. No one likes to burn, ever. When most of us suffer a small burn, we rush for Vaseline, honey, aloe vera, lotion, or cold water mixed with flour to ease the pain. The fire of hell, however, is indescribable—there are burning stones and unimaginable agony. Many who have suffered toothaches understand the intensity of such pain, and from this description, the gnashing of teeth will be far worse than any toothache or cavity pain!

❁ God has given us His Word to prevent us from going to hell. The words we heard from childhood echo in our minds, drawing us back to Him. Verses we memorized remain etched in our minds, returning to convict our hearts. Bible stories also guide us back from being lost. God's Word is a map, a compass, a lamp, and wisdom to lead us to eternal life in heaven. God has not promised eternal life to sinners but only to the righteous. The wicked are promised hell. This Bible will either keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible. God also uses sermons to draw us away from the broad path to hell. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Many mock preachers, criticizing their outdated style, poor clothing, or imperfect English. Yet, Scripture says that preachers are sent to proclaim the Good News—not with human wisdom—so that the cross of Christ may not be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God. God chose to save believers through the foolishness of what is preached. Even if someone thinks they are wise and that the Scriptures are nonsense, they should be cautious—God has chosen this seemingly foolish method to save us from hell.

❁ Preachers may lack eloquent words or human wisdom, but what matters most is that we all come to know Jesus Christ, who was crucified. He alone can save us and take us to heaven, helping us escape hell. Hearing God's Word is what keeps us from perishing. However, all human beings are merely servants doing what they are called to do. Perhaps this is the last sermon you will ever hear in your life—we do not know what tomorrow holds, for it is not guaranteed. What is surprising is that young people die just as the elderly do. Death spares no one. It is inevitable for all. God has also used the prayers of others to draw us back to Him—prayers of parents, the righteous, spiritual

leaders, and even grandparents. Such prayers have brought us to the narrow path that leads to heaven. God has also used various problems and challenges to bring us back to Him so that we will not be lost. He has allowed us to be weak so that we may humble ourselves and listen to Him.

God has also used the image of Jesus' cross to remind us and prevent us from perishing. Every time you think of this image—His thoughts, His life, and His final days on earth as He went to die for you and me—say, "Jesus, I give You my life forever." We have written only a few things that God has inspired us to share—you can list other ways God has worked in your life. Let us examine where we have fallen, repent, and return. If we are right with God, let us continue to grow step by step until that day when Jesus appears in the clouds to take us to live with Him forever and ever. What an indescribable joy that will be!

Occasional prayers—praying only when you feel like it—will cause you to lose your fellowship with God. Prayer is the breath of the soul; it is the secret of spiritual strength. There is no other means of grace that can substitute for prayer while maintaining spiritual health and ensuring things go well. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Fountain of Life and strengthens the nerves and muscles of spiritual experience. Neglect prayer, or engage in it sporadically as you see fit, and you will lose your connection and dependence on God. Spiritual faculties will weaken, and spiritual vitality and resilience will fade.

Questions: What did Jesus say about hell? In what ways has God helped us avoid hell? Why don't people like living near a wicked person? Has God promised that the wicked will live forever in His Word? Explain what the Bible says about the nature of hell.

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: John 3:15, 16

[15,16] That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Prayer: Thank You, our Father in heaven, that You did not come to condemn us but to save us. Help us to believe in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Use an illustration to show the idea of being left out. Explain it like when all their friends are invited to a party, but they are not. Show that being separated from God is like this sadness and loneliness, because God is the source of all good and joy. Emphasize that being apart from God means sadness and loneliness.

DAY 356 (December 22)

TOPIC: Hell (Part II)



GOD has spoken more about Heaven than Hell. Heaven is so beautiful that even in our most wonderful dreams, nothing compares to it. Heaven is one of the safeguards to keep us from going to Hell. He has given us glimpses of Heaven throughout the Scriptures, appearing every few chapters. The Almighty GOD has told us in the book of Hebrews that if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left... It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living GOD (Hebrews 10:26-31). If someone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses, how much more severe will be the punishment for someone who tramples the Son of GOD underfoot? What will happen to the one who insults the Spirit of GOD when He calls? Let us reflect on these things—GOD loves us far more than we love ourselves. No one can come to GOD by themselves unless drawn by the Almighty GOD. Even today, GOD is drawing us in various ways so that we do not perish and go to Hell.

JESUS, the Son of Man, came to seek and save those who were lost and to give His life for the forgiveness of our sins. When JESUS calls you—whether you are six, ten, fifteen, or even one hundred years old—do not say, "Tomorrow,

tomorrow." Respond with "Yes" and do not rely on your own wisdom and strength, but trust GOD to deliver you from all kinds of desires. These desires distance us from the Heaven that GOD has promised us. If you have sinned, make things right with your GOD. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of GOD, but He says to come to Him, reason with Him, confess, and have genuine repentance.

Let us surrender to Him and begin a new life in JESUS, being open to His unyielding guidance. GOD's many ways will set us on His narrow path so that we do not go to Hell but have eternal life. GOD uses His Spirit to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. When we go astray, the Spirit of GOD speaks to us, and we hear that still, small voice. He directs us to righteousness and reminds us that everything we do will be brought to judgment—our words and our actions. Therefore, we must understand that for everything we do, there will be an account. All sins fall into three categories: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

A person is drawn to do evil through seeing, and through this sight, they feel tempted in their heart and think, "Why shouldn't this be mine?" They then decide to take and claim it, thereby committing theft and sinning. Similarly, the lust of the flesh can lead a person to engage in unlawful sexual acts or other forms of defiling the body. GOD's plan is for a person to engage in sexual relations only with their lawful spouse. The lust of the flesh can pollute thoughts and the mind, leading to fornication, masturbation, pornography, adultery, or prostitution.

The pride of life includes the misuse of your health. Being young and neglecting GOD while saying, "Let me enjoy life first, and when I grow old, I will seek GOD," is a form of pride in life. GOD advises us to seek Him while we are still young or while we still have good health. GOD draws us to Himself in many ways, and the image of Heaven is one of them. He describes how life there will be full of peace, joy, rest, and the great glory of JESUS, angels, and the elders of faith. Imagine Heaven and consider what you would miss if you were not there—no pain, no tears, no sorrow, and no death. This reality surpasses everything else about Heaven. Being with JESUS forever will comfort our hearts and remove all worry permanently.

What grieved JESUS the most as He approached death was the feeling of being separated from His FATHER. To Him, this separation felt eternal. JESUS went forward and endured separation from GOD so that we would not be separated from Him. Being separated from the face of GOD is the worst thing of all. Concerning Hell—eternal separation from GOD—what does this mean? It means there will be nothing good or pleasant. There will be no child's smile,

no cheerful greeting of “Good day,” and no peaceful or joyful moments. There will be no meeting kind people—only the darkness of being cut off from GOD and all good things. It will be a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Perhaps, in the torment of the lake of fire or the pain of separation, there will be no one nearby because of the darkness. Revelation 9 says an angel was given the key to the Abyss, and when it was opened, smoke rose from it like the smoke of a gigantic furnace. We do not know for sure if this describes Hell or the Abyss, but just imagining it as humans, an endless pit must be terrifying. Many of us fear falling into a pit, and Scripture says this pit is incredibly deep. Some have asked whether one would fall through to the other side of the Earth—about 7,900 miles! The thought of falling into such a deep pit without knowing how long the fall will last is frightening. GOD’s descriptions of Hell serve as a final warning to help us all make the choice not to perish.

Revelation says that some will lose their strength while trying to attack the city when the saints descend to make war but will fail. Let us not waste our strength planning how to hide in caves or asking mountains to fall on us to escape GOD’s wrath. Instead, let us wisely choose now to be in the New Jerusalem, the new Heaven, and the new Earth. When the books are opened and judgment is underway, let us pray to be on GOD’s side. Do not be confused—goodness may seem slow to win, but in the end, Love and GOD will triumph.

GOD is not trying to scare us with Hell, but if you consider it seriously, you will decide that it is not a place you want to be. Today, leave the broad path and walk the narrow way. The broad road does not align with the narrow path—they are in opposite directions. If you do not have a relationship with GOD today, choose whom you will serve. There are only two masters: Satan or GOD. If you are on the path to Hell, change direction—make a U-turn. Plan to go to Heaven, where there is no complaining, strife, cruelty, or discouragement. It is a place of eternal and abundant peace, where perfect health abounds.

GOD does not force anyone to choose Heaven or Hell—the choice is yours and mine. However, if you fully surrender to GOD, He will do everything in His power to keep you from Hell and give you eternal life. GOD only uses truth, not deception, to draw you to Him. He does not offer false promises—only truth. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” and even today, many ask the same question. The only truth is GOD’s Word. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Choose His way—it leads to eternal life. Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

🌻In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but GOD's can see and no ear but His can hear, we can pour out our hidden desires and deepest longings to the Father of infinite mercy. In the quietness of the soul, that voice—one that has never failed to respond to the cry of human need—will speak to our hearts.

🌻Questions:
What happens if we deliberately keep sinning after knowing the truth?
Why do you think GOD has spoken more about Heaven than Hell?
What will you do today if you hear GOD's voice calling you?
What is the worst thing about Hell?
How does the Holy Spirit help us avoid Hell?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👥

Key Text: Philippians 2:3-4

[3,4] Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your goodness, protection, and kindness. Today we lift up Your Name and say that we are part of Your team. Forgive our sins, and help us to love You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Invite each child to tape a spoon to a ruler. Tell them that now they are in hell, and their elbows are tied straight so they cannot bend. Ask them to try to feed themselves without bending their elbows. After a minute, tell them that their elbows are still tied, but now they are in heaven. This time, they must remove selfishness and feed each other instead.

DAY 357 (December 23)

TOPIC: Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man

(Revelation 21)



❁ The Bible tells us that John was shown a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea to separate people. There will be no deserts, ravines, floods, thorns, poisonous plants, snakes, or animals that harm others. Nothing will die there, which is why no creature will prey on another. There will be no hunting. The taste of things there will be astonishing, far surpassing the flavors of this world. Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, nor has it entered the heart of man the beauty of heaven!

❁ Then John saw the New Jerusalem city coming down from heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. The dwelling place of God will be with mankind. God will move His great city from heaven to dwell with humanity forever here on earth. That is, God's main city or dwelling will be here after the earth is made new. We will be His people, and He will be our God. He will wipe every tear from our eyes because there is much sorrow on earth. Some will remember their loved ones who are lost forever—whether their children, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, grandchildren, brothers, or sisters. They will cry, but God will wipe away their tears.

❁ There will be no more death, pain, or anything that takes away joy. Tears will appear in two forms—tears of joy and tears of sorrow. The tears of sorrow

will only be at the beginning because we are told there will be no more tears, death, sorrow, or pain, for God will wipe away all these things. Sin will never rise again (Nahum 1:9). The prophet John was instructed to write these things by the Messiah because they are trustworthy and true. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty, I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who overcome will inherit all these good things and live with God forever.”

There will be no cowards, unbelievers, sorcerers, vile persons, murderers, adulterers, idol worshipers, those with impure behaviors, liars, or anyone practicing wickedness there. Their portion will be in the lake of fire—the second death. Those who love the Almighty God will experience the first death, which we know as the ordinary death, but not the second death because the Messiah died so that we would not face eternal death. John was shown the Holy City in a vision. He saw the city descending from heaven from the Almighty God, shining with His glory, and its radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates—three gates on each side.

The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates, and the names of the twelve apostles were written on the foundation. The city was square in shape, with its length, width, and height equal. Its wall was made of jasper, and the streets were pure gold, as clear as glass. The twelve foundations were adorned with twelve different precious stones: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst. The gates were made of pearls.

There was no temple there because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it because the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the gates will never be shut because there is no night or any evil. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful—only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. The great conflict will be over. Sin and sinners will be no more and will have vanished forever. Loving relationships and joy will be the daily life of all beings. The universe and all planets will be pure and perfect. Both the great and the small will declare, “GOD IS LOVE.”

The Lord is compassionate and full of mercy (James 5:11). He patiently waits with unyielding love to hear the confession of those who have strayed and to accept their repentance. He longs to receive our gratitude, just as a mother looks forward to a recognition smile from her beloved child. He wants us to understand how tender and yearning His heart is for us, loving us deeply.

He invites us to bring our trials and challenges to His mercy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weaknesses to His strength, and our emptiness to His fullness. No one who comes to Him has ever been turned away disappointed. “They looked to Him and were radiant; their faces were not ashamed” (Psalms 34:5).

Questions:

What did the Holy City look like?

Why was there no temple anymore?

What are the twelve names on the foundation of the city?

What are the twelve names on the gates?

What things will be present in heaven?

Do you plan to go to heaven?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 22:12-14

[12-14] “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”

Prayer: Father in heaven, we love You. Please help us to be ready, for You have told us that You are coming quickly. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: Draw a picture of the Tree of Life, the River of Life, blessings and curses, and show what we must do to be ready.

DAY 358 (December 24)

TOPIC: Forever and Ever in Heaven

(Revelation 22)

John was shown the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of the Almighty God and of the Lamb. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations so that they will no longer die. All curses will be gone, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city. There will be no more night, and no need for a lamp, sun, or moon because God Himself will be the light. Many of us say the first thing we want to do when we arrive in heaven is to see Jesus! But I think we will also desire to see God the Father and the Holy Spirit, for they all love us deeply and have worked tirelessly for our salvation.

We will serve God with joy and see Him face to face, and His name will be on our foreheads. These words are faithful and true and must soon take place, for He says, "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." When John heard these things, he fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed him these things. But the angel said to him, "Do not do that! I am a fellow servant with you; worship God alone—the Lamb, not the angels." Angels are messengers and servants of God, as shown to Jacob, a ladder connecting heaven and earth. They are ministers appointed by God for our sake. Keeping the words of this book also means not adding to or subtracting from them. For example, during the 1800s, slave traders reduced the Bible from 1,189 chapters to only 232 chapters for their slaves. They removed entire books, such as Exodus, which spoke about God delivering the Israelites from slavery. That was only about a quarter of the whole Bible.

John was told that the time is near, and when the time is fulfilled, the Spirit of God will be withdrawn, and the door of mercy will be closed. This will cause the unjust and the filthy to become even more wicked, while the righteous and holy will be further purified. The Lord will come with His reward to give to everyone according to their work. Blessed are those who wash their robes—those with the heavenly character free from sin. Jesus, the Root of David and the Bright Morning Star, gave these messages as a testimony for us today, so we may prepare ourselves. The Spirit and the bride invite us three times to heaven, saying, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!"



Let the one who is thirsty come and take the water of life freely.

Do you know a friend or relative who has died? It is heartbreaking when we bury our loved ones. When the Lord returns and the trumpet sounds, He will awaken children, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. This is a true promise. Angels will carry little children to their parents, and friends will reunite face-to-face, never to be separated again. We will see those who have been in heaven transformed—the elderly made young again, the sick healed, and the blind, deaf, and disabled will see, hear, and run. In the blink of an eye, we will all have immortal and perfect bodies. Our thoughts will be clearer and more profound than ever before.

We will find ourselves rising above the earth, leaving it behind, and ascending to heaven. We will not need to carry anything with us—no suitcases, boats, cars, or houses—because heaven has everything we could ever need. It will be a wonderful journey full of surprises. The Bible says the journey will take half an hour. If this follows the prophetic time where a day equals a year, then half an hour could represent approximately seven days, meaning it will take seven days to reach heaven. Imagine when Paul, once known as Saul, meets Stephen, or when King David meets Uriah—what a conversation they will have!

There are people who lived before hearing about the Almighty God or Jesus, yet they obeyed the Spirit's voice in their hearts and followed the good laws of their nations—many of which align with God's Ten Commandments. These people will be eager to learn about God and the Lamb. The Ten Commandments are a reflection of God's character. They will be amazed to discover the miracle that allowed them to live forever, for they never knew about the resurrection! Those of us who knew God and the Lamb and had the Scriptures will have the privilege of sharing the story of Jesus with them. Is there anything more important than being with the Almighty God forever and ever? Earthly riches are temporary—lasting maybe less than a hundred years. Beauty, education, wealth, and fame all fade away. Let us seek the Almighty while He may be found today!

After those seven days, we will arrive at the New Jerusalem—a city beyond our imagination. It is a square, 1,500 miles on each side. I wonder if it will have stories reaching that height or just a high ceiling! Perhaps we will have homes in the city and in the countryside where we can garden! Jesus Himself will place a crown on each person's head and give us a harp. Without much effort or training, everyone will play beautiful heavenly music. Many of us who cannot play musical instruments look forward to that day! Imagine the moment when Adam meets the Son of Man—Jesus. When Jesus stretches

out His loving, nail-scarred hands, I believe Adam will fall to the ground, exclaiming, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.”

Jesus will show Adam the Garden of Eden, which was taken to heaven before the flood, and He will give Adam fruit from the tree of life. Adam will see millions of his descendants who have overcome sin. This realization will overwhelm him with joy and gratitude. When we sing the song of Moses and the Lamb and reflect on our earthly journey, the angels will not be able to sing that song, for they never experienced the trials we faced or the salvation we received. Jesus will open the city gates and welcome us. We will see a long table stretching beyond our sight, prepared for everyone who has overcome. This is the special feast Jesus promised to share with us in His Father’s kingdom. Wouldn’t you want to be there with Jesus? Decide today if you haven’t already.

We will live in the New Jerusalem for a thousand years. During this time, we will search for our loved ones, hoping to see them there. If they are missing, we will ask, “Where are they? They were good people.” God will open the record books, and we will see every hidden sin they refused to confess. Despite all of God’s efforts to save them, they rejected Him. This will confirm that God is both just and loving.

During this time, Satan will be bound in the desolate earth, unable to deceive anyone. For a thousand years, he will wander alone, reflecting on the consequences of his rebellion. Even he will acknowledge that God is just and loving and that he alone is responsible for the destruction he caused.

What will you do with Jesus, called the Christ? The answer to salvation is to behold Jesus, trust Him, and follow Him daily. By looking to Him, we are transformed to be like Him!

A heart that seeks God daily through sincere prayer will grow in understanding, righteousness, and spiritual strength. This connection with God will bring peace and stability to your heart.

Questions:

How large is the New Jerusalem?

Who will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb?

What will happen to Satan?

Are you preparing to go to heaven?

What have you done with Jesus, called the Christ?

What will happen in the blink of an eye?

What does the Spirit and the bride say?

Who will the trumpet awaken?

How many kinds of fruit does the tree of life bear?

Why are those who wash their robes in the blood of Jesus blessed?

Which sign of the Lord's return has not yet been fulfilled?

Key Text: Revelation 22:1-4

[1-4] And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. … On either side of the river was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

Prayer: Thank You so much, our Father, for preparing good fruits for us in heaven, and that we will see Your face, and Your Name will be on our foreheads. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Use 12 different fruits, and paper to write the children's names on their foreheads.

DAY 359 (December 25)

TOPIC: The New Jerusalem Descends

(Revelation 20-22)



We have seen that during the 1,000 years, all our questions will be answered. We will understand that GOD is just, and His judgments are true, but Satan and his angels will still think GOD is not fair. After the 1,000 years, the saints will descend inside the holy city of New Jerusalem, returning to earth with the angels and JESUS Himself. Satan and the wicked will be resurrected. This second resurrection will involve imperfect bodies and evil thoughts, just as they had when they fell asleep in death. Blessed are those who die in the LORD and will rise in the first resurrection; the second resurrection is for the wicked.

When the wicked see JESUS, they will say, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD." Even though they hate Him, they will acknowledge GOD because they will have no choice but to speak the truth. When JESUS sets foot on the Mount of Olives, the mountain will split into two (Zechariah 14:4). Then, the New Jerusalem will descend while Satan watches with billions of resurrected wicked, thinking he has another chance to rule them. He will

urge the wicked to seize the New Jerusalem. As they plan this attack, GOD's commandments will appear in the sky, and they will be judged. They will be shown everything that has happened—from Adam's temptation, the plan of salvation, to the work of the Holy Spirit inspiring people.

Every wicked person will remember their sins and how they rejected GOD's Spirit and believed Satan's lies. Each will see how loving and just GOD is, and they will acknowledge that they deserve death. Even Satan will admit that GOD is righteous. Resurrection will not change a person's character, but GOD has given us the opportunity to change our character now by accepting His love and mercy. Although the wicked will confess GOD's love and justice, they will still hate Him and plan to seize the city. The wicked will see Satan as a deceiver and will even attempt to invade the city—but fire will come down from heaven and destroy them.

Each wicked person will be destroyed according to their sins. Satan will suffer the longest, but all will be reduced to ashes (Malachi 4:1-3 and Ezekiel 28:19). Heaven will be safe without Satan. There will be no more funerals, orphans, poverty, accidents, gossip, mockery, prisons, fires, floods, volcanoes, oppression, cruelty, diseases, earthquakes, famine, theft, divorce, sorrow, or any form of evil. Some people do not want to go to heaven, imagining they will live forever as ghosts floating on clouds playing harps! They think it would be boring. The truth is, GOD has planned only good and wonderful things for us. We will enjoy creation, delight in various activities, and have real, incorruptible bodies. We will recognize faces and see each other clearly—right there, in that eternal joy! The resurrection will restore the body, and GOD will give the breath of life! No body will exist without the breath of life in heaven.

We will have the opportunity to talk with Adam, Noah, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, Solomon, David, our friends, family, and many more. We will be able to explore and know the beings on other planets—perhaps those that did not fall into sin like ours. Our joyous conversations will center on GOD's love, how He sent His Son to die and take our punishment so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. The good news is that we still have the chance to choose Him today—if you have not yet chosen Him, today is the day. Once you have chosen Him, help others to choose GOD as well so that they will not be lost. We are saved to save others. You have time today—tomorrow may be too late. Tomorrow is uncertain and may bring unforeseen events.

We do not need to guess about eternity—GOD has prepared great things for those who love Him. But GOD has revealed these things to us by His Spirit,

for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of GOD (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). We will have homes in New Jerusalem and on the new earth. We will build our own houses and cultivate gardens without toil. We will return to the original work of Adam before sin, as the dew will water our crops. There will be no thorns, weeds, harmful insects, or poisonous plants (Isaiah 55 and 65).

We will walk in beautiful fields with amazing plants and flowers of indescribable colors. Plants and flowers will not die, and food will be delicious without decay or spoilage. The weather will always be perfect—there will be no floods, hurricanes, hailstorms, droughts, or storms. We will live among amazing animals—you might decide to ride a horse, a lion, or a whale, and they will not harm you! Perhaps animals will even enjoy carrying you, for in heaven, all creatures will love and care for each other. We will hear the sweet songs of birds, and there may be no need to keep domestic animals like chimpanzees or dogs, as all animals will be gentle and harmless (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Since nothing will die again, people will not eat other creatures there. That is why we are told that no living being will suffer pain anymore. Even with fruits and trees, we will use only what we need and will not destroy plants unnecessarily. In some places, people made guns and tested them by killing animals without using them for food, causing harm without a valid reason. Let us start practicing care for creation by using plants and animals responsibly. Animals can sense who loves GOD by how they are treated—no one who loves GOD is cruel to harmless creatures!

The rivers will be pure and clear—just as we are told, the river of life will flow from GOD's throne and water the tree of life. This tree will bear different fruits every month—delicious fruits that prevent death. Beyond our world, we will explore other planets and stars like Jupiter, Venus, and Orion, marveling at their landscapes. Let us meet under the tree of life. One thing will forever remind us of earth's sins—the scars on JESUS' hands, head, and feet. These marks will be a reminder that He gave His life so we would not perish but have eternal life. In the Garden of Eden, GOD visited Adam every evening until sin disrupted that beautiful relationship. GOD has longed to restore this connection.

When sin is finished, our world will be honored above all others, for GOD Himself will dwell with us. GOD wants you there—do you accept His invitation today to be with Him? Let us read His Word daily and continue to grow in grace. The LORD warns us not to add to or subtract from His Word. If anyone adds to these words, GOD will add the plagues described in this book. If anyone removes words from this prophecy, GOD will take away their share in

the tree of life and the holy city.

🌻At that time, the saints will rejoice exceedingly. The great conflict between GOD and Satan, good and evil, will be over. Sin and sinners will no longer exist. The plan of salvation will be fully accomplished, as GOD's character will be clear to everyone. His words will endure forever. Everyone will understand the consequences of sin and Satan's true nature. The removal of sin forever will demonstrate GOD's love and His marvelous attributes to all creation. Everywhere will be safe for eternity.

🌻Reflection Questions:
Why is it dangerous to add to or subtract from the Scriptures? How can someone alter GOD's Word? What does JESUS, who testifies to these things, say? What do you look forward to in heaven? Would you like to be part of the marriage supper of the Lamb? How are you preparing to be there? What does eternity mean? Why will heaven be safe? What has GOD prepared for us? How do we know heaven is a real place?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Lesson: The New Jerusalem Comes Down

Key Text: Revelation 20:1

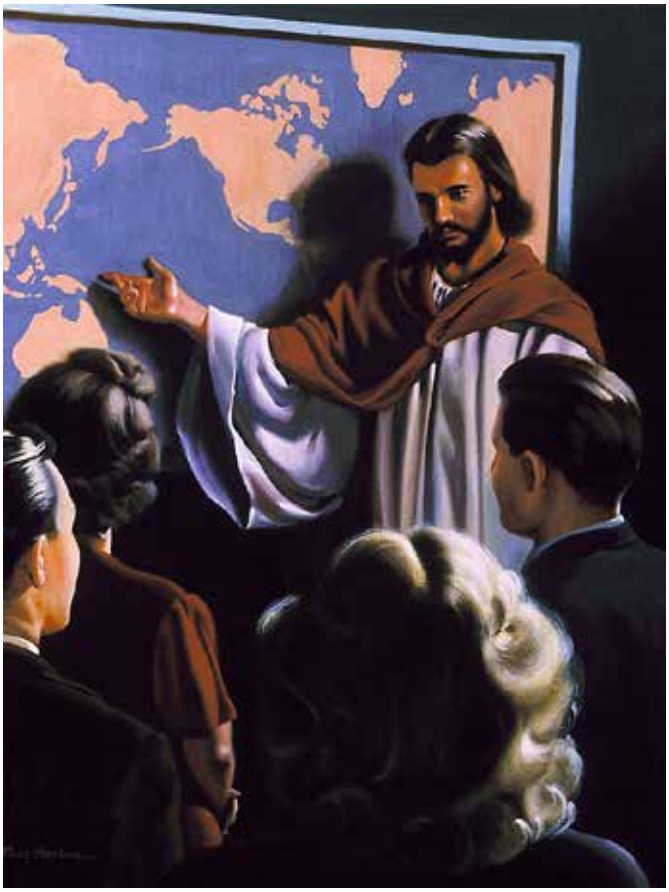
[1,2] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, that Satan will be bound and his power destroyed forever. Help us to remain faithful until then. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Use a Bible to discover 10 verses where something was either added or removed. Make a chain to represent Satan being bound, along with other tools that can illustrate the scene.

DAY 360 (December 26)

TOPIC: Christian Education Is the Eternal and Best Education of All



The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. —Proverbs 9:10. God is the source of everything. He alone is the Creator and the Sustainer of all life—from a single living cell to insects, animals, stars, humans, angels, kingdoms, and authorities in the spiritual realm (Ephesians 3:10). He does not need wood or raw materials to make a chair or any other object; He simply speaks, and things come into existence.

All knowledge, wisdom, and understanding originate from the Lord. God is love and the true Light. He is the giver of life. The law of God or His commandments is our teacher—read Psalm 119. This chapter, the longest in the Bible, contains 22 stanzas with 8 verses each. In its 176 verses, God's law, testimonies, commandments, precepts, Word, ways, statutes, and judgments are mentioned 175 times. The psalmist says he has more understanding than his teachers and elders because of God's law (Psalm 119:99-100). The law is a mirror and a light that guides us through darkness so that we do not go astray, enabling us to walk in the light. Anyone who values God's law and commandments will have a better and more meaningful life than someone who disregards them.

Since the fall into sin, we are all engaged in the great controversy between two sides—God's side and Satan's side. Because God is righteous, He has established laws in this conflict so that the entire world may know His character of love and the gift of choice He has given us, in contrast to Satan's character of evil, hatred, and injustice. We must seek the knowledge of God and His

kingdom first, above any other form of education. What benefit is there in gaining advanced knowledge in science, engineering, economics, or the arts if we lose eternal life? Christian education is the most valuable education. In the beginning, God initiated this Christian education in the Garden of Eden, where He taught Adam and Eve face to face. They were given work and responsibilities, such as naming the animals and caring for the garden. Their love, praise, and gratitude for God grew daily. Humanity was given laws and instructions by God.

Although God gave instructions to humanity, Adam and Eve chose to listen to the evil teacher—Satan. Sin entered the world, and everything was corrupted. Now we are in the process of restoration, preparing to enter the heavenly classroom where God will once again be the teacher. There, we will learn about other planets, worlds, and the science of redemption for all eternity.

Obedience to God's authority and to the leaders He has appointed is essential—starting from the home, where parents are the first teachers, to the church, and even to civil authorities, as long as they do not contradict God's law. True education at home or school must teach worship, faith, evangelism, and service. Jesus is presented as Lord, Savior, and our Heavenly Father.

Parents educated their children at home according to God's plan as revealed in the Scriptures. Later, Samuel established the schools of the prophets, where students were taught God's Word and ministered to others.

The childhood life of Jesus shows us that He obeyed His parents and respected authority while also growing in favor with God and humanity. Parents must diligently teach their children to fear the Lord when they rise, when they sit, when they lie down, and when they walk (Deuteronomy 6:5). We must continuously receive Christian education in our homes so that we do not forget God. Jesus is the greatest and best teacher of all. People tried to arrest and accuse Him but failed because they marveled at His teachings. His life was both a model and a lesson. Indeed, Jesus is our example—let us follow His ways.

As believers, our worldview is shaped by the Bible, which teaches us that we were created by God. Our understanding of life's meaning, the afterlife, and our eternal destination comes solely from the Scriptures—not from newspapers or cultural traditions like evolution. We have lived in Africa for many years, yet we have never seen apes evolve into humans! God calls us to worship Him in spirit and truth and in the beauty of His holiness. We must not worship human theories, philosophies, science, or mathematics. We are called to fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has

come. Judgment Day is approaching swiftly; therefore, we must choose the right education so that we may stand blameless on that day.

Education and redemption are inseparable. Every Scripture inspired by God is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. We are told to hold on to education and never let it go. God created us in His image, but this image was greatly damaged by sin. The education God designed for us will restore His image in us. True education removes hatred and discrimination and helps us recognize that all humans are children of God. When we lift up the cross, we see the dignity and image of God in people and treat them justly—this is true education. True education humbles us and prevents pride. Genuine science does not contradict the Bible; however, false theories created by humans—such as evolution—are dangerous and should be opposed by all believers.

Work is a blessing and an essential part of Christian education. Working merely to earn money and retire early in good health is not ideal for the body. The human body was created to be active. Agriculture is the alphabet of education. Work provides joy and dignity. It is more than employment—it is a service and promotes physical health. Manual labor, like the apostle Paul's tent-making, is part of the education God wants us to have. Agriculture and manual labor are foundational to Christian education. Stewardship is also a responsibility God has given us in our lives. We should work and rest according to His command so that we may reflect His character each week.

Many parents send their children to expensive schools to ensure academic success, but these schools often lack spiritual education. As a result, these students lack balanced education, which encompasses intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. Such holistic education is found in schools that teach the Scriptures. A person who excels academically but is deficient spiritually is unprepared for God's coming kingdom. Moreover, such a person cannot be a fully responsible citizen on Earth. May God help parents awaiting Jesus' return to enroll their children in Bible-based schools—especially before the age of 10—where they can receive a balanced education.

Read Deuteronomy 6 and the book "Fundamentals of Christian Education." We have an online copy available, and if you cannot access the English version, we have translated it into Swahili.

"And this is the law, the commandments, and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land you are crossing over to possess."

Prayers offered to God, confessing our sins and weaknesses with genuine contrition, are the prayers He accepts. For He who is high and exalted, who inhabits eternity and whose name is Holy, says: “I dwell in the high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Questions:

1. What is education?

2. How are education and redemption related?

3. What were the Israelites instructed in Deuteronomy 6? (Summarize)

4. Why are manual tasks important in Christian education?

5. How are salvation and education connected?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Proverbs 9:10

[10] The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for creating us and for loving us. We ask that we may know You, for You are the source of our wisdom and understanding. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Activity: Recite the books of the Bible, and say what each of them teaches.
Reflection: GOD is the source of all things. He is the Creator and the Sustainer of all life—from the smallest living cell to insects, animals, stars, humans, angels, kingdoms, and authorities in the spiritual world (Ephesians 3:10). He does not need wood or raw materials to make things—He simply speaks, and it comes into being.

DAY 361 (December 27)

TOPIC: Making Friends with God



❁ Mission or making disciples of JESUS is God's work. He has provided all the resources of heaven to redeem humanity, but it is our joyful duty to cooperate with Him in this work of saving souls. This work is not a burden but a joy because we see the lost returning to the LORD. God has placed eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). When a person is born, they naturally desire to live forever with their God, and they lack peace or joy until they surrender to Him. JESUS is the light that illuminates everyone, and His Holy Spirit draws us to Him. Every desire to do good comes from the Holy Spirit. Although we may not understand how the Holy Spirit draws us, He is a gift to us. When humanity fell into sin, JESUS was sent to help us in our sinful state. God sought us before we even thought to seek Him. The plan of salvation was established before humanity sinned. We have a wonderful task of partnering with God to make others friends and followers of JESUS.

❁ Witnessing to others brings people to salvation. It is God's will for everyone to reach salvation. God desires our salvation even more than we do. Witnessing

is about lifting JESUS up and telling others what He has done in creating and redeeming us. We should view everyone as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. JESUS rejoices when we care about the salvation of others. Witnessing is a command from God. We should have a heart of friendship and love, avoiding arguments so that people see our faith as something desirable.

🌻 Our personal testimony attracts others—that is, the things God has done for us. When our hearts are filled with the love of JESUS, we will feel compelled to share Him with others. Mark 5 describes how those who were delivered from demons were eager to follow JESUS and testify about Him. We should see people the way JESUS saw them. By observing how JESUS reached others, we learn how to reach them ourselves. He saw people as citizens of heaven—like Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, and others. Pray and start where you are, and you will see great changes.

🌻 Intercessory prayer for others is crucial because the great conflict between Satan and God, which began in heaven, continues today. Many who are captured by Satan are unaware, and praying for them can greatly influence their decisions, leading them to accept JESUS' sacrifice and align with God. JESUS, Paul, Samuel, and others in Scripture provide examples of intercessory service. Pray with all your heart, and the Holy Spirit will help you witness. God gives various gifts to empower us to witness to others. Spiritual gifts are given to strengthen the church. These gifts include serving, teaching, encouraging, generosity, compassion, helping, and having a joyful spirit. Discover and develop the gifts God has given you.

🌻 The Word of God is powerful and does not return to Him empty; it accomplishes His purposes. We must study God's Word because it transforms us and makes us more like Him. The Word is useful for teaching, correcting ignorance, and bringing blessings beyond measure. The Bible contains more than 3,500 promises.

🌻 When JESUS met people, they knew He wanted the best for them. He helped them with their problems, gave them hope, and then invited them to follow Him, enabling them to lead others to the light of life. He healed many and provided for their needs.

🌻 Small groups play a significant role in witnessing because they encourage us and allow us to work together rather than alone. The central message is about JESUS! JESUS is radiant and the core of our faith. Revelation 14:6-12 says:
"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe,

tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and the springs of water.’ Another angel followed, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’ Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of JESUS. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” This message of the three angels warns the world about false worship and teachings. These angels prepare the world for the judgment that is coming soon.

We must receive light and blessings so that we have something to share. It is every worker’s privilege to speak with God in private prayer before speaking to people as God’s mouthpiece. Men and women who communicate with God and have Christ dwelling in them make their surroundings holy because they cooperate with the holy angels. Such a testimony is needed in this time. God accepts silent prayers—the Lord will hear even the unspoken cry of a burdened heart.

Questions: What are the spiritual gifts? What did the angels say? Why should we witness? How does praying for others help? What is the benefit of small groups?

Mungu Akubariki Sana Mtoto Na Kijana Wa Yesu

Key Text: Mark 16:15-18

[15-18] And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak

with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Prayer: Thank You, Father in heaven, for giving us the authority to pray for the sick, and they will be healed. Help us to pray for those who are sick and to share the good news. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Make posters with the word "Go!", prepare boxes and bags, bring Bibles, Bible games, and let twelve children act as apostles.

DAY 362 (December 28)

TOPIC: How God Loves Humanity

All the creatures of the universe and the way God reveals Himself demonstrate God's love. Our Father in heaven is the Source of life, wisdom, and joy. Consider the beauty and wonder of all created things. Think of how they are suited to meet the needs and happiness not only of humanity but also of every living creature. The sun and rain refresh and nourish the earth; the mountains, seas, and valleys all reflect the love of our Creator. God is the one who provides for all His creatures' daily needs. In the beautiful words of the Psalmist, we read:
"The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing." (Psalm 145:15,16)

God created humanity in a state of perfect happiness and holiness, and when the earth came forth from the Creator's hand, it was completely beautiful; there was no sign of decay or curse.
Suffering and death entered the world due to breaking God's law—the law of love. Yet, even in the midst of the pain caused by sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground because of humanity (Genesis 3:17). Thorns and thistles—trials and difficulties that make life burdensome—were introduced for the benefit of humanity, to serve as part of God's teaching plan to rescue us from the state of sin and restore us to the original goodness. Despite the fallen condition of the world due to sin, it is not all sorrow and distress.

The things of nature serve as messengers of God's comfort and peace. Every thorn bush has its blossom; in every hardship, we can find God's blessings. "God is love" is written on every budding leaf and every delicate flower. The beautiful birds that fill the air with their joyful songs, the flowers painted with radiant colors, the tall green trees of the forest—all testify to God's love and care and how He desires to bring joy to His children. The Word of God reveals His character. He has personally declared His love and compassion. When Moses requested, "Show me Your glory," the Lord responded, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before you." This is His glory.

The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness,



rebellion, and sin." (Exodus 33:18,19; 34:6,7) God is merciful and full of compassion, for He delights in showing mercy (Jonah 4:1; Micah 7:18). He has bound our hearts to His in countless ways, revealing His love both in heaven and on earth. Through nature and the bonds of human affection, God seeks to reveal Himself to us. Yet, even with all these evidences, they can only imperfectly express His love.

Although all these testimonies are given, the enemy of good has blinded the spiritual vision of humanity, causing people to view God with fear, imagining Him as stern and unforgiving. Satan has misrepresented God to humanity as a harsh judge, an exacting creditor who watches for our faults to punish us. This dark shadow was removed, and the boundless love of God was revealed to the world through Jesus Christ. The Son of God came from heaven to reveal the Father. "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known." (John 1:18). "No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." (Matthew 11:27).

When one of His disciples asked, "Show us the Father," Jesus replied, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:8,9). Explaining His mission on earth, Jesus said:
"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." (Luke 4:18).

That was His mission. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him (Acts 10:38). There were entire villages where no sound of sickness was heard because He had passed through and healed all their sick. His works testified to His divine mission. Every aspect of His life revealed love, kindness, and compassion; His heart was filled with tender sympathy toward humanity. He took on human nature to meet humanity's needs. The poor and the lowly felt no fear in approaching Him. Even little children were drawn to Him, climbing onto His lap and gazing into His face full of love and grace.

Jesus never concealed truth, but He always spoke it in love. His interactions were filled with kindness, care, and compassion. He never acted harshly, spoke unnecessarily severe words, or caused needless sorrow. While He was firm against hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, His rebukes were given with sorrow in His heart. He wept over Jerusalem—the city He loved—because it rejected Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

🌻 His life was one of self-denial and service. Every person was precious to Him. Though He was divine, He never looked down on humanity. He saw everyone as fallen beings whom He came to save. This is the character of Christ as revealed through His life. This is the character of God. From the heart of the Father, through Christ, flows a stream of love to humanity.

🌻 Jesus, the compassionate Savior, was God manifest in human form (1 Timothy 3:16). It was to redeem us that He lived, suffered, and died. He, who was one with God, felt the separation caused by sin and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). Yet, His sacrifice was not to persuade the Father to love us, but because God already loved us (John 3:16).

🌻 The Apostle John, reflecting on God's immeasurable love, exclaimed: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1). Through faith in Christ's atonement, fallen humanity can become children of God, transformed and made heirs of His kingdom. What amazing love!

🌻 Let us begin our day with prayer—speaking to God as we would to a friend. Tell Him your joys, sorrows, and needs. He is always ready to listen.

🌻Questions: Explain how God's love is evident in your life and those around you.

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: 1 Corinthians 2:9

[9] But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for preparing such a beautiful place for us—one so wonderful that our minds cannot fully imagine it. Help us to tell others so that they too may be ready. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Make a list of 33 attributes of God, and explain their meanings.

DAY 363 (December 29)

TOPIC: The Great Controversy is Over!

There will be great rejoicing in heaven—no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what GOD has prepared for humanity. There will be no more sorrow or suffering! There, the "Hallelujah" of the Jews and the "Hosanna" of the Gentiles will mingle—it will be a glorious day! May GOD help us, beloved, to meet those who will rise in the first resurrection! On that day, we shall be clothed with immortality and will declare, "O death, where is your victory?!" I imagine that on that day, the triumph of God's love—the love He Himself has planted in our hearts—will be fully realized. Fellowship with holy beings and perfect unity of righteousness will sustain the complete joy of eternity (Ephesians 3:15). In that perfect state of mind, we will witness the wonders of God's creative power and the mysteries of redemptive love. Every aspect of our being will continue to grow and advance.

Knowledge will have no limit. Our love will grow deeper each day, and our relationships will continually improve. Great and marvelous things will be achieved, and the highest heights of thought and understanding will be reached. Yet, there will always be new wonders to explore. Throughout eternity, there will be endless lessons to learn, and there will be no weariness. The treasures of GOD will be opened to His redeemed children. They will traverse other worlds without the burden of tiresome journeys. The redeemed of this world will enter the sinless universe and share in the flawless knowledge that other beings have possessed for generations upon generations. They will behold the glory of creation without any dimness of vision. The sun, stars, and all the planets will revolve around the throne of GOD. As the ages of eternity roll on, the unfolding revelation of GOD's glory will continue to increase, magnifying the greatness of GOD and Christ. The more humanity understands GOD, the more they will reflect His character.

GOD and Christ will reveal themselves to us in wondrous ways. As people come to understand the character of GOD, their love and worship for Him will deepen. As Jesus reveals the mysteries of the great controversy—the cosmic battle between good and evil instigated by Satan—His followers will increasingly glorify and serve Him with all their hearts, joining their voices with tens of thousands upon thousands. Every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea—everything in creation—will declare, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13). The great controversy is finished.



Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is now at peace. Perfect unity and harmony fill heaven. From the Creator flows life, light, and joy, spreading to all corners of existence. From the smallest atom to the grandest galaxy, every living and non-living thing in the universe declares that GOD is Love.

May GOD grant us His love because one day in heaven, it will overflow and continue to grow as we discover the wonders He has done for us and experience the profound awe of His grace (The Great Controversy). Let us hold on to this comforting promise from Revelation 22:17: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come, and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." Completely free!

The Privilege of Kneeling in Prayer—Whether in public worship or private devotion, it is our privilege to kneel before GOD when we offer our prayers. Jesus, our example, "knelt down and prayed" (Luke 22:41). It is written of His disciples that they also "knelt down and prayed" (Acts 9:40). Paul declared, "I kneel before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:14). When confessing the sins of Israel before GOD, Ezra knelt in prayer (Ezra 9:5). Daniel "got down on his knees three times a day and prayed, giving thanks to his GOD" (Daniel 6:10).

Our Prayers Are Not in Vain—It is a wondrous thing that we can pray effectively and confidently. Despite being unworthy, mortal, and sinful, we have the privilege to present our prayers to GOD. What greater power could a human being desire than to commune with the Infinite GOD? Weak and sinful as we are, we are granted the honor to speak directly with our Creator. Our words reach the very throne of the King of the universe. We can talk with Jesus as we walk along the way, and He assures us, "I am with you always."

Pray, therefore; pray, and you will receive. Pray for humility, wisdom, courage, and increased faith. Every sincere prayer will be answered. The answer may not come in the way or at the time you expect, but it will come in the manner that best meets your needs. The prayers you offer in solitude, in times of weariness and trial, GOD will answer—not always according to your expectations, but always for your ultimate good.

Fathers and mothers, no matter how busy you are, take time to pray. In our efforts to serve and entertain our guests, let us not neglect our duty to GOD. The hour of prayer should not be sacrificed for anything or anyone. Do not engage in endless conversations or entertainment until you are too exhausted to enjoy the blessings of worship. Offering such weary devotion is

like presenting a defective sacrifice to GOD. The early evening hours—when our minds are clear and alert—are the best times to bring our prayers before GOD, lifting our voices in joyful praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Questions: Explain the meaning of the Great Controversy. Why will sin and sinners no longer exist?

May God Bless You Greatly, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Revelation 21:3,4

[3,4] 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. 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."

Prayer: Thank You, Father in heaven, for preparing heaven for us—something no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has entered into the heart of man. Help us to be strong and prepare for it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Use pencils and crayons to draw heaven, and then share stories of what they think will be there.

DAY 364 (December 30)

TOPIC: How to Develop Your Brain to Become a Genius

1. Think: Just as physical exercise benefits those who engage in it, so does exercising the front part of your brain through thinking. The more you think, the more your thinking capacity increases.

2. Love Truth and Seek It: GOD is limitless, and He reveals His love to us every day (through the Scriptures, science, and experience). He will show you the Truth in all fields, whether science or otherwise.

a. Learn and delight in God's commandments and His principles—The Law of Love, the Law of Freedom.

3. Test All Theories About God: Verify all theories about God using the Scriptures; do not follow human inventions such as evolution. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding; acknowledge HIM in all your ways, and He will direct your paths.

4. Surrender to God: Based on the evidence of God's character—His supreme faithfulness and love—surrender to Him and invite Him into your heart. Begin each day by inviting His Spirit. Consecrate yourself to Him, abide in Him, and He will abide in you. Ask His Spirit to dwell within you.

5. Meditate Daily on God's Character: Reflect on God's character of love and wisdom every day. Fill your thoughts with gratitude and truth, and contemplate His kingdom of love and the work of creation.

6. Trust God Today and for the Future: Trust in God for your life today, for the future, and for the outcomes after understanding His faithfulness and experiencing it firsthand.

7. Practice God's Principles: Live selflessly by giving to others, volunteering, and sharing what God has given you. The more you give, the more you will receive.

8. Share the Truth: Seek ways to share the truth about God's kingdom and love with others. Join organizations dedicated to demonstrating God's love

worldwide. Start ministries, lead Bible studies, and fellowship with believers who share similar faith perspectives. Fellowship enhances your knowledge, demonstrates God's love, and brings healing and renewal.

9. Live According to God's Physical Laws: Avoid substances and habits that can harm your body and soul, such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, unhealthy entertainment, addictions, violent games, secular literature, or anything that diminishes God's character.

10. Exercise Regularly: Engage in physical exercises and activities that promote nerve growth and improve emotional regulation, including temper control.



11. Prioritize Rest and Wellness: Ensure you get enough rest, drink water, breathe fresh air, eat well, and sleep adequately to maintain your brain's ability to function effectively.

12. Follow God's Natural Principles: Eat healthy foods, cleanse your body of toxins, get sunlight, and reduce the risk of many diseases.

13. Forgive: Do not hold grudges. Harboring anger creates fear, anxiety, and ultimately reduces your peace and health. Let go of hatred and negative thoughts against others.

14. Release Guilt: Guilt reduces peace, increases anxiety, and affects innocent people around you. Confess your sins, move on with your life believing you are forgiven, and forgive yourself.

15. Confront Fear and Doubt: If fear or doubt tempts you to act against your conscience to gain others' approval, take a step back and reflect:

a. What is the truth? What is right? What is healthy? What is worthy? What should I do?
b. If someone rejects or is angry with you for doing what you believe is right, is this person truly your friend? Do you need their approval?
c. Be willing to let others think or feel about you however they choose. If you think, "If I do what they want, they won't be mad," release them to their opinions, and you will be free from the stress of pleasing others.
d. Remember, love does what is right and reasonable, not just what feels good at the moment. Look beyond the present and follow God's principles, even when they seem difficult.
e. Always FOCUS ON JESUS, live confidently in God's beauty, knowing the truth of His Law of love and His plan for life. With all your heart, long for His Return and seek His Pentecost in your life every day.

Always ask yourself these questions as you progress. Loving God does not mean we never sin—we are human and will make mistakes. Salvation is a gift from God, not a result of our deeds. Our actions are the fruit of salvation. Knowing He saved us frees us from the bondage of idols or other forms of slavery. Who governs my heart?

Where do my thoughts dwell? What do I talk about most? Who do I love and serve with all my strength? If we belong to the Almighty God, our thoughts will be with Him, and our sweetest reflections will focus on Him. We give ourselves and all we have to Him always. We desire to resemble Him, have His Spirit in our hearts, follow His will, and please Him in everything. Those who become new creations in Christ Jesus will indeed bear the fruits of the Spirit!



While exiled on the island of Patmos, John felt that his usefulness to the Lord had reached its limit. However, he was greatly surprised. In those challenging

circumstances, Jesus Christ revealed to John visions detailing future events. God uses whomever He chooses, whenever and wherever He wills. Be hopeful and sharpen your brain so that Jesus can use you—even when things seem impossible!

🌻Let all who visit Christian homes see that prayer time is the most precious, sacred, and joyful moment of the day. These seasons of worship bring refinement, cleansing, and uplifting influence to all who participate. They bring peace and grateful rest to the soul. Morning and evening, heaven watches every praying household. The Angel with the incense, representing the atoning blood, seeks a way to reach God.

🌻Questions: Explain 10 ways to develop your brain, and describe what you are doing today to enhance your brain capacity.

God Bless You Very Much, Child and Youth of Jesus👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Key Text: James 1:5-6

[5,6] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

Prayer: Thank You, Almighty God, for giving us intelligence. Help us to have wisdom and do well in our studies at school. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Place about 20 different items on a table. Ask the children to look at them, then remove them, and see how many items they can remember.

DAY 365 (December 31)

TOPIC: Steps to Success in Your Life



❁Step 1: Wake up two hours before your first appointment or before going to work. Invest the early hours in reading spiritual books—start with the WORD of GOD, then proceed to educational and motivational books. The first hours of the day are the driving wheel for your entire day.

❁Step 2: Write down your main goals every day in a notebook in the present tense every morning before leaving, without looking at what you wrote yesterday. The act of writing and repeating forms a principle that shapes the information guiding your mind. By repeatedly writing down your ten goals each morning, you will continually visualize and think about the opportunities to achieve them. You will become more focused, goal-oriented, and steadfast. This will accelerate your success much faster than if your goals merely drifted through your mind as vague thoughts.

❁Step 3: Plan ahead every day. Prepare a list and prioritize your tasks before leaving home. Your ability to identify priorities and choose what is most important at any given time is the key to organizing your life and increasing your productivity.

❁Step 4: Cultivate the discipline to engage your entire mind in ONE task. Choose the most important thing you can do each day. Then, start with it and work on it until it is 100% complete. Your ability to focus and work on tasks while building this habit will increase your productivity, spiritual growth, efficiency, and positive outcomes.

Step 5: Listen to educational programs on your phone, videos, or radio. Avoid programs that contain profanity, sin, time-wasting content, and foolishness. When you turn your home into a classroom, you receive knowledge equivalent to attending two semesters of school. Many people say that if you spend three hours daily learning a particular subject, after three years, you will possess the knowledge equivalent to a degree in that field. For instance, if you dedicate three hours daily to studying agriculture—reading, researching syllabuses, and practicing—you will acquire the knowledge of an agricultural degree after three years. You may not have a certificate, but your understanding will match that of a degree holder. Many people have transformed their lives through self-education in entrepreneurship, craftsmanship, the Bible, history, and other fields by listening to various audio programs.

Step 6: Always ask yourself two reflective questions, for example, when you meet someone:

1. What did I do well?

2. What can I do differently?
The first question forces you to think deeply and recall all the right things you did the last time you met someone, attended a meeting, made a presentation, or participated in a Bible study—even if the outcome was not successful. The second question compels you to think of different ways to improve your effectiveness in similar situations. Write these thoughts down somewhere. This method is one of the fastest and most important exercises for personal growth and continuous improvement.

Step 7: Treat every person you meet as a precious gem or a valuable treasure—consider them as potential citizens of heaven. Whether at home, school, or the office, and even when visiting others, value each person you encounter. When you treat people as important and valuable, they will reciprocate by valuing you in return. Even the people you meet online can become a significant part of your growth if you take the time to know them. Start with those in your household—express gratitude, maintain a positive attitude, and you will experience peace and joy throughout your day.
Eighty-five percent of your success depends on your relationships with others—avoid being quick-tempered or moody. Love your neighbor as yourself—this is the second greatest commandment. The first commandment is to love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Thank GOD before you sleep and plan how your next day will be—never wake up without a plan or drift through the day aimlessly like a ship without an anchor. Read the book The Atomic Habits of Successful People.

Before leaving home for work, the entire family should be gathered together. The father, or the mother in the father's absence, should earnestly seek GOD's protection for the day. Come humbly and with hearts full of kindness, love, and gentleness—aware of the trials and dangers ahead for you and your children. With faith, entrust your family to GOD's altar, praying fervently for the LORD's protection. Ministering angels will guard the children dedicated to GOD in this way. Every home should be a House of Prayer—if there has ever been a time when every home should be a house of prayer, it is now.

Questions:

1. List three habits of success and explain them.

2. The Second Coming of Jesus is a hope people have had for many years. How are you preparing for the return of Jesus?

God Bless You So Much, Child and Youth of Jesus

Key Text: Ephesians 5:15-16

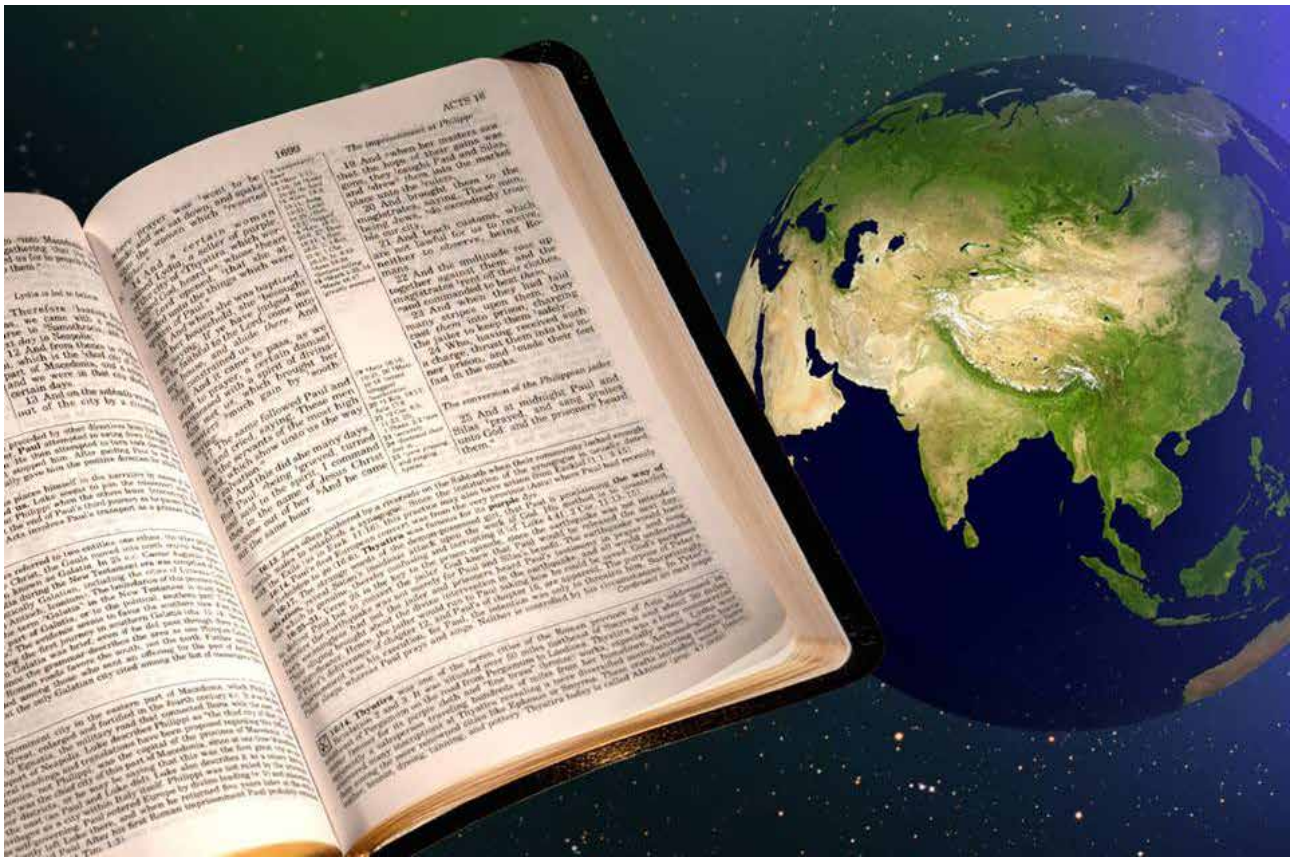
[15,16] See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for giving us time, and for helping us to use it wisely so that we may progress in school and at home. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: Teach about time management. Use a clock and tasks to count, and see who can count or complete activities the fastest.

DAY 366 (December 31)

TOPIC: Methods of Studying the Holy Scriptures:



John 17:3 – "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

1. Reading by Chapter and Analyzing It

Today, read chapter 17 and analyze it.

What is the main idea? (For example, the main idea of Genesis 1 is creation.)

What is the leading subject?

What is the key verse in that chapter?

Which verse do you love the most?

Who are the people involved in this chapter?

What does this chapter reveal about the Lord?

What important example should I follow in my life today? (Personal application)

Are there any promises for me in this chapter?

Is there a responsibility I need to fulfill for someone after reading this chapter?

What are the prayer points from this chapter?

2. Reading by Paragraph

3. Reading by Subject or Theme

For example: the parables of Jesus, the prayers of different people, miracles, stories, and conversations mentioned.

4. Reading by Verses

For example: Romans 8:28.

5. Reading by Words

The Old Testament in Hebrew contains approximately 8,674 words, and the New Testament has about 6,000 words.

6. Reading by People's Prayers

The Old Testament contains eighty-three prayers, while the New Testament has forty-nine prayers.

7. Reading by the Life History of People

For example, King David or Joseph, the husband of Mary. The Bible mentions thirty Zechariahs in the Old Testament and fifteen in the New Testament. There are seven Jonah figures and five Jacobs.

8. Reading by Fulfilled Prophecies

For example, the prophecy in Daniel 2 or 7.

9. Reading All Passages about Christ Throughout the Bible
Luke 24:27 says that the Scriptures and prophets speak about Him.

10. Reading One Entire Book

For example, read the entire book of Matthew in a day and meditate on it.

11. Reading by Questions and Answers

12. Reading by Copying the Entire Bible

As you copy, continue to meditate on it.

The Lord Does Not Accept Routine Family Worship
Often, morning and evening devotions become mere habits—shallow and repetitive—where the spirit of gratitude and a sense of dependence on God are absent. The Lord does not accept such worship. However, He will not despise a humble heart and a broken spirit. Opening our hearts to our Heavenly Father, acknowledging and confessing our total dependence on Him, expressing our needs, and offering worship with loving gratitude—that is true prayer.

Name Two Methods of Studying the Bible That You Plan to Use.

Do you have a Bible?

If not, what is preventing you from having one?

Key Text: John 17:3

[3] "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

Prayer: Our dear Father in heaven, thank You so much for preparing a beautiful place in heaven where we will live with You forever. Thank You that eternal life is not simply living a long time, but knowing You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activity: A short play with crowns and heavenly garments to show life in heaven.

Note: Reading the entire Bible takes only 70 hours—but we must digest it carefully!

References:

Swahili Bible, Swahili Word Project, Union Version, and Bible Society of Tanzania, Dodoma, Tanzania, 1997.

Arthur S. Maxwell, The Bible Story – 10 Volumes, Review and Herald, Hagerstown, Maryland, USA, 1954.

Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, Bedtime Bible Story Book, 1989, Barbour and Company, Inc., Florida, USA.

George W. Knight, The Layman's Bible Handbook: Description of 66 Books, 2003, Barbour Press.

Revival and Reformation.org Bible Blog.

Jack Blanco, Clear Word Devotional Bible, Year and Printing Press.

Revival and Reformation.org Blog.

Grace Momadi-Masaka, Kuzaa na Kulea.

Bible Lessons with the Traveling Pilgrim.

Character Building Stories, Inter-American Division Publishing Association – 4 Volumes.

Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 2000.

George Knight, Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, 2013, Review and Herald.

GotQuestions.org by Michael Houdmann.

Jerry D. Thomas, Messiah: The Simplified Desire of Ages, 2002, Pacific Press, Nampa, Idaho, USA.

MyBibleFirst.org Website.

UNDERSTAND THIS WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE:

God has revealed Himself to His people; it is the history of what God has done and said to His people.

Why the Bible is important:
It is the breath of God's Word, it teaches us who God is, shows us right and wrong, teaches us how to live with others, reveals God's love even to the point of death, teaches us how to repent, helps us not to fear, helps us to talk to God, guides us in making decisions, shows us things about heaven and how to get there, and teaches us how to have joy and gratitude.

The Bible is not just a book for learning but a map for how to live, how to make wise choices, and how to bring joy both here on earth and in eternity. It shows us how to be friends with God and that God loves us deeply.

Where did I come from? Who is God, and what is He like? What is the right thing for a person to do? How can I make friends and take care of them? Why did Jesus die on the cross? How can I be forgiven when I sin or make mistakes? What should I do when I am afraid, anxious, or worried? How do I talk to God? Where is heaven, and how can I have eternal life? How can I be a joyful and thankful person?

A few key teachings to review—based on the lesson:

Promises of God:
Abraham—Promise to have descendants as numerous as the stars (Genesis).

The thief on the cross—Promised eternal life.

God's Commandments:
Mount Sinai—The Ten Commandments were given (Exodus).

The Word of God—Commands, statutes, testimonies, Scriptures (Psalm 119).

Emphasis on Commandments—Mount of Blessing (Matthew).

Sin and Its Consequences:
The first sin (Genesis).
The consequences of sin (Genesis).

Cain—Marked after sinning (Genesis).
The flood—Wickedness was great in those days (Genesis).
Sodom—Destroyed by fire due to wickedness (Genesis).
Aaron—Made a golden calf (Exodus).
Judges—Days when people did what was right in their own eyes (Judges).
Achan—Stole consecrated items (Numbers).
David—Took another man's wife (Samuel).
Ahab—Evil of seizing Naboth's vineyard (Kings).
Manasseh—An evil king (Kings).
Belshazzar—The writing on the wall.
Captivity—Jews taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah).
Saul—Visited the witch of Endor.

The Flood and Its Effects:
Noah and the flood (Genesis).

Tower of Babel—People wanted to discover where the waters came from (Genesis).

Faith:
Abraham—Left Ur and traveled to Canaan (Genesis).
Abraham—Prepared to sacrifice his son (Genesis).
Jericho—The wall fell (Joshua).
The widow of Zarephath—Her oil did not run dry.
The widow's oil—It filled many jars.
The choir—Won a battle under King Jehoshaphat.
Red Sea—Crossed on dry ground (Exodus).
Jordan River—Crossed on dry ground (Joshua).
Jesus' healing—The woman who touched the hem of His garment.

Faithfulness:
Joseph—Faithful at home, in prison, and in Pharaoh's palace (Genesis).
Bezalel—Builder of the Tabernacle (Exodus).
Huram—Craftsman for Solomon's temple.
Talents—Jesus' parable of faithfulness.

Acting Hastily Without Thinking:
Jephthah—Judge who made a rash vow (Judges).
Moses—Killed an Egyptian (Exodus).

Choosing Wisely:
Esau—Sold his birthright for food (Genesis).

Solomon—Asked for wisdom (Kings).
Mary—Chose the better part compared to Martha.

Boasting Is Not Good:
Hezekiah—Boasted instead of giving glory (Isaiah).
Nebuchadnezzar—Lost his mind due to pride (Daniel).

Devotion to God:
Ruth—A Moabite devoted to God (Ruth).
Hannah—Dedicated her son to God (Samuel).
Josiah—A king who repaired the temple (Kings).
Elijah—Defended God on Mount Carmel (Kings).
David—Prepared offerings for the temple (Kings).

Consecration:
Aaron's sons—Consecrated as priests (Leviticus).
Hezekiah—Told the people to cleanse and consecrate the temple (Kings).
Jesus—Blessed the bread and fed 5,000 (Matthew).

Despair:
John—Despaired on Patmos but was comforted (Revelation).
Raising and Teaching Children:
Moses—Good upbringing is vital for a child to love God (Exodus).

Forgiveness:
Peter—Told to forgive as God does.
Jesus—Forgave His tormentors (Matthew, Luke, Mark).
Walking With God:
Enoch—Taken to heaven (Genesis).
Elijah—Taken by God.

Ingratitude:
Nine lepers—Did not return to give thanks.
Absalom—Did not show gratitude after being forgiven.

Conversion:
Nicodemus—A nighttime visitor converted (John).
Samaritan woman—At the well in Sychar (John).
Zacchaeus—A greedy man who became generous (Luke).
Paul—From enemy of Jesus to His champion (Acts).

Marrying Unbelievers:
Ezra—Instructed the people to send away foreign wives (Ezra).

Witnessing to Others:
Abraham—His life was a witness (Genesis).
Queen of Sheba—Came to see God's greatness.
Mount Carmel—People saw who the true God was.
Naaman's servant—Witnessed to her master.
Those healed by Jesus—Testified (Gospels).
Ephesus—Burned books of magic (Acts).
Saul—Transformed to Paul (Acts).
Come to Macedonia—Paul's vision (Acts).

Making Excuses:
The wedding invitation—People gave excuses.

Indecision and Its Dangers:
Felix, Agrippa, and Festus—Missed heaven by a small margin (Acts).

Perseverance:
Paul—Finished his race well (Timothy).
Nehemiah, Ezra, Zerubbabel—Rebuilt the temple and city (Nehemiah/Ezra).

Disobedience:
King Saul—Disobeyed and faced consequences (Samuel).
Uzzah—Touched the ark and died instantly.
David—Numbered the people and faced punishment (Chronicles).
Solomon—Followed his wives into idolatry.
Divided kingdom—Result of disobedience (Kings).
Temple of Solomon—Plundered by Shishak (Kings).
Prophet—Killed by a lion for disobedience.
Many disobedient kings—Zimri, Omri, and others (Kings).
Jonah—Swallowed by a fish for disobedience (Jonah).

Scriptures:
Important for every child to read.
Jesus taught the Scriptures as a child (Luke).
Bereans examined the Scriptures (Acts).
Cleopas—Jesus explained the Scriptures (Luke).
Ethiopian eunuch—Read the Scriptures (Acts).

Heaven:
New heavens and new earth—The city of Jerusalem (Revelation).

Life of Jesus
Birth, resurrection, death, suffering, ascension – Gospels

Angels
Story of Samson – Judges. Night and lions – Story of Daniel and the lions – Daniel. Good news – Angels singing at the birth of Jesus. Two mothers – Mary and Elizabeth when they became pregnant. Angel choir – Birth of Jesus. Joseph – Told to take baby Jesus to Egypt. Peter – Released from prison by an angel – Acts. Paul – An angel tells him no one will perish – Acts. Jesus – Comforted by an angel in the Garden of Gethsemane – John.

Heaven is a Real Place
Dwelling – God has prepared a place for us in heaven – John, Matthew. Heaven – God has prepared a wonderful city – Revelation.

Prayer
The Lord's Prayer – Jesus teaches the disciples to pray – Matthew. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane – John. The Pharisee and the tax collector – Two prayers – Luke. Solomon – Prayer of dedication for the temple – Kings. Elijah – Prayed for rain seven times – Kings. Nehemiah – Prayed for God's help – Nehemiah. Jacob – Prayed and had his hip dislocated – Genesis.

God's Mercy
Jacob's ladder – Angels ascending and descending – Genesis. Jonah's vine – Withered in one day – Jonah. Dying on the cross – And His love – Entire Bible.

Repentance
David – His confession – Psalms and Kings. The prodigal son – Returned and confessed – Luke.

The Holy Spirit
Gifts – Promised by God – Acts.

Sabbath
Day of remembrance – Genesis. Manna – Did not fall on the Sabbath – Exodus. What to do on the Sabbath – Gospels. Jesus – Went to the temple and rested in the tomb – Gospels.

Secrets of Happiness
Mount of Blessings – Read His teachings – Matthew 5-7.

Greed
Ahab – Coveted Naboth's vineyard – Kings. Gehazi – The prophet's servant coveted Naaman's belongings – Kings.

Baptism
John the Baptist – Jordan River – Matthew. The Ethiopian eunuch – Baptized – Acts.

Complaining
The Israelites – Complained about food, water, and everything – Books of Moses. Moses' siblings – Questioned why God spoke through Moses alone. Canaan – The journey took 40 years instead of two weeks – Exodus.

Courage
David's 30 mighty men – Kings. David – A courageous young man anointed as king – The shepherd who fought a bear and a lion – Samuel. Zelophehad's daughters – Five brave women who changed history. Jonathan – The brave prince who won a battle. David – Rescued captives from the Amalekites. Zerubbabel – Encouraged to be strong – Nehemiah. Esther – Made a bold decision to approach the king – Esther. Paul and Silas – Sang courageously in prison.

Lies or Deceit
Lies – Cause pain, as in the case of Jacob – Genesis. Moldy bread – Deception.

God's Leadership/Miracles
Animals – Entered Noah's ark by themselves – Genesis. All the miracles performed for the Israelites – Bible. Aaron's staff – Budded – Leviticus. Joshua – Met the Commander of the Lord's army – Joshua. Gideon – The sign of the fleece – Judges. Samuel – Led to choose a king – Samuel. Esther – Became queen – Esther. The Magi – Guided to see Jesus – Matthew. Jesus – Taken to Egypt by His parents – Matthew. Nebuchadnezzar – Forgot his dream – Daniel. Jebus became Jerusalem. Return from Babylon – Led by Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Joshua – Ezra.

Generosity
Offerings – The Israelites gave so much they were told to stop. Barnabas – And others sold their properties to give.

Heavenly Character
Those who do good to Jesus – Matthew 25.

Humility
Salome – Asked for her sons to have high positions – Luke. Jesus – Washed His disciples' feet – Humility is essential. The Pharisee and the tax collector – Praying in the temple.

Impartiality
Peter – Realized God shows no favoritism to Cornelius – Acts. James – And the apostles wrote a letter to the Gentiles – Acts.

God's Love and Greatness
God – Sent His Son – Gospel. Jesus – Lived among people, healed, and helped them – Gospels. Parables of Jesus – The prodigal son, the lost sheep – Gospel. God is love – Letters of John. The Last Supper. Jesus – Died on the cross for our sins.

God's Care
Noah – Cared for by God in the ark – Genesis. Joseph – Cared for through hardships in slavery – Genesis. Moses – Protected as a baby – Exodus. Balaam – His donkey spoke – Numbers. David – Spared from Saul's hands – Samuel, Kings. Elijah – Fed by ravens – Kings. Elisha – Protected by an army. Josiah – Hidden in the temple. Paul's nephew – Helped save Paul from 470 men – Acts. Haman – His plot to kill the Jews failed – Esther. Mordecai – Exposed those plotting to kill the king – Esther. Jesus – His birth and life – Gospels.

God's Power
Walking on water – Matthew. Jordan and the Red Sea – Parted and walked on dry ground. Joshua – The sun stood still – Joshua. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – In the fiery furnace – Daniel. An ax head floated – Kings. The sun went backward – During Hezekiah's time. The wedding at Cana – John. All miracles in the Scriptures.

Spirit of Friendship
Jonathan and David – Kings. Isaac – Persisted in digging wells.

God the Creator
God – Created the heavens, life, the earth, and everything – Genesis.

Consequences of Jealousy
Haman – Tried to kill the Jews – Esther. Joseph – Sold into slavery by his brothers – Genesis. Michal – Placed an idol in bed – Samuel. David – Took Goliath's sword.

Plan of Salvation
Passover – Blood on the doorpost – Exodus. The bronze serpent – Moses lifted it – Numbers. Rahab – The red cord – Numbers. Jesus – The Lamb of God – Gospels.

Kindness Never Fades
Rebekah – Helped water the camels – Genesis. Rachel – Helped Jacob – Genesis. The Shunammite woman – Helped Elisha and was blessed in return. Ebed-Melech – Helped Jeremiah – Jeremiah. Mephibosheth – Helped by David for Jonathan's sake.

Call from God
Moses – Called to serve God – Exodus. Samson – A Nazarite called to serve God – Judges. Samuel – Called to serve God – Samuel. Elijah – Heard God's still small voice – Kings. Isaiah – Called to serve God. Jeremiah – Called to be a prophet – Jeremiah. Jesus – Called to begin His ministry – Matthew, Luke. Apostles – Called to be fishers of men – Matthew, John, Luke. Angels – Call people to fear God – Revelation.

Jesus Is Coming Again
Signs of Jesus' return – Matthew. How Jesus will return – Gospels. The manner of Jesus' coming – Revelation.

Fulfilled Prophecy
The great statue – Kingdoms ruling the earth – Daniel. Strange beasts – Kingdoms ruling the earth – Daniel. Jesus' birth – Fulfilled prophecy – Gospels.

Jesus' Healing
All the miracles of Jesus – Gospels.

Obedience and Faithfulness
Noah – Built the ark – Genesis. Abraham – Father of faith – Genesis. Faithful youth in Babylon – Daniel. Job – Faithful to God – Job.

Tithing
Abraham – Gave tithes to Melchizedek – Genesis. Windows of heaven – God will open – Malachi.

DAILY BIBLE STORY READING PLAN

(More than 407 Stories for One Year – 366 Days)

1. The Beginning or Creation – Genesis
2. The Creation of Man – Genesis 1 & 2 (Approximately 4000 B.C.)
3. The Seventh Day and Rest for Mankind – Genesis 2
4. The Seventh Day and Rest for Mankind – Genesis 2
5. Satan Falls from Heaven – Revelation 12, Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14, John 3:14-20
6. The Punishment for Rebellion – Genesis 3
7. The First Child and the First Death – Genesis 4
8. The Life of Enoch – Genesis 5-8
9. Noah, the Ark, and the Flood – Genesis 6-8 (Approximately 2348 B.C.)
10. The Tower of Babel – Genesis 9-11
11. Abram – The Father of Faith – Genesis 13-14 (Approximately 2000 B.C.)
12. The Birth of Ishmael and the Promise of Isaac – Genesis 15-17
13. Abraham Speaks with God and the Rain of Fire – Genesis 18 and 19
14. The Birth of Isaac – Genesis 20 and 21
15. Abraham's Great Test – Genesis 22-24
16. A Wife for Isaac – Genesis 24
17. Sibling Rivalry and the Birthright – Genesis 25
18. Jacob Takes Esau's Blessing – Genesis 27 and 28
19. Jacob's Family – Genesis 29-31
20. Wrestling at Night – Genesis 31-33
21. Joseph and His Brothers – Genesis 35-39
22. Joseph is Released from Prison – Genesis 40-41
23. Jacob's Sons Go to Buy Grain – Genesis 42-43
24. Jacob Reunites with Joseph – Genesis 44 and 45
25. Jacob's Family Moves to Egypt – Genesis 45 and 46
26. Jacob Blesses His Sons – Genesis 49 and 50
27. The Birth of Moses – Exodus 1 and 2
28. Moses and the Burning Bush – Exodus 3 and 4
29. Before Pharaoh – Exodus 5-7 (Approximately 1400 B.C.)
30. The Plagues of Egypt – Exodus 8-11
31. The First Passover – Exodus 12 and 13
32. Crossing the Red Sea – Exodus 14
33. Bitter Water and Manna Bread – Exodus 16
34. Water from Meribah and Delegation of Leadership – Exodus 17 and 18
35. The Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (Horeb) – Exodus 19 and 20
36. Laws and Judgments – Exodus 20 and 21
37. Build Me a Sanctuary – Exodus 24-27
38. The Sin of Worshiping the Golden Calf – Exodus 32 and 33

39. Moses Goes Up the Mountain Again – Exodus 34 and 35
40. Reasons for the Sanctuary – Exodus 25, Leviticus 16 and 22
41. Consecration of the Priests – Exodus 28, 27, 39, and 28
42. Services of the Sanctuary – Exodus 27, 35-40, Leviticus 1 and 8, and Numbers 10
43. Holiness of the Priestly Ministry – Leviticus 1-10
44. The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 16
45. Clean and Unclean – Leviticus 11-19
46. God and His Complaining People – Leviticus 26, Numbers 1, 7, and 11
47. Moses' Siblings and Their Rebellion – Numbers 12 and 16
48. The 12 Spies – Numbers 13-15
49. Water from Meribah Causes Moses to Miss Canaan – Numbers 20
50. Journeying and Continuing Challenges – Numbers 21-26
51. Offerings, Festivals, and the Census of Israel – Numbers 26-31
52. The Book of Deuteronomy
53. The Death of Moses – Numbers 27 and Deuteronomy 31-34
54. Rahab and the Scarlet Cord – Joshua 1-3
55. Miraculous Crossing of the Jordan River – Joshua 3-5
56. Joshua Meets the Commander of the Lord's Army – Joshua 5 and 6
57. Achan's Sin of Greed – Joshua 7
58. Joshua Is Deceived by the Gibeonites and the Sun Stands Still – Joshua 10-21
59. Joshua's Final Days – Joshua 21-24
60. The Judges – Joshua 24 and Judges 1
61. The First Judges and Israel's Rebellion – Judges 3-6
62. Gideon and His 300 Men – Judges 6-9
63. Jephthah and His Vow of Sacrifice – Judges 9-13
64. Samson, the Nazarite of God – Judges 13 and 14
65. Samson's Riddle – Judges 14-16
66. The Death of Samson – Judges 16
67. Micah's Idol Temple – Judges 17 and 18
68. Evil in Israel – Judges 19-21 (circa 1400-1000 BC)
69. Naomi Returns Home – Ruth 1
70. Boaz Marries Ruth – Ruth 2-4
71. The Boy Samuel – 1 Samuel 1-3
72. Samuel as a Child in the Temple – 1 Samuel 2-3
73. The Philistines Capture the Ark (Ichabod) – 1 Samuel 4-7
74. Samuel, Israel's Last Judge – 1 Samuel 7-9
75. Saul Anointed as King – 1 Samuel 9-12
76. Saul's Sin of Offering Sacrifices – 1 Samuel 13-14
77. God Regrets Choosing Saul – 1 Samuel 15-16
78. David Chosen as King – 1 Samuel 16-17 (circa 1000 BC)
79. David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17

80. The Deep Friendship of David and Jonathan – 1 Samuel 18-20
81. Saul Kills 85 Holy Priests and Their Families – 1 Samuel 20-22
82. Abiathar Flees to David – 1 Samuel 22-24
83. David, Nabal, and Abigail – 1 Samuel 25
84. Saul Hunts David Again – 1 Samuel 26-28
85. The Witch of Endor – 1 Samuel 29-30
86. Satan's Deception About Communicating with the Dead – 1 Samuel 29 and 30
88. The Death of Saul – 1 Samuel 30-2 Samuel 1-3, 1 Chronicles 10
89. David Reigns Over Hebron and All Israel – 2 Samuel 3-5
90. David's Kindness to Mephibosheth – 2 Samuel 8-10
91. David's Great Sin – 2 Samuel 11
92. David's Punishment – 2 Samuel 12
93. David's Genuine Repentance – Psalms 32 and 51
94. Evil Within David's Household – 2 Samuel 12-13
95. Absalom, David's Son, and Joab His Nephew – 2 Samuel 14
96. Absalom's Rebellion – 2 Samuel 15
97. Absalom Fights Against His Father – 2 Samuel 15-18
98. The Death of Absalom – 2 Samuel 18-19
99. David's Return to the Throne – 2 Samuel 19-21
100. David's Mighty Warriors – 2 Samuel 22-23
101. David Counts Israel – 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21
102. Solomon's Coronation – 1 Kings 1
103. Psalms – Songs and Worship – Psalms 1-150
104. Solomon and His Father's Instructions – 1 Kings 2-3
105. The Lord Appears to Solomon – 2 Kings 3 and 2 Chronicles 1
106. Words of Wisdom – Proverbs
107. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
108. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
109. Building the Temple – 1 Kings 5 and 2 Chronicles 1, 3
110. Completion of the Temple – 1 Kings 6-8
111. The Dedication of the Temple – 1 Kings 8-9 and 2 Chronicles 4-6
112. The Lord's Response to Solomon – 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles 7 and 9
113. Song of Songs or Song of Solomon
114. Solomon Turns Away from God – 1 Kings 11
115. Rehoboam, Solomon's Son, Inherits Judah – 1 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 9-11
116. The Kingdom of Israel Divides – 1 Kings 12 and 1 Chronicles 10
117. Jeroboam's Withered Hand – 1 Kings 13 and 2 Chronicles 13
118. Kings of Judah and Israel – 1 Kings 14, 15, and 2 Chronicles 10
119. Kings and the Prophet Elijah the Tishbite – 1 Kings 15-17 and 2 Chronicles 16
120. The Widow's Son of Zarephath is Raised – 1 Kings 17

121. The Prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel – 1 Kings 18
122. Elijah Loses Courage and Flees – 1 Kings 19
123. Elijah Anoints His Successor – 1 Kings 20
124. Naboth's Vineyard – 1 Kings 21
125. The Last Days of Ahab – 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18
126. Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah, and Elijah – 1 Kings 22, 2 Kings 1, and 2 Chronicles 17-19
127. The Prophet Elijah is Taken to Heaven – 2 Kings 1 and 2
128. Mischievous Children are Punished – 2 Kings 2-3
129. The Widow's Oil and the Shunammite Woman – 2 Kings 4-6
130. Poisonous Food and the Sunken Axe – 2 Kings 4-6
131. Commander Naaman and the Slave Girl – 2 Kings 5
132. Naaman's Leprosy Transfers to Gehazi – 2 Kings 5
133. Chariots of Fire – 2 Kings 6
134. The LORD Fights for Israel – 2 Kings 6-7
135. Hazael Becomes King of Aram – 2 Kings 8
136. The Reign of Jehu – 2 Kings 9-10
137. Joash – The Child King – 2 Kings 11-13; 2 Chronicles 24
138. The Choir that Won the Battle – 2 Kings 19-20
139. The Evil Years of the Kings – 2 Kings 14-15 and 2 Chronicles 25-28
140. More Kings – 2 Kings 15 and 2 Chronicles 28
141. The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel – 2 Kings 15-17
142. King Hezekiah – 2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-37
143. Hezekiah's Illness – 2 Kings 20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 38-39
144. King Manasseh and Josiah – 2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33
145. Josiah's Reforms – 2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34-35
146. The Final Kingdom of Judah – 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 35; Isaiah 45
147. Ezra – Priest and Scribe of the Word of God
148. Ezra the Priest and Nehemiah the Leader Under the Persian Government
149. Nehemiah – The King's Friend
150. The Prophet Isaiah
151. More Messages from Isaiah
152. The Message of the Prophet Jeremiah – Baruch the Scribe – 625 BC
153. More Messages from Jeremiah
154. The Prophet Ezekiel in Exile in Babylon Around 600 BC
155. The Message of Ezekiel Continues
156. Esther Becomes Queen of the Persian Empire, Which Ruled the Whole World Around 478 BC
157. Esther and the Jews Hold Special Prayers – Esther 4-7
158. Mordecai is Promoted, and the Jews Defend Themselves – Esther 8-10
159. The Man of God, Job
160. Daniel Goes into Exile – Daniel 1
161. The Lesson on Food – Genesis 1:29 and Daniel 1

162. The King's Dream – Daniel 2
163. The Kingdoms That Will Rule the World – Daniel 2
164. The Importance of the Prophecy in Daniel 2
165. Forced to Worship the Golden Image – Daniel 3
166. King Nebuchadnezzar Lives in the Wild – Daniel 4
167. The Hand Writes on the Wall – Daniel 5
168. Daniel is Thrown into the Lions' Den – Daniel 6
169. Strange Beasts – Daniel 7
170. The Interpretation of Daniel's Dream in Chapter 7
171. The Vision of the Ram and the Goat – Daniel 8
172. Daniel Continues to Receive Prophetic Revelations – Daniel 9
173. The Prophecy of 2300 Days Revealed – Daniel 9
174. Knowledge Will Increase, and People Will Travel Here and There – Daniel 10-12
175. God's Love for His People – Hosea, Around 750 BC
176. The Message of Joel, Around 930 BC
177. The Prophet Amos
178. The Message of Micah
179. Jonah – The Prophet Swallowed by a Fish
180. Jonah Inside the Fish
181. Rebuilding the Temple – Haggai, Around 538 BC
182. The Message of the Prophet Nahum
183. Obadiah – The Day of the LORD
184. Habakkuk – Vision and Hope
185. The Message of Zephaniah
186. Zechariah – A Message to Those Returning from Exile
187. Malachi – The Message of Reform, Around 420 BC

NEW TESTAMENT – AFTER THE BIRTH OF JESUS (ISA, SON OF MARY)
Jesus Changed the Course of World History – From "Before Christ (BC)" to "After Christ (AD)"

188. Has God Forgotten Us? People Asked After the Silence
189. The Harmony of the Four Gospels
190. Jesus Existed Always and Lives Forever
191. The Prophecy of the Birth of Jesus the Messiah and Our Lord – Luke 1
192. The Birth of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah – Luke 1
193. The Birth of Jesus the Messiah and the Son of God – Luke 2 and Matthew 2
194. The Wise Men from the East Visit Jesus – Matthew 2
195. Jesus is Blessed in the Temple at 40 Days Old – Luke 2
196. Jesus in the Temple at Age 12 – Luke 2
197. The Childhood of Jesus and John the Baptist – Luke 3, Matthew 3, and

Mark 1
198. Jesus is Anointed Through Baptism in the Jordan River – John 3, Mark 1, Luke 3
199. Jesus is Tempted by Satan in the Wilderness – Luke 4, Matthew 4
200. The Calling of the First Disciples I – John 1
201. The Calling of the First Disciples II – John 1
202. Jesus Performs His First Miracle at the Wedding in Cana – John 2
203. Jesus Overturns the Temple Tables and Cleanses the Temple – John 2
204. Nicodemus, the Nighttime Disciple of Jesus – John 3
205. The Samaritan Woman at the Well – John 4
206. John is Imprisoned and Killed – John 3, Luke 3, and John 4
207. Jesus Begins His Ministry in Nazareth – Luke 4, Matthew 4
208. Jesus is Rejected in Nazareth – Luke 4
209. The Fishermen Are Called Again to Be Disciples – Luke 5
210. Matthew is Called to Be a Disciple and Hosts a Farewell Feast – Luke 5
211. What to Do on the Sabbath – Luke 6, Luke 13, and John 5
212. Healing on the Sabbath – Luke 6, Luke 13, and John 5
213. The Narrow Door to Enter Heaven – Luke 13
214. The Mount of Blessings – Beatitudes, Salt, and Light – Luke 6, Matthew 5-7
215. The Mount of Blessings – The Law and Living a Christian Life – Luke 6, Matthew 5-7
216. The Beatitudes – Blessed Are Those Who… – Matthew 5
217. The Lord's Prayer – The Prayer Jesus Taught Us – Matthew 6
218. Ask and You Shall Receive, Seek and You Shall Find, Knock and the Door Will Be Opened – Luke 11 and Matthew 7
219. The Centurion's Servant is Healed – Luke 7
220. Mary Magdalene and the Anointing of Love – Luke 7, John 12
221. Martha and Mary – The Two Sisters Who Served Jesus – Luke 10
222. The Sower – Jesus Teaches in Parables – Mark 3 and 4
223. The Storm Obeys Jesus – Mark 4, Matthew 8
224. The Twelve Apostles Go Out to Minister – Matthew 10, Luke 9
225. Jesus Sends Out Seventy Disciples on a Mission – Luke 10
226. The Good Samaritan – A Man of Compassion – Luke 10
227. God Encourages Us to Seek His Kingdom First – Matthew 10
228. The Cost of Being a Disciple of Jesus – Luke 12, Luke 14, and Matthew 10
229. The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Precious Pearl or a Fishing Net – Matthew 13
230. Five Loaves and Two Fish Feed Thousands – Matthew 14, Mark 6
231. Peter Walks on Water – Mark 6
232. Some Disciples Turn Back and Others Abandon Jesus – John 6
233. The Woman Caught in Adultery – John 8
234. A Blind Man is Healed – John 9

235. The Healed Blind Man is Cast Out of the Synagogue – John 9
236. The Good Shepherd – Jesus Cares for His Sheep – John 10
237. The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead – John 11
238. Jesus Blesses Children – Mark 10, Luke 18
239. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16.
240. Giving Thanks. Luke 17.
241. Sin Can Follow a Person to Church. Luke 18 and 21.
242. Zacchaeus, the Short Man, Climbs a Tree. Luke 19.
243. The Faith of the Persistent Woman. Matthew 15.
244. The Feeding of 4,000 with Loaves and Fish (Second Time). Mark 7-9.
245. Carrying the Cross and Denying Oneself. Mark 8, Matthew 17.
246. The Disciples Fail to Cast Out a Demon. Mark 9, Matthew 17.
247. Who Is the Greatest in the Kingdom of God? Mark 9.
248. Is It Lawful to Divorce or Separate? Mark 10.
249. Let the Little Children Come to Me. Matthew 13, Mark 10.
250. The Rich Young Ruler. Mark 10, Matthew 13.
251. The Workers Hired in the Morning and Evening Are Paid Equally. Matthew 20.
252. Sitting at the Right or Left Hand in Heaven. Matthew 20, Mark 10.
253. Blind Bartimaeus. Matthew 17, Luke 19.
254. Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes? Matthew 22 and 24.
255. We Must Forgive Others as God Forgives Us. Matthew 18.
256. Hosanna, Blessed Is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord. Matthew 21.
257. The Fig Tree Withers. Matthew 21, Luke 20.
258. The Parable of the Vineyard Owner and the Wicked Tenants. Matthew 21, Luke 20.
259. The Sadducees, Marriage, and the Resurrection. Luke 20.
260. Which Is the Greatest Commandment? Matthew 22.
261. Woe to the Pharisees. Matthew 23.
262. The Pharisees. Matthew 23.
263. Jesus Is Coming Soon—What Are the Signs of His Coming? Matthew 24.
264. Signs of the End Times. Matthew 24.
265. The Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins. Matthew 25.
266. Using Our Talents for Profit. Matthew 25.
267. The Passport to Heaven. Matthew 25.
268. Jesus Raises Lazarus. John 10 and 11.
269. They Plot to Kill Jesus. John 11 and 12.
270. The Greeks Seek Jesus. John 11 and 12.
271. The Wedding Banquet Invitation. Matthew 22, Luke 16.
272. The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. Luke 14.
273. The Prodigal Son or the Son Who Ran Away. Luke 15.
274. The Lord Washes Feet. Matthew 26, John 13.
275. The Last Supper. John 13.

276. Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled. John 14.
277. Jesus, the True Vine. John 15, 16.
278. Jesus' Prayer for All of Us. John 17, Luke 22.
279. Jesus Is Arrested. Luke 22.
280. Jesus Before Pilate. Luke 22.
281. The Crown of Thorns. John 19.
282. Jesus Dies on the Cross. John 19, Matthew 27.
283. The Burial of Jesus. Luke 23-24, Mark 15, Matthew 27.
284. The Resurrection of Jesus. Mark 16.
285. The Road to Emmaus. Luke 24.
286. Peter and John Go to the Tomb to Verify. John 21, Luke 24.
287. Jesus Appears to His Disciples for 40 Days. Matthew 28, Acts 1, John 21.
288. Jesus Strengthens Peter. John 21.
289. Jesus Ascends to Heaven. Matthew 28, Luke 24, Mark 16, Acts 1.
290. What Is Jesus Doing in Heaven Now? We Have a Friend in Heaven.
291. Sharing the Story of Salvation in Three Minutes!
292. Waiting for the Holy Spirit/Pentecost in Jerusalem. Luke 24, Acts 1-2.
293. Pentecost. Acts 1.
294. Peter Preaches. Acts 2.
295. The Lame Man Jumps for Joy. Acts 3.
296. The Apostles Imprisoned for the First Time. Acts 4.
297. Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5.
298. The Apostles Imprisoned Twice. Acts 5.
299. Stephen Is Martyred. Acts 6.
300. Saul Persecutes the Saints and the Church. Acts 8.
301. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8.
302. Saul Encounters Jesus. Acts 9.
303. Tabitha (Dorcas), a Kind Woman, Is Raised from the Dead. Acts 10.
304. Cornelius, a Gentile—His Prayers Are Heard. Acts 10.
305. God Shows No Favoritism. Acts 10.
306. Peter Is Freed from Prison by an Angel. Acts 11-12.
307. Jews Reject the Gospel—Christianity Spreads to the Gentiles. Acts 13-14.
308. Paul Is Stoned in Lystra. Acts 14.
309. The Jerusalem Council Writes to Gentile Believers. Acts 15.
310. Paul and Silas Sing in Prison. Acts 16.
311. Those Who Turned the World Upside Down. Acts 17.
312. Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos. Acts 18.
313. Books of Sorcery Are Burned. Acts 19.
314. Ephesus and Their Goddess Artemis. Acts 19.
315. Paul Bids Farewell to Believers. Acts 20.
316. Paul Is Arrested. Acts 21.
317. Paul Defends Himself and Recounts the Gospel. Acts 21-22.
318. The Pharisees and Sadducees Argue Over Paul. Acts 22-23.

319. Paul Is Escorted to Caesarea by the Army. Acts 23.
320. Paul Before Governor Felix. Acts 24.
321. Paul Appeals to Caesar Before Agrippa. Acts 24-25.
322. Paul Shares His Testimony Again. Acts 26.
323. Paul Almost Persuades King Agrippa. Acts 26-27.
324. Shipwreck and Swimming to Shore. Acts 27.
325. On the Island of Malta. Acts 28.
326. Paul Testifies in Rome and Writes Letters to the Churches. Acts 28.
**327. The Letters of Paul, the Apostles, Jude, and James.
328. Romans – We Are Saved by Faith in Jesus Alone, Not by Works of the Law.
329. 1 Corinthians – Addressing the Problems of New Believers.
330. 2 Corinthians – When We Are Weak, Then We Are Strong.
331. Galatians – The Fruit of the Spirit Versus the Works of the Flesh.
332. Ephesians – Relationships Between Parents, Children, Husbands, Wives, Masters, and Servants.
333. Philippians – Rejoice in the Lord Always; Again, I Say, Rejoice.
334. Colossians – As You Received Christ, Walk in Him.
335. 1 Thessalonians – Pray Without Ceasing.
336. 2 Thessalonians – If Anyone Will Not Work, Neither Shall He Eat.
337. 1 Timothy – Qualifications of a Pastor and a Deacon.
338. 2 Timothy – I Have Fought the Good Fight, I Have Finished the Race, the Crown Awaits Me.
339. Titus – The Character of a Pastor and an Elder.
340. Philemon – Forgive Onesimus and Accept Him as a Brother.
341. Hebrews – Jesus Is Superior to All Things.
342. James – Faith Without Works That Please God Is Dead.
343. 1 Peter – (Various Teachings on Christian Living)
344. 2 Peter – (Warnings and Encouragement for Believers)
345. 1 John – Behold the Amazing Love! God Is Love.
346. 2 John – (Encouragement in Truth and Love)
347. 3 John – I Pray That You Prosper in All Things.
348. Jude – God Is Able to Keep Us from Falling If We Allow Him.
349. Revelation – God's Side Wins; He Will Judge and Reward the Saints. Revelation 1-2.
350. The Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Revelation 2-3.
351. Who Is Worthy to Open the Scroll? Revelation 5, 8-10.
352. Satan and His Angels Cast Down to Earth. Revelation 12.
353. The First and Second Beasts. Revelation 13.
354. The Four Angels and 144,000 Saints. Revelation 14-17.
355. Avoiding False Teachings. Revelation 18-20.
356. Hell (Part I).
357. Hell (Part II).
358. Behold, the Dwelling Place of God Is with Men. Revelation 21.

359. Heaven Forever and Ever. Revelation 22.
360. The New Jerusalem Descends—Every Knee Shall Bow and Every Tongue Confess. Revelation 20-22.
361. The New Jerusalem Descends—Every Knee Shall Bow and Every Tongue Confess.
362. Christian Education Is Eternal and the Best Knowledge of All.
363. Making Friends with God.
364. How God Loves Humanity.
365. The Great Controversy Is Over—Every Creature, Living and Non-Living, Declares That God Is Love.
366. Train Your Mind to Think Big and Deep—Focus on the Creator, and You Will Become a Genius! Steps to Success in Life.

Forty different people have written similar thoughts.

The Bible we use today is a copy of a copy. There are no original manuscripts written by the original authors. The King James Version of 1611 is 400 years old and was revised 240 years ago. Regardless of the version you use, most people care more about how you live the Word than which version you read! How do you interpret the Word of God in your life? Are you a true Christian, or are you just pretending? Will you be a faithful interpreter of the Scriptures?

Respect, Courtesy, Good Manners, PROPER BEHAVIOR (ETIQUETTE)

HOW TO HAVE GOOD MANNERS

- Respect God.
- Respect others.
- Respect yourself.
- Respect other people's property.
- Be a good steward of God's creation and possessions.

These principles encompass everything about good behavior, and everyone remembers these things! That is the summary of GOOD MANNERS.

WHAT IS ETIQUETTE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS?

Children and adults should know:
A child's mischief is not always intentional. Sometimes, children do not realize that it is rude to interrupt, pick their noses, or speak loudly when they see a woman with one leg walking ahead of them! With the daily struggles of life, busy parents often lack the time to focus on teaching good manners. However, if you emphasize these 36 essential lessons, you will raise a well-mannered, kind, and lovable child by God's grace. We know that parenting involves one sinner raising another sinner—but God's grace is sufficient for the journey!

36 ESSENTIAL MANNERS TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN:

1. When asking for something, say "Please."
2. When receiving something, say "Thank you."
3. Do not interrupt adults who are speaking unless it is an emergency. They will address your issue when they finish talking.
4. If you need to get someone's attention immediately, saying "Excuse me" is the most polite way to enter their conversation.
5. When in doubt about doing something, ask for permission first. It can save you from much sorrow later.
6. The world does not care about what you dislike. Keep negative opinions to yourself or share them privately with friends—but not in front of adults. Avoid being a complainer.
7. Do not comment on other people's appearance unless it is a compliment. If you have concerns, address them privately and lovingly.
8. When people ask how you are, respond politely, and ask them how they are in return.
9. When spending time at a friend's house, thank their parents for hosting you.
10. Knock on closed doors and wait for a response before entering—especially at restrooms.
11. When making a phone call, introduce yourself first and then ask to speak with the person.
12. Be grateful and say "thank you" for any gift you receive. Sending a handwritten thank-you note can leave a lasting impression.
13. Never use foul language in front of adults. They already know all those words, and cursing is neither pleasant nor necessary.
14. Do not call people hurtful names (Colossians 4:5-6).
15. Do not mock anyone for any reason. Mocking others reflects your weakness and is a form of cruelty (Ephesians 4:29).
16. Even if a performance or gathering is boring, remain quiet and respectful. Performers and speakers put in effort, even if their views differ from yours.

17. If you accidentally bump into someone, say “Sorry” immediately.
18. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Do not pick your nose in public. Avoid urinating in public unless it is an emergency.
19. When going through a door, check if you can hold it open for someone behind you.
20. If you see a parent, teacher, or neighbor working on something, offer to help. If they accept, assist them—you may learn something new. Sometimes, offer help without waiting to be asked.
21. When an adult asks for your help, do it cheerfully and without complaining.
22. Always thank people who help you. This encourages them to assist you again—especially teachers at school, church, and the community. Sending a thank-you note is a kind gesture.
23. Use cutlery properly. If you do not know how, ask your parents or observe adults.
24. Place a napkin on your lap during meals and use it to wipe your mouth if needed.
25. Do not reach across the table; ask for items to be passed to you.
26. Greet people warmly. While handshakes have been limited due to COVID-19, still acknowledge people who greet you.
27. Avoid anger and conflict. If disagreements arise, seek peaceful solutions and be a peacemaker (Colossians 1:20-21).
28. Be kind and courteous to the poor, needy, strangers, widows, and orphans.
29. Respect everyone and know how to speak appropriately to your elders (2 Kings 2:23-24; Leviticus 19:32).
30. Do not be lazy. Always be hardworking and avoid living off others’ labor (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10).
31. Respect other people’s spouses in both words and actions. Avoid immoral behavior.
32. Respect the lives of others and all living creatures. Do not harm them unless they are pests like rats, mosquitoes, or cockroaches (1 Corinthians 13:5).
33. Respect other people’s property when visiting them (Philippians 2:3).
34. Follow the rules of any house you visit. Ask for permission if necessary before taking their children or giving them food or gifts.
35. Treat others as you would want to be treated (1 Peter 3:8).
36. Show kindness even to those who do not deserve it. Your kindness may humble and teach them (Luke 6:32).

VARIOUS SNACKS

Important Considerations in Music Ministry

1. Music for believers should reflect reverence and honor during worship, aligning with the Scriptures and avoiding content that contradicts the Word of God.
2. Musical instruments should blend harmoniously without overpowering the lyrics, which convey God's message.
3. Church music should express joy and enthusiasm for being in God's presence (Revelation 7:12).
4. Ensure a balance between the message, vocal arrangement, and sound for clarity and understanding.
5. Choir members and singing groups should wear uniforms or modest, respectful attire when presenting themselves before the congregation and God.
6. Music and singing in worship are like a thanksgiving offering to God for creation, His protection, and eternal salvation. Remember that a choir of 4,000 people served as ministers before the Lord.
7. Let us restore the principles of early Adventist music (Jeremiah 6:16). May God bless you.

MAY GOD BE WITH US.

**Table
Wherever we go to others, we do these 21 good deeds as if we are at our own home.

If we violate or forget the 21 rules of this House, we accept disciplinary actions and instructions from God.

Bible Promises We Should Claim in Prayer

Promises of the Holy Spirit

"Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain, the Lord who makes lightning; and He will give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the

field.” — Zechariah 10:1

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” — Luke 11:13

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you… And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” — John 14:26; 16:8

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” — John 14:12–14

“So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” — Zechariah 4:6

Promises That God Answers Prayer

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” — John 15:7

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” — Hebrews 4:16

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” — Mark 11:24

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” — Psalm 50:15

“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.” — Matthew 18:19

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” — Matthew 21:22

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” — John 14:13–14

“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” — John 16:23–24

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” — 1 John 5:14–15

Promises About God’s Power

“Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” — Genesis 18:14

“The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” — Exodus 14:14

“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.’” — Mark 10:27

“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:24

“I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.” — Job 42:2

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?” — Romans 8:31–32

“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” — Numbers 23:19

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their

strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." — Isaiah 40:28–31

Promises of God's Guidance

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." – Joshua 1:9

"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." – Genesis 28:15

"Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared." – Exodus 23:20

"But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." – Deuteronomy 4:29

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know." – Jeremiah 33:3

"Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." – Isaiah 40:4-5

"I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with My loving eye on you." – Psalm 32:8

"The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." – Deuteronomy 31:8

"Who is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose." – Psalm 25:12

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." – Proverbs 3:5-6

"If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen

your bones. You shall be like a well-watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail." – Isaiah 58:10-11

"They will go out and look on the carcasses of those who rebelled against Me. The worms that eat them will not die, and the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind." – Isaiah 66:24

Promises of a Changed Heart

"I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart." – Jeremiah 24:7

"The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and live." – Deuteronomy 30:6

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." – Ezekiel 36:26

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." – Philippians 1:6

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." – 2 Corinthians 5:17

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." – Galatians 2:20

"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. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." – 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Promises of Forgiveness

"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and heal their land." – 2 Chronicles 7:14

"For You, Lord, are good and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You." – Psalm 86:5

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” – Mark 11:25

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” – Ephesians 4:32

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” – 1 John 1:9

“Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” – Isaiah 1:18

“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” – Isaiah 43:25

“For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” – Jeremiah 31:34

“In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of His grace.” – Ephesians 1:7

Promises of Victory Over Sin

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” – 1 John 5:4

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” – Romans 8:37

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 15:57

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” – Isaiah 41:10

“Above all, take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” – Ephesians 6:16

“For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” – Philippians 2:13

“I say then: Walk by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” – Galatians 5:16

“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” – Romans 16:20

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.” – Romans 12:2

Promises of Healing

“If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.” – Exodus 15:26

“Your strength will equal your days.” – Deuteronomy 33:25

“Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all His benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”
—Psalm 103:2-5

“Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and shun evil.
This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.”
—Proverbs 3:7-8

“He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem.
Surely He took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered Him punished by God,
stricken by Him, and afflicted.

But He was pierced for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on Him,
and by His wounds we are healed."
—Isaiah 53:3-5

"Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for You are the One I praise."
—Jeremiah 17:14

"But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds,' declares the Lord,
'because you are called an outcast,
Zion for whom no one cares.'"
—Jeremiah 30:17

"Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it;
I will heal My people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security."
—Jeremiah 33:6

"But for you who revere My Name,
the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.
And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves."
—Malachi 4:2

"Is anyone among you sick?
Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them
and anoint them with oil in the Name of the Lord.
And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well;
the Lord will raise them up.
If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."
—James 5:14-15

Promises for Strength to Do God's Will

"Therefore we do not lose heart.
Though outwardly we are wasting away,
yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.
For our light and momentary troubles
are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.
So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,
but on what is unseen,

since what is seen is temporary,
but what is unseen is eternal."
—2 Corinthians 4:16-18

"Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
—Galatians 6:9

"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength."
—Philippians 4:13

"For it is God who works in you
to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose."
—Philippians 2:13

"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you,
for My power is made perfect in weakness.'
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses,
so that Christ's power may rest on me."
—2 Corinthians 12:9

Promises About Being Witnesses for God

"Do not tremble, do not be afraid.
Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?
You are My witnesses.
Is there any God besides Me?
No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."
—Isaiah 44:8

"Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."
—Isaiah 60:1

"All this is from God,
who reconciled us to Himself through Christ
and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."
—2 Corinthians 5:18

"But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, "I am too young."
You must go to everyone I send you to
and say whatever I command you.'"
—Jeremiah 1:7

“But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.”
—Acts 1:8

“But you are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God’s special possession,
that you may declare the praises of Him
who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”
—1 Peter 2:9

“Always be prepared to give an answer
to everyone who asks you
to give the reason for the hope that you have.
But do this with gentleness and respect.”
—1 Peter 3:15

The Fundamental Teachings of the BIBLE

The Church accepts the Bible as its only statement of faith and holds the Fundamental Teachings of Faith to be the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as outlined here, represent the Church’s understanding and expression of the teachings of the Scriptures. Revisions of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session of the worldwide Church when the Church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds more suitable language to express the teachings of God’s Holy Word.

1. Holy Scriptures:
The Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and infallible revelation of God’s will and an accurate account of His acts throughout history.
(2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

2. The Trinity:
There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever-present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by all creation.
(Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

3. The Father:
God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers displayed in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.
(Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Exod. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son:
God the Eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. Through His miracles, He manifested God's power and was attested as the promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place. He was raised from the dead and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary on our behalf. He will return in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.
(John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

5. The Holy Spirit:
God the Eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings, and those who respond are renewed and transformed into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be with His children always, He bestows spiritual gifts upon the Church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and guides it into all truth in harmony with the Scriptures.
(Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Matt. 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Matt. 28:19; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)

6. Creation:
God is the Creator of all things and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made "the heavens and the earth" and all living things on the earth and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus, He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished, it was "very good," declaring the glory of God.
(Gen. 1; 2; Exod. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

7. The Nature of Humanity:
Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power to think and act. Though created as free beings, each person is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence on Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred, and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God, in Christ, reconciled the world to Himself, and by His Spirit restores in penitent humans the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him, love one another, and care for their environment.
(Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Matt. 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

8. The Great Controversy:
All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict began in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led a portion of the angels into rebellion. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of God's image in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and, ultimately, its devastation during the global flood. Observed by the entire created universe, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, from which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this conflict, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them on the path of salvation.
(Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Pet. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ:
In Christ's perfect life of obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life and the entire creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides forgiveness. Christ's death is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement, it ensures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow.
(John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

10. The Experience of Salvation:
In infinite love and mercy, God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit, we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ, we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit, we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him, we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment.
(2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:4-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

11. Growing in Christ:
By His death on the cross, Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subdued demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made their ultimate doom certain. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. As we continually surrender to Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, or a life without meaning. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into His likeness, communicating with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and His providence, singing

His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience.
(Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil. 3:7-14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Matt. 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:38, 39; 1 John 4:4; Heb. 10:25.)

12. The Church:
The Church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In continuity with God's people in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world, and we join together for worship, fellowship, instruction in the Word, the Lord's Supper, service to all humanity, and the proclamation of the gospel to the world. The Church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The Church is God's family; adopted by Him as His children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The Church is the body of Christ, a community of faith with Christ Himself as the Head. The Church is the bride for whom Christ died to sanctify and cleanse her. At His victorious return, He will present to Himself a glorious Church, the faithful of all ages, purchased by His blood, without spot or wrinkle, but holy and blameless.
(Gen. 12:3; Matt. 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15; 3:8-11; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:13-20; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18.)

13. The Remnant and Its Mission:
The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, during a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant proclaims the arrival of the hour of judgment, salvation through Christ, and the nearness of His second coming. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14 and coincides with the investigative judgment in heaven, which leads to repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.
(Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Pet. 1:16-19; 2 Pet. 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

14. Unity in the Body of Christ:
The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ, we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, nationality, social status, wealth, gender, and other differences must not divide us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has united us into one fellowship with Him and with each other. We are to

serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, we share the same faith and hope and give a united witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.
(Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Matt. 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27-29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

15. Baptism:
Through baptism, we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We become His people and are received as members of His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is performed by immersion in water and is based on a public declaration of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance from sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings.
(Romans 6:1-6; Colossians 2:12, 13; Matthew 16:30-33; 22:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19, 20.)

16. The Lord's Supper:
The Lord's Supper is a communion symbolizing the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Savior. In this fellowship experience, Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we joyfully partake, we proclaim the Lord's death until He returns. Preparation for the Lord's Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Lord commanded the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in humility, reflecting the spirit of Christ, and to unite hearts in love. The Lord's Supper is open to all Christian believers.
(1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Matthew 26:17-30; Revelation 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries:
God bestows spiritual gifts upon all members of His church in every generation, and each member is called to use these gifts in loving service for the common good of the church and humanity. Given by the Holy Spirit, who distributes them according to His will, these gifts provide the abilities and ministries needed for the church to fulfill its divinely ordained mission. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include faith, healing, prophecy, preaching, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and selfless service to help and encourage people. Some members are called by God and equipped by the Spirit for recognized ministries such as pastoral work, evangelism, mission work, and teaching, especially to prepare believers for service, to build the

church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity in faith and knowledge of God. When members use these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from destructive influences of false teachings, grows through divine increase, and is strengthened in faith and love.
(Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:9-11, 27, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-16; Matthew 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. The Gift of Prophecy:
One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of the Spirit of Prophecy. As the Lord's messenger, these writings are a source of continuing and authoritative truth that provides the church with comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also clearly affirm that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.
(Joel 2:28, 29; Matthew 2:14-21; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 12:17; 19:10.)

19. The Law of God:
The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and were exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These commandments form the basis of God's covenant with His people and are the standard of God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, they point out sin and awaken a sense of the need for a Savior. Salvation is entirely by grace and not by works, but its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. Obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives and strengthens the Christian witness.
(Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 40:7, 8; Matthew 22:36-40; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Matthew 5:17-20; Hebrews 8:8-10; John 15:7-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Romans 8:3, 4; Psalm 19:7-14.)

20. The Sabbath:
The gracious Creator, after six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and established the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchanging law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest, worship, and ministry, in harmony with the teachings and practices of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of joyful communion with God and with one another. It is a sign of our redemption in Christ, a mark of our sanctification, a token of our obedience,

and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's acts of creation and redemption.
(Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Luke 4:16; Isaiah 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Matthew 12:1-12; Exodus 31:13-17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Hebrews 4:1-11; Leviticus 23:32; Mark 1:32.)

21. Stewardship:
We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time, opportunities, abilities, possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and to our fellow human beings and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His Church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God to nurture love and to overcome selfishness and greed. Stewards rejoice in the blessings that come to others as a result of their faithfulness.
(Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Malachi 3:8-12; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14; Matthew 23:23; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Romans 15:26, 27.)

22. Christian Behavior:
We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with heavenly principles. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord, we must engage only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusements and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress should be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not come from outward adornment but from the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the healthiest diet possible and abstain from unclean foods as defined in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, misuse of drugs, and other addictive substances are harmful to our bodies, we are to avoid them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness.
(Romans 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:6; Ephesians 5:1-21; Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31; Leviticus 11:1-47; 3 John 2.)

23. Marriage and Family:
Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus as a lifelong union between a man and a woman in a loving relationship. For Christians,

marriage is a commitment to God and to each other and should be entered into only by partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the foundation of this relationship, reflecting the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the bond between Christ and His Church. Concerning divorce, Jesus taught that anyone who divorces a spouse, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, those who give themselves fully to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the Church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall help each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to raise their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words, they are to teach that Christ is a loving, tender, and caring disciplinarian who desires the children to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the distinguishing marks of the final gospel message.
(Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:21-33; Matthew 5:31, 32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11; Exodus 20:12; Hebrews 6:1-4; Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Proverbs 22:6; Malachi 4:5, 6.)

24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary:
There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not man. In it, Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry when He ascended to heaven. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, He entered the second and final phase of His atoning ministry, which is a work of investigative judgment. This work of judgment reveals to heavenly beings who among the dead are asleep in Christ and are thus, in Him, deemed worthy of the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and are, in Him, ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Coming.
(Hebrews 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Daniel 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Leviticus 16; Revelation 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

25. The Second Coming of Christ:
The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church and the grand climax of the gospel. The Savior's return will be literal, personal, visible,

and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living, will be glorified and taken to heaven, while the wicked will die. The near fulfillment of most prophecies, along with the current state of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is near. The exact time of this event has not been revealed, and therefore we are urged to be ready at all times.
(Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:43, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

26. Death and Resurrection:
The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day, death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked, will occur a thousand years later.
(Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)

27. The Millennium and the End of Sin:
The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time, the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be desolate and void of human life, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At the end of the millennium, Christ, His saints, and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The wicked dead will be raised, and together with Satan and his angels, will surround the city. But fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. Thus, the universe will be free from sin and sinners forever.
(Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Ezek. 28:18, 19.)

28. The New Earth:
In the new earth, where righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will be no more. The great controversy will be over, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love, and He shall reign forever. Amen.
(2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)

ALPHABET OF CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING

Or the 21st-century parent? I'm sharing a few insights—this book is available online for free.
(The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.)

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO MAKE THE IMPORTANT THING THE IMPORTANT THING.

2. WHEN A CHILD IS IN THE MOTHER'S WOMB
3. STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
4. CHILDREN IN THE BIBLE
5. COW'S MILK OR MOTHER'S MILK?
6. THE CHILD AT SCHOOL
7. WHY DID GOD GIVE US CHILDREN?
8. THE CHALLENGES OF PARENTING
9. SEX EDUCATION FOR YOUTH
10. FAMILY PRAYERS (WORSHIP)
11. OTHER HOUSEHOLD ROUTINES
12. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN
13. HOLY MARRIAGE
14. DIVORCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
15. GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS
16. ESTABLISHING FAMILY VALUES
17. ADULT CHILDREN
18. CUTTING THE UMBILICAL CORD
19. ADULT CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME
20. CHILDREN'S HEALTH
21. IN-LAWS AND CO-PARENTING (HEALTH)
22. FATHERS AND CHILD-REARING
23. MOTHERS AND CHILD-REARING
24. CHOOSING A LIFE PARTNER
25. ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND FRIENDS
26. FASHION-RELATED ILLNESSES (IKKCW)
27. DISCIPLINE
28. POVERTY AND THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT
29. HELPING WITH CHORES, SERVICE, TEACHING SKILLS, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
30. CHILD ABUSE (IKKCW)
31. MUSIC, WITCHCRAFT, AND OTHER INFLUENCES
32. CHILDREN AND MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY (IKKCW)
33. SINGLE PARENTING
34. TEACHING CHILDREN AT HOME
35. AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS FOR CHILDREN

36. THE WORD OF GOD
37. PRAYER
38. MORE THAN 101 THINGS WE ADVISE YOU TO DO WITH YOUR CHILDREN
20 Things That Encourage Good Behavior in Children
39. PARENTS' HEALTH
41. RAISING BOYS TO BE LEADERS
42. RAISING GIRLS ACCORDING TO PROVERBS 31 (IKKCW)
43. CONCLUSION OF THE MAIN THING IN PARENTING

A.Questions and Answers for Parents and Children

B.Guidelines for Various Services

RAISING A BOY TO BECOME A PRIEST TO LEAD HIS HOME

(or raising a child to be a layperson – written for boys by parents)

Many have written books on raising boys for believers. Raising a girl is not significantly different from raising a boy, except where gender roles differ, as God has instructed us. God is the ultimate parent, and the Scriptures are the primary parenting manual—everything else supplements it. The most important thing in raising our children is to help them live independently of us. They must learn to navigate life through relationships with God, the community (school or work), the church, and their families.

The heavens and the earth are a boy's first books before he learns to read or write, as Psalm 19 states. Psalm 144:12-15 says:
"May our sons in their youth be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters like pillars carved to adorn a palace. May our barns be filled with every kind of provision. May our sheep increase by thousands, by tens of thousands in our fields; may our oxen draw heavy loads. May there be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets. Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord."

God's definition of a man goes beyond physical appearance. Ezekiel 22:30 tells us that a man stands in the gap to repair what is broken. Being a man according to God's Word means growing spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. A child grows properly at home, in the community, at school, and in the church.

Once we have children, we must plan because God has entrusted us with them as stewards. They are like a garden that we must cultivate until they grow and mature. We cannot simply sit back and assume things will happen by themselves. Food and clothing are not enough to complete a child's upbringing.
Our sons will become leaders in their communities, priests in their homes, and our brothers in heaven one day. We are preparing our sons to be husbands, fathers, and believers in the household of God. This is a lifelong journey that requires significant time and is firmly rooted in the foundation of God's Word.

God's Word is the beginning and the end of parenting (the Alpha and Omega). It is the only true security for both parents and children. May you reap the fruits of your labor and faithfulness to God; may you help your children become responsible individuals who bear much fruit in righteousness. Luke 2:52 says, "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

The teenage years do not have to be marked by rebellion; instead, they can be a time of productivity for the child, the parents, and the community. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for one day, “Your father and mother will rejoice; she who gave you birth will be joyful.” As parents, we should take our children to gospel or lay ministry seminars and involve them in the work we do for the Lord so they learn through action and grow to love God’s work.

Raising a God-fearing son requires commitment because today’s boys face challenges in developing diligence in academics and manual labor. About 90% of farmland in Africa is cultivated by older women, and approximately 80% of congregants in places of worship are women, who also show greater enthusiasm for education and reading in many countries.

In the past, subjects like mathematics or physics were considered masculine, and boys generally scored higher in these areas. However, research by Dr. Nedley in the United States indicates that these trends are shifting, with girls now performing as well as boys. He adds that many boys today feel less motivated to strive for excellence because finding a wife no longer requires the traditional bride price, making marriage easier.

Nowadays, girls are the ones pursuing boys. This dynamic reduces boys’ sense of responsibility, motivation, and ambition. Dr. Nedley also points out that many boys rely on their parents or wives for financial support well into adulthood. If a wife eventually leaves, she often takes the children, leaving the husband to return to his parents and depend on them.

A boy is created in God’s image and was made before the woman. His primary purpose on earth is not just to reproduce but to give glory to God, have dominion, and subdue the earth. Our sons must understand this first and foremost. The boy was given the task of tending the garden even before humanity’s fall. Obedience to God and to parents is the first lesson for our sons—followed by discipline, skill, education, self-control, and manual labor. These qualities teach self-denial, self-discipline, and the responsibility of providing for a family.

In African traditions, the eldest son was the one who cared for his parents and was relied upon by his sisters and younger siblings as a provider, counselor, and leader. This responsibility has been diminishing to some extent.

Although these statistics are from the United States, the trends often influence other regions. The U.S. often sets social standards—sometimes negative ones, like the normalization of homosexuality—that other cultures follow without

much resistance. Today's media, especially television, acts as a surrogate parent to many children, which is dangerous because much of the content promotes questionable values in speech, dress, and behavior.

In the past, calling a boy a "girl" was considered an insult. Today, even intelligent and strong boys are adopting immoral behaviors like homosexuality—something that was once taboo even among non-believers. In countries like the Philippines, reports indicate that the nation leads in gender reassignment surgeries for men who believe their lives will become "easier" if they become women. This reflects a misunderstanding of God's created order: man was created first, he is the head, and he is to be respected by the woman. Furthermore, the first sinner was a woman—a fact that should not inspire admiration from anyone.

Herod killed male children. Pharaoh also knew that by eliminating male children, he could destroy a nation. Even Balaam caused the death of 24,000 men of Israel, knowing that by eliminating the men, he would finish the nation. God has given male children and men gifts and responsibilities that women were not given, so when raising boys, we must consider this. Fathers should spend time with their sons and teach them through actions. It is said that many fathers spend less than four minutes a day talking to their children.

We must be intentional in choosing many things, such as friends, the music we listen to, the books we read, the education we pursue, the church we attend, the clothes we wear, and much more. Parents should read the Word of God to find answers and proper standards. We should also strive to mature as believers and serve together. Even careless parents can raise children who love God. We see Timothy, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice helping Timothy become a hero who served many as a layman and later as a pastor.

You must have goals and plans for a year. You cannot do everything at once—create a step-by-step plan for what you want to achieve instead of stumbling in the dark until the children leave home. Young children are like sponges that absorb a lot of knowledge. They retain much of what they learn in science and memory work. Use this time to teach them from the book of creation and the world. The teachings of 1 Corinthians 13 on love are essential for both children and us.

Always teach our children about God's creation and not evolution. This should be a priority (1 Corinthians 3:19). Utilize the help of grandparents to assist with the children. Children should be taught how to build a house, sew, cook, farm, and other skills. Teach children to speak in public, manage their

time, and evaluate their progress. Celebrate their achievements. Teach them about biblical heroes like David, Noah, and Abraham. Ask your child who their heroes are—are they movie characters or video game figures? How can they be a light or a beacon in their home?

Read books like "10 Boys Who Changed the World," by Irene Howard. Does your child admire people who do not love God, like Samson loved the Philistines? What kind of books are they reading?

A man's life is full of decisions and actions based on those decisions. We should prepare our young men to take responsibility by making the right choices. Prepare them well, then allow them to make decisions, and when they make mistakes, let them learn to correct them. Learn even from small creatures like ants and from biblical figures such as young Joseph, Jethro, Abigail, the Good Samaritan, Boaz, and others.

Can your child handle responsibilities when you are absent? Do they greet people? Do they do household chores? Observe if they manage their time well and keep their belongings organized and clean. Do they know how to solve problems, or do they forget their responsibilities? Do they understand that time is valuable and avoid procrastination?

Take your child to observe court proceedings appropriate for their age and discuss common cases. Read stories like those of Achan and Samson and discuss them. Does your child make excuses, exaggerate, or break promises? Do they take other people's belongings without permission? Do they love gossip and bear false witness?

We should not shield our children too much from pain or failure. Sometimes they must fail to learn, but they should not fear trying again. Read about David's thirty mighty men (1 Chronicles 11). Also, study the heroes of the Reformation, such as Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, Knox, and Huss. Can your child accept correction and learn from it? Do they have the courage to admit their sins, repent, and leave them behind? Can they confess when they are wrong? Do they fear people more than God?

A man is the head of the family, just as Christ is the head of the Church. Look at the character of men like Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, and David. Abraham was praised as a hero because "I have known him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." A son should thoroughly understand the major teachings of the faith and distinguish them from false doctrines because he will be a priest in his home and perhaps even in the church. He should question pastors and

spiritual leaders about their beliefs—what is the gospel, and how does it impact their lives?
Deuteronomy 6:7-8 instructs us to teach children and ensure they memorize these truths. Parents should help their sons become teachers.

Learning leadership is vital. In 1 Kings 3:9, Solomon prayed, “Give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?” Here, Solomon asked for wisdom and leadership. We should model to our sons how to be fair judges. When we discipline them, we uphold God’s law and guide them in the Lord’s instructions. Teach them to reconcile with friends when conflicts arise so they can do the same with their children when they err against God’s law.

Ensure that your discipline reflects your love. If your punishment exceeds your love, there is a problem. We acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes in parenting, but discipline should be loving and corrective rather than rooted in anger. Do not punish a child while angry—wait until you have calmed down, then talk with them and administer discipline. They should understand what they did wrong and how to make it right.

Can your child lead others humbly, delegate tasks, and follow through to completion and evaluation? Refer to resources like the “Brother Offender Checklist” and “21 Rules of This House” available online. Have a “Court of the Home” to decide which actions require punishment and which need warnings. Study the punishments of prophets, biblical figures, and apostles. List the sins your child struggles with, plan appropriate discipline, and define the consequences of ignoring correction.

What are the responsibilities of authority, and how should we treat authority figures? Can your child teach others, such as leading a children’s class or youth group at church?

A boy should be taught not to covet other people’s possessions and to be grateful for what he has, for godliness with contentment is a great blessing. We came into the world with nothing, and we will leave with nothing. When he makes mistakes, he should be taught to ask for forgiveness. Since he will one day be a leader, he should be taught to exercise authority and responsibility with wisdom. Examples of those who misused power include the Pharisees, while those who used power wisely include Noah, Job, Elijah, and others. He should understand that authority means being a servant to the people, not a dictator who oppresses others. He should learn to work with his own hands to provide for himself and others.

He should start fasting and praying when he reaches about twelve years old, for many things are impossible without prayer and fasting. He must understand that his wife and children will need clothes, food, and shelter, which is reason enough for him to learn to pray and fast.

Straying or moral decay begins slowly, like a thermometer rising, so he should realize that over time, he may find himself far from the right path. He should learn from wise men with good character, for these men have experienced both victories and failures, allowing him to avoid missteps and sinking into ruin. Temptations often appear attractive but do not reveal the whole truth. He should not attempt to fight temptations by himself but should ask God for the strength to obey and avoid invitations to do evil, for the battle belongs to God when one chooses to follow His law.

Why is it advisable for a young man to avoid engaging with rock music and dance music? Because such music often carries evil; many artists who perform it promote rebellion against God's laws, engage in idol worship, indulge in alcohol or drugs, and unknowingly teach dark matters. This music diminishes spiritual sensitivity, increasing anxiety and restlessness.

Education is valuable, but start reading books early before life becomes challenging. Explain this to the young man as well. For instance, he should not wait to read a book on how to have a successful marriage after divorcing his wife—he should read it before marriage. Being educated and being knowledgeable are two different things; one can earn advanced degrees and still lack wisdom. Similarly, making money and working are different things. The Word of God is proven to be beneficial in all aspects—for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness—so that a person may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

A child should learn to obey authority because he may one day hold a leadership position. One cannot lead others without first knowing how to follow. The Holy Scriptures tell us to respect and obey those who lead us, so their work will not be difficult or burdensome, for they will give an account for their actions. Consider the services the government provides for its citizens. While we recognize that some leaders are corrupt, most leaders provide vital assistance, and we cannot live without leadership. If parents make the work of leaders difficult or treat them with contempt, children will imitate that behavior.

Forgiveness is essential for a young man. Holding onto unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die. Moreover, we must remember that we, too, have wronged others and received forgiveness. He

should be free from those who have hurt him, not their prisoner. Furthermore, we are forgiven as we forgive others. A young man should learn to forgive and tell God about the pain in his heart, asking Him to remove it. He should be honest with God, for the Lord has the power to take away all bitterness and hatred, and he will be surprised at how light his heart becomes. His wife, children, and even his parents may hurt him, but he must learn how to resolve such conflicts. We are told that they are fragile vessels, so we need wisdom to deal with them. He should entrust his problems to the Almighty, and if the burdens return to his mind, he should keep giving them to God until they are gone.

Holding onto grudges and hatred is utterly destructive. How can we remove evil thoughts? Evil thoughts come to everyone, but how do we eliminate them? Many people fail to deny themselves and end up speaking, thinking, or doing anything they please. Does he struggle with uncontrollable anger or bad thoughts? Psalm 119:110 tells us to store God's Word in our hearts to overcome evil thoughts. Like Joshua, we should choose daily whom we will serve. If we choose to serve the Lord, He will help us overcome evil thoughts. We must take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Finally, we should focus on things that are good, praiseworthy, and honorable.

A child's curiosity should be nurtured so that he can invent and discover things. Give him tools and time; do not worry too much if he breaks things or spends time experimenting. The people who have invented great things in the world needed time, trust, and freedom from pressure. For a child to become an inventor, he needs knowledge in different fields of study. God is the greatest inventor—do not waste your time inventing evil things that will destroy people, like those who created nuclear bombs. Try to provide durable, long-lasting items that are strong and few in number.

The greatest quality in invention is perseverance. Thomas Edison conducted 1,000 failed experiments before inventing the light bulb and other things. He discovered 1,000 ways not to succeed. Do not give up when you fail—learn from mistakes and keep moving forward until you find the answers.

A young man is created to invent songs, programs, tools, methods, art, books, devices, and more. Strive to be an inventor, as God designed you to be—to serve the world and live a meaningful life. However, do not neglect your physical health; exercise regularly to avoid becoming weak from spending too much time indoors without sunlight and fresh air.

A young man should learn endurance and how to maintain friendships. He

should not be quick to anger or fail to repair broken relationships. As human beings, we often fail in many ways, but courage and persistence are essential. Even God has not abandoned us despite our failures, and He continues to restore the brokenness that began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). From Genesis 4 until today, His restoration work continues.

Where should I belong? Sometimes you may feel like you do not fit in anywhere. Ultimately, heaven is our true home, where we will find our permanent residence. Do not waste time trying to "fit in" here on earth, for the Almighty has gone to prepare a place for us. Often, we will feel like strangers here, but we should set our minds and goals on that heavenly country. It is better to live as a stranger here while preparing for heaven than to feel at home and eventually face eternal sorrow.

Righteousness is crucial; otherwise, a young man becomes a slave to his desires and a lack of self-denial. Treating all people justly and loving others is vital. King Solomon judged with wisdom, but when he began to indulge himself by marrying many wives, he lost his sense of justice and damaged his relationship with God. Sometimes young men think such downfalls cannot happen to them. However, if we believe we are immune, we claim to be wiser than Solomon, stronger than Samson, and love God more than David.

Life is about working, studying, building, investing—don't be lazy and idle. Don't sit lazily at the "jobless corner" until your clothes tear at the back—that is not God's plan for a young man. A young woman can marry a man with means, but as a young man, you are the provider. It is shameful to prey on a wealthy woman just to make your life easier. If it is God's plan for it to happen that way, you should still be diligent and a provider so that you are not despised by your wife or in-laws.

If you want to become an engineer, you must start studying math and science today. If you want to be a priest, start planning to study God's commandments. God created us to be doers, not spectators.

Learn to read the Word of God. When you wake up, the goal is not how many pages you have read but your relationship with God. God wants to talk to you about things that matter to you (concerns); He wants to know your dreams. God has the power to stir up a weak man or boy to get out of bed and read His Word. Pray and ask Him to help you wake up and read. The Creator wants to be close to you—allow Him.

Often in life, people will fail to understand us. Being misunderstood—if you are falsely accused—learn to hold your tongue and speak only the truth until

the accusations pass. Being falsely accused is an opportunity for God to teach us patience, humility, and forgiveness. Even the Lord was falsely accused and slandered. Instead of getting angry and shocked, stay calm and ask the LORD for strength. Have peace in your heart, knowing that God understands and knows your inner motives. Doing good is a weapon. The Almighty uses it to counter the falsehoods people accuse you of or the labels they place on you.

Sometimes you will not understand and will get tired of being falsely accused or misunderstood, but remember, we are in a great conflict between good and evil. Satan has accused God of being unjust, and some have believed it; but one day soon, God's character will be cleared of all blemishes.

Strive not to work just to play. Many men think that work is simply a way to earn money to buy toys and entertain themselves on their days off. Men have expensive "adult toys" like luxury cars, motorcycles, boats, and other costly things. Remember that working to earn a living is important, but there is also other work—helping the widows, the poor, and orphans. This is also important for bringing healing to others. Use your talents and skills to make the world a better place.

To provide for your needs, your parents work hard. A good child does not want to take the work or wealth of their parents and waste it on their pleasures. When you inherit property, be careful to use it to help others and future generations. We are saved by grace, not by our works, so let us think of others and the next generation.

Does a young man fear darkness, dogs, high mountains, or spiders? Overcoming fear is part of growing into manhood. You may not eliminate all fear, but you will thrive and overcome your environment, even while having some fears.

Moses had this fear—Exodus 3-4. Joshua was told, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." A man overcomes his fears by knowing that the Almighty is present and that He is capable. The Almighty knows what you need, and He will give you courage and confidence—but not arrogance. Victory is sweeter when you work for it. "I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and you have overcome the evil one."

Every man faces fear at some point—you cannot overcome if you have no enemies to fight against. Every man faces challenges. The key is to conquer the small, everyday battles within your heart. There will be days when you won't want to work, but you will have to. Victory comes especially when you treat anger, greed, and lust as your enemies.

Ninety percent of the fears we have are about things that will never happen. The remaining ten percent you will face—and you may lose a few battles—but if you keep fighting with strength, you will win.

Selfishness should be forbidden, and if you struggle with it, you do not have to remain that way all your life. A young man will become a leader of his household and perhaps a nation, planning to help others. If he is selfish or self-centered, he will harm many. Many of those who support the social welfare of a nation are men—so a young man must learn to reject selfishness.

Mothers generously give food or small household items, but men handle major plans to assist society and even entire nations. In times of disaster or calamity, they often rescue many. We must teach our young men not to have a "me-first" attitude.

A young man should pray and be honest with the Almighty: "I am selfish, I think of myself more than others. I know You don't want me to be this way—please open my eyes to see the needs of others so that I may be helpful. I ask to have a character like Yours."

Imagine how your father feels when he comes home—can you help him with something? Can you ease your mother's burden? When you visit someone, look for ways to help instead of sitting in the corner waiting to be served. Use your time to serve others—it will help you overcome fear and selfishness.

Do not be ashamed of your pain or sorrow—start helping others. Every visionary leader must think about serving people. Selfish people lack courage. Brave people do not wait for grand opportunities to be heroes—they seize the small, daily chances that arise. These give you opportunities to be brave or cowardly.

Learn to love certain things. Many young men complain: "I don't like the rain, I don't like this job, I don't like the hot sun, I don't like this city, I don't like this village, I don't like this, I don't like that!" If you want to enjoy the greatness and goodness of God, learn to love what He has openly given you to love. You have a choice—to complain and grumble with a sour face or to love what you have been given. But there is no need to wear a gloomy face all day.

One man said that as a child, he hated tomatoes. But when he got married, his wife cooked with tomatoes. He asked, "Why are there tomatoes in my food?" But his wife didn't change anything. Eventually, he started liking them—and now he even misses them when they're not there. However, we say do not love evil or unhealthy things. Still, there are many things you can learn to

tolerate—and you might even find that you love them.

Many people have grown to love mushrooms or avocados, even though they couldn't eat these foods when they were young due to their attitudes. Maturity and growth involve embracing both the bitter and the sweet. Don't just force yourself to "eat tomatoes"; instead, learn to love them. God has many good things in His kingdom, and we shouldn't turn up our noses and say, "I don't like how it tastes," because God has allowed us to eat.

To become a man, every boy must learn to endure pain. It is part of life, bringing wisdom, strength, and skill. A child who does not deny himself cries out over small pains and thinks more about his happiness than his responsibilities. Instead of working in the field, he thinks about how hot the sun is or how tired he feels. Instead of giving up a seat for an elderly mother, he thinks about his comfort and entertainment. If he scratches his hand a little, he refuses to wash the dishes. Life holds much greater pains than small scratches. All creation groans with some form of pain—whether spiritual, physical, or mental. Many people are hurt simply by someone speaking unkind words—not just you! So, do not pity yourself when you are in pain, because every creature experiences pain.

A man must learn how to endure pain; he cannot hide or avoid it. Without pain, there are often no fruits or progress. Pain is universal and is usually temporary. But in heaven, there is no pain. What hurts us today may be gone tomorrow—so don't dwell on your pain. Pain also has its limits, even when it feels unbearable. Pain cannot do whatever it pleases to us because the Almighty controls and knows the limits of our endurance, giving us only what we can bear. God knows the length and weight of every pain and has allowed it to come to us; 1 Corinthians 10:13. As the story of Job shows, God did not allow Job to suffer beyond what he could endure. Pain has a certain beauty—God does not allow it without a purpose. And sometimes, we are counted worthy to suffer with Christ.

When someone close to us hurts our hearts—whether through misunderstanding or unmet expectations—it wounds us more deeply. David said, "If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers."

How you respond to people who hurt and offend you reveals whether you are growing as a man of God or are focused only on yourself and your pain. Cry out to God for comfort, and don't make a big fuss over small pains or get

angry when things don't go your way.

Many people seek to avoid pain, but few of them are fit for the kingdom of God. If you are physically injured, go to the hospital to get stitched or have a broken bone set—but don't show your wounds to everyone. A man must be brave and not constantly seek pity from others. Instead of always focusing on your wound, find people to serve and shift your thoughts away from yourself and your pain.

For emotional pain, don't be like a dog that licks its wounds all day—instead, "overcome evil with good." Even the Lord, "for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." There is a time to weep and a time to laugh. I do not believe the saying that "a man does not cry," because even the Lord wept—but He did not cry over His own sorrows, but for others. Crying can ease the pain of the heart. So, there is a time to hold back, and there is a time to cry—and the Lord will help His children to know the difference, so they are not people who cry over everything or hold everything inside and suffer silently.

How can you prepare yourself now to live well with a wife in the future? You might think you are still too young to consider this and laugh at the idea—and it is true that it is not yet time to marry. However, you can prepare yourself now mentally so that, in the future, you will be a happy husband with a joyful marriage. It is not about rushing to get married, but it is wise to be ready, whether you marry or receive the calling to be celibate.

Learn the tasks that men do to help their sisters or mothers—such as changing a tire, repairing the house, unclogging a toilet, applying fertilizer, beekeeping, herding livestock, uprooting stumps, using a hammer and pliers, building animal pens, selecting seeds for planting, killing rats, or pruning fruit trees.

How you treat your sisters and mother now is the best training for marriage. Let your younger siblings be happy to have a big brother—love them, and let them love you too. The way you build relationships with your sister or mother is how you will build relationships with your wife. Do not be arrogant so that your sisters fear you and cannot share their hearts with you. Be gentle so that they trust you, and when they share their problems, take the challenge to solve them quietly without bragging.

Do you know what your sisters like or dislike? Do you understand their dreams and their fears? What hopes do they have for today or tomorrow? If you are proud and harsh, they will hide things from you. If your sister wants to learn a musical instrument, take the challenge to help her get one. Your sisters are

your training ground for learning how to provide for your future family.

David's courage to defeat Goliath did not appear suddenly—it started when he fought lions and bears. Likewise, serve your sisters and mother. Do not mock, humiliate, or compete with them to prove your strength. Be a team with them—if there is food, let them have the bigger portion, and you take the smaller one. Give them the better seat.

Have you thought about reading the Word of God with your sisters and younger siblings? Do you pray with them? Praise them when they do good, and when they do wrong, forgive them, help them improve, and cover their faults. You have the opportunity to help them become beautiful both inside and out. One day, they will say, "My brother gave me the chance to achieve my dreams—I love and respect him."

If your younger sibling, sister, or mother is self-centered, help them. Pray to God to assist you, and make it your mission to restore good relationships. Be an example to your siblings, sisters, and mother. The Lord has turned millions of hearts toward Him—so you can do the same.

A mature young man does not focus on who loves or does not love him; instead, he focuses on doing good, regardless of how others treat him. Do not assume that your younger siblings, sisters, or mother do not want your help or love—most of the time, they will change. Girls can be unpredictable at times, but you should find ways to please your sisters—ask your mother for guidance if needed. It is the duty of a young man and a grown man to love his sisters and, ultimately, his wife.
Choose a wife carefully—let God guide you. Pray and wait for the time He will choose for you. People choose based on outward appearance, but the LORD knows the heart. Observe if she loves spiritual matters. Avoid the reckless games you play with men. Make it a rule never to dance with girls, as it stirs up evil desires. Many boarding schools host dances that have led young people into lust and sin. Every day, we face battles in our minds and against the kingdom of Satan. Wear the spiritual armor of Ephesians 6 and do not expose yourself to temptations. Avoid any sinful sexual relationships, as many exist on the internet.

Dancing is a tool of Satan himself. Ask any man if he would allow someone to dance closely with his wife while embracing her—he will tell you no! During the colonial era, people were prohibited from performing traditional dances, claiming they were primitive. Strangely, those traditional dances kept men and women apart. Today, sin is done openly—embracing a girl who is not your wife, and being closer than a centimeter apart.

Many are taught about wearing condoms, but for those who respect God, sex belongs only within marriage; outside of that, it is sin and rebellion against God's laws. Moreover, condoms do not erase sin, silence a guilty conscience, fully prevent pregnancy or HIV, or remove sorrow.

A young man should always know that only God can help him avoid sexual sin. Many men, especially in today's world of pornography, have fallen into sin because of three things: women, money, and the pride of power. If a young man thinks he cannot fall into these traps, he must have strength greater than Samson, wisdom greater than Solomon, and love for God greater than David.

"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD." A young man should distinguish between the "strange woman" of Proverbs 7—a harlot—and the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. Does she possess the qualities of a noble woman? Does she understand the role of sex according to the Word of God? Teach her about physical changes such as puberty and keep talking to her at every stage of life.

Many parents only talk to their children about sex when they are thirteen years old and then stop, only to be shocked when things go wrong at seventeen! They give one lesson about sex and leave it at that. Sexual temptations, including masturbation, affect many people. Children should be taught to avoid these things consistently. Do not allow your children to sleep in other people's homes or participate in overnight parties (pajama parties or sleepovers).

A young man should remain pure in words, thoughts, and body until marriage. Is he willing to seek permission from the girl's father before opening the door to marriage rather than living together without commitment ("come-we-stay")? Is he prepared to inform you when he plans to marry? Is he willing to remain single if God has called him to a life of celibacy and avoid living a double life?

The Bible is not just a book of good advice or opinions—it contains the thoughts of God Himself, holding the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth. God's Word teaches us how to treat and please everyone we meet—friends, siblings, parents, employers, women, elders, enemies, or children. It warns us about traps, instructs us on how to work, invest money, what to eat, and even when to sleep. It provides principles for every aspect of your life. It reveals the depths of how God works and how to hear His voice. It explains life, the natural world, and even other planets. From Genesis to Revelation, it tells us how to receive the LORD, who gave Himself for us to grant us eternal life.

You are not an animal, as the theory of evolution falsely teaches—you were created for a special purpose. Every young man should ask himself why he is here, where he came from, and what will happen when he dies. The Word of God explains why there is so much pain and suffering. No other book answers all these questions. One hour with any other book cannot compare to one hour with the Word of God.

No other book is as thrilling or life-changing as the Bible. Mathematics or chemistry cannot transform your life the way this book can. However, the Bible is not meant just for information—it is for transformation. If you follow its teachings, your life will become real, and you will be changed. Do not waste time reading novels or fictional stories that diminish your desire for God's Word. Fiction makes the Bible lose its appeal.

Your mind will expand if you read the Bible, and you will even excel in your studies. Share with your friends what you learn from each chapter. Sometimes, sit quietly and reflect on His glory. Memorize many of its verses, and sing hymns. Mark 1:35 says, "He went to a solitary place to pray;" you, too, should wake up and pray.

Listen to the advice of elders—you will not be like your peers but will have wisdom beyond your years. The counsel of the elderly may seem outdated, but you will process it and digest wisdom that people your age do not possess. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam ignored the elders' advice, listened to his young friends, and lost his kingdom.

Wise elders do not speak their thoughts quickly—they weigh matters first. They understand how a child's life will turn out, even without formal education, because their years of experience guide them. Many people have rejected their advice, causing elders to remain silent, fearing hostility from young people. It is the responsibility of young men to sit with elders and ask them questions about valuable professions, important skills to acquire, or the best investments to make.

Ask an elder questions like these: What should someone do to maintain good relationships? What destroys relationships? How has society changed today? Has it changed for better or worse? What mistakes did you make that led to failures? What areas of your life turned out very well? What can you teach me about marriage and raising children? As an employer, what qualities would you look for in an employee? Do you remember the advice your father gave you as a child? Did you follow it? What is most important to you now in life? Are you prepared to die at any time? If yes, why? If no, why not?

There is a time to kill and a time to heal (Ecclesiastes 3), and that is the challenge of growing up or becoming a man. Many people get confused and kill when they shouldn't and fail to kill when they should. How will a boy know? A man or a boy is not just another animal in God's kingdom. He was given authority and dominion. He is supposed to respect creatures and be a good steward—not to kill animals or cut down trees without reason, just because they are under his dominion. He should use these things for his needs but not wastefully; if he cuts down a tree, he should plant another. He should not be cruel but should know how to preserve and also understand what to preserve. For example, if mice are eating your maize in the house, should you kill them? Should you kill ants in the wild? Should you kill a cat crossing the road? If you live near a wildlife reserve and are hungry, should you kill a gazelle without permission? Do not ignore the work God gave you—to protect and care for His creatures. Even animals know who fears God based on the compassion and care that person shows to them.

Do your livestock receive adequate food and nourishment? Or do you keep a dog without feeding it until its ribs are visible? Remember, Noah was told to bring animals into the ark. God could have created new ones, but He cared for the ones that already existed. The Bible says, "God remembered Noah and the animals."

To meet the needs of one's family, sometimes it is necessary to kill, but one should not kill God's creatures out of anger or recklessness—only for sustenance or protection. When wars have occurred, we know that many people who love God have fought to bring freedom and to defend their countries or communities. Others, due to their conscience and the calling God placed on them, have refused to kill during war and instead care for the wounded (non-combatants), and that is also acceptable depending on the individual's convictions. However, all men must know how to protect their families and provide for them.

A man has a duty to care for the environment around him and not to be destructive. Some boys have shot birds with slingshots just for fun without any meaningful reason. A man must care for what God has entrusted to him, including the environment. We live in a time when people kill even their own children through abortion or other means. People are willing to kill their children but are afraid to kill cockroaches in their cabinets. We must understand the value of human life while also having the courage to kill things like cockroaches or mice.

Home worship is essential. Do not frown during prayers or worship. The

Israelites spent a lot of time in worship and offering sacrifices, but they were self-centered and selfish. Every day is a day of worship, and how we live is also worship. We may sing beautifully, but if our lives have a bad odor, we are failing. Our hearts need to change—not just to have heads full of God's Word while our hearts are full of sin.

If you want to be a true man whom God can use, learn to worship God the way He wants to be worshiped. Worship Him every day in the beauty of His holiness. Relationships and communication are important. Learn to write letters of encouragement. Practice writing simple letters, and as you continue, you will develop that skill and be able to write meaningful letters. Many people receive letters of complaints, and when they see a letter of gratitude, they are surprised and encouraged, and they will cherish your letter forever.

Where I live, many people are afraid to receive gifts because they feel indebted, are proud, or do not want to be part of "welfare programs." Others are afraid to write thank-you letters. Giving and receiving gifts builds good relationships. If you stop accepting gifts, people may think you value your possessions too much or that you are unwilling to give, thus closing the door to further kindness. It is more blessed to give than to receive, so do not make others lose their blessings by refusing their gifts if given with a good heart.

For our children, we teach them to give when we receive as well. However, write thank-you letters and be specific about what you are thankful for. For example: "Thank you for the money; it has greatly helped me during this cucumber-growing season." Many people write letters asking for things while they are students in boarding schools, but when they become adults and no longer need anything, they never write again—that is wrong. Communication is not just for getting things but is a service of love.

How do we prepare to be good fathers while we are still young? The answer: By becoming the kind of person we would want our children to be! Do not think about how you will raise your children—think about how God wants you to be like Him. When your children are your age, what kind of people do you want them to be? Because your children will want to be like you. Are you faithful? Are you a hard worker? Do you love to complain? Understand that they will follow your example.

God is merciful, even when you have messed things up. He does not always give us what we deserve (exceptions). Not all your bad habits will pass on to your children, but "the fruit does not fall far from the tree." The children you raise will resemble you. When your son is twelve years old, he will likely be as you were at twelve. If you are grateful and diligent, so will he be—but

if you are lazy, he will inherit that bad habit. If you practice playing a musical instrument diligently, he will do the same. Whatever you work hard at, he will also work hard at. Your example teaches more than your words ever will.

The habits you form today will shape you into the man you will become tomorrow, and that will affect your children. You may think, “I am just a child, I will deal with this or that when I grow up.” But the days will come quickly, and suddenly, you will be an adult doing the same things you did as a child. So start today to change your ways—there is little chance to change them tomorrow.

Have a vision of doing things as a man, and these wise visions will help you build good relationships and true wealth. Each day, you are laying bricks of character that will harden like cement—if it is bad, it will be difficult to remove even for future generations.

Good character is like making a savings deposit into your children’s account. If you understand this lesson, you will avoid many pitfalls. Boys can change things more easily than older men. Examine your life honestly and carefully—ask your friends or parents about your strengths and weaknesses. Pray that God will make you the man He wants you to be, and then start changing your ways today.

Can a son lead prayers and read God’s Word and be blessed? Can he delegate tasks to his siblings? There must be a schedule for all children to work at home.

Helping the disabled and not mocking or ridiculing them is essential. Where I live, a man from East Africa and his wife used to mock disabled people with large heads and brain disorders while working. When they got married and had their first child, he was born with a severe disability—a urinary tract deformity that required them to live in the hospital. People said, “Now they don’t have to look far to mock; they have something to mock right in their home!” They became humble and more understanding of others’ suffering. It is true that sometimes we face disabilities even if we did not mock others—because we do not fully understand God’s will—but when we mock people’s suffering, our conscience condemns us.

www.truthforyourfamily.org by Joel Beeke.

If you want to be a cheerful and hardworking person, your children will follow suit. They will love work like their father and be cheerful. You might ask, “How is it that I am a young man, yet they do not see me now?” God’s plan

for living is that a good tree produces good fruit—not by chance but by a heavenly principle.

Does a child understand what evil is? Does he know that the Ten Commandments are the standard of righteousness? Does he understand God's mercy and the importance of treating others fairly, or is he prejudiced? For God desires us to walk in justice, mercy, and humility. Can he correct his siblings? Does he get angry and hold grudges against them? Does he resist correction? He should know how to manage his household well. Children should be given tasks appropriate to their age, such as cleaning the car, mowing the lawn, or farming.

Self-denial is crucial because the Garden of Eden was lost due to failing to control the desire for food and gluttony. A child should be taught to avoid this. He should guard his heart and thoughts by not watching harmful programs on television, phones, or computers.

He should avoid getting into debt. Discuss the dangers of debt and how to avoid it, especially in these days of credit card debt. If possible, he should pay off any debts and learn to give offerings and tithes. He should not be quick-tempered: "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls" (Proverbs 25:28). Even a young child should learn to wait patiently without anger when playing with others.

Uncontrolled anger can harm a wife, children, or even the young man himself. If he struggles to control his temper, teach him "not to be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds" (Philippians 4:6-7). Encourage him to focus on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy and to think about such things.

He should learn how to care for the family and develop good manners, as these do not come naturally without practice. He should learn to say "sorry," "excuse me," "thank you," "please," "forgive me," and "may I." He should be taught not to oppress those under him because many children who are mistreated by their parents continue that behavior. Let him go before God to renounce those forces of darkness, so that any curse is broken and does not pass to the third and fourth generation.

Does he waste time on social media or the internet? Is he learning the habits of a diligent person? Can you trust him to complete tasks without being distracted by technology? Do his close friends love God, or does he associate

with wicked people like Delilah? Does he know how to maintain healthy friendships with girls without engaging in inappropriate relationships? What character traits should he avoid in friends?

Does he make excuses to skip worship services? Does he frequently leave to get water or go to the restroom during worship? Does he trust in God, or does he grumble when things go wrong? Can he complete the work given to him, like Noah or Nehemiah? Can he fulfill his promises like Elkanah and his wife? Or is he easily distracted? Does he leave his belongings scattered everywhere—even leaving his trousers on the floor right where he took them off?

Sometimes parents are busy serving others, and the child seeks attention in ways the parents may not notice. I learned this from the preacher Billy Graham. While he was very famous, his children would sit near the gate of their house and ask visitors for money or items before they met the preacher. Feeling ashamed, the guests would give the children these things without reporting it to him. This behavior was like that of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who asked for clothes and silver, tainting the work of a servant. The preacher eventually discovered this. If you are a parent with a public role or responsibilities that attract visitors, observe how your children interact with people to protect them from certain evils.

Can he be as hospitable as Abraham, welcoming strangers and receiving blessings? Study the importance of hospitality toward guests and family. Is he afraid to answer the phone, respond to letters, or open the door for guests? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Today, we may not receive physical visitors often, but sometimes phone calls are from people who need our counsel or assistance. I have learned that many times, it is those people who bless me, rather than the other way around—just like Abraham, who was blessed by the stranger. Let the child learn to be a servant and not to avoid guests.

A young man who does not know how to earn a living is worse than an unbeliever. Although women also earn their livelihood today, this is primarily a man’s responsibility. This requires a man not to be selfish, and as parents, we should help our sons become responsible providers. Let them assist their younger siblings, grandparents, and family projects. Discuss the family budget and how they can find small jobs.

Can he earn his own bride price? Does he understand his duty to care for elderly parents? Does he help with household chores faithfully? Is he generous in assisting those in need and showing others how to do so? Teach him to be a good listener and not to interrupt others’ conversations.

Does he remember to pray for others, or does he only bring his problems to God? Does he know how to confess his sins when he is wrong? Can he share his salvation testimony in a few minutes, including relevant Bible verses?

What kind of woman does he want to marry? Does he respect girls as future wives and protect them from evil and impurity so that they remain virgins for their husbands?

Although we try our best, we must leave the rest to God, who is almighty. We may not understand why certain things happen, but in time, we often see their rewards.

A young man who lives according to God's laws and judgments will reap the blessings of children who love God in the future (Proverbs 22:6). Therefore, when tempted to do evil or act foolishly, such as breaking the law, think about your decisions and how they will affect future generations—even the third and fourth. Determine to live with integrity for the sake of future generations. You will live without regrets, and it will become a strong foundation for your children and grandchildren, as the Lord permits. Let us remember that God is patient, full of mercy, and forgives sin.

What should a young man's relationship with alcohol be? The answer is: "Do not put even a drop of alcohol to your lips." He should not wear clothing with alcohol advertisements, listen to alcohol commercials, or go where alcohol is sold. He should not mock drunkards because sin is a sorrowful thing. Refuse to give the excuse that drinking is necessary. Even if you do not plan to drink, recognize that it is a temptation. Tell your friends lovingly that you will not drink because you honor God. Proverbs 23:32 says, "Stay away from any intoxicant as you would stay away from a snake." Forty percent of drinkers become alcoholics. If you had a dog that bit two out of five visitors, would you keep it?

A son should understand why he is disciplined or corrected—to guide him in the right path of wisdom. A son who loves his parents will be grateful when they correct him. Avoid being led astray by peer pressure, as it ruined Samson. Loving God, walking in His ways, and serving Him with our hearts, minds, strength, and spirit is true wisdom. His words should be seasoned with grace so he knows how to answer others because words reveal character and what fills his heart. Purity of heart, speech, and actions is essential.

Raising a Girl to Become a Proverbs 31 Woman – Lessons for Mothers and Daughters

David, the writer of Psalms, speaks words of blessing in Psalm 144:11-15, “May our sons in their youth be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters like pillars carved to adorn a palace…” Without a doubt, raising our daughters to maturity while pleasing God is a tremendous blessing. Many parents, due to their busy schedules, are tempted to let their children raise themselves. God did not give us children to neglect them. Parenting is a serious responsibility, greater than many of us imagine. As mothers, we cannot leave our children, even those in high school, alone at home while we are busy or constantly traveling.

Some of us work shifts, others move around frequently, leaving our children alone – this is a mistake. A child’s thoughts wander easily. They might visit neighbors or engage in inappropriate activities. The life of Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, is an example. Children may begin to do wrong, but do not be the one to create the cracks. Some parents send their young children abroad and leave them alone without parental guidance. Many fail to finish school, but what is even more heartbreaking is that many abandon their faith. Some enter into strange marriages to obtain work permits, face conflicts with the locals, and others are left broken and exhausted. Solomon says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

Nowadays, higher education and moving to Western countries have become idols. A God-fearing life requires effort and intention. Do not leave your child in someone else’s care unless it is an emergency, because you will end up blaming that person. Children are curious and like to experiment to see what will happen—even if the caregiver is a good person, they cannot care for your child like you can. We once met a high school girl who had been raised far from her parents. She did not greet people, show gratitude when treated kindly, or respond when spoken to. We thought she was mute or deaf, but we later realized her behavior was due to poor upbringing and ignorance. Some said she was just “shy,” but there is a difference between shyness and rudeness.

Our daughters need training because, in the future, they will be responsible for raising their own children and communicating effectively with their husbands and in-laws. Can you accidentally step on someone’s foot and not say “sorry”? Anyone who wants to be a citizen of the kingdom of God must know how to share the Good News with others. Will she remain silent out of embarrassment but know how to bargain for a better price at the market? Proverbs 31 describes many qualities a woman should possess, and these lessons start in childhood—not adulthood. Some claim that the Proverbs 31 woman is a combination of many women, but we see that while she has helpers, she is the one who organizes and plans her household. As parents,

especially mothers, we must study Proverbs 31 in depth and model it for our daughters.

Mama Pam Foster from doorpost.org has elaborated on this woman in detail. We have adapted her questions for you to discuss with your daughter daily and teach her the lessons from Proverbs 31. It is beneficial to read the entire books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms together. Take time to read the Bible every evening for three years, focusing on one chapter per day, reflecting on it, and asking questions. This practice will help shape your child's character. There is no better parenting guide than the Word of God. God is the perfect parent, while human parents are sinners raising other sinners.

Does your child understand that the six days of creation and the Sabbath rest are foundational to the teachings of the Bible? Today, evolutionary theories have caused many of our daughters to lose their sense of worth, forgetting they were created by God. The days described in Genesis 1 are literal 24-hour days, not millions of years. The first lesson for our children is obedience—we repeat, "Obedience is the first lesson!" Obedience to God's instructions and parental authority is crucial. We must remember that these words in Proverbs 31 were spoken by Solomon's mother, advising her son on how to identify a virtuous woman. In contrast, Proverbs 7 describes the "strange woman," who is the opposite of the Proverbs 31 woman.

As women, we must be prayerful, vigilant, and intentional about parenting. We should have clear plans and goals for raising our daughters and write them down. If we want Proverbs 31 daughters, they must see that example in us. Let us pray for strength and commit to guiding and supporting our daughters. Our daughters need to learn obedience, discipline, self-denial, diligence, cleanliness, and practical skills. We all desire to have daughters who are spiritually, intellectually, socially, economically, and physically mature.

The Proverbs 31 woman is described in great detail. She prepares food, sews clothes for her family, engages in entrepreneurship, buys land, plants vineyards, and helps those in need. She is an admired woman. Men would love to have a sister, mother, daughter, or wife like her. Even an unbelieving husband can be influenced by such a woman. Women play a significant role in shaping future generations. We see this in Timothy, a great preacher who received his faith from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Let us not grow weary in doing good, for we will reap a harvest in due time if we do not give up.

Some women have become discouraged due to the hardships of life. One woman even said, "I have drunk from the bitter cup." It is true that life can

be challenging, but we must not lose heart. Even if our family members do not praise or appreciate us, our calling by the grace of God is to live as Proverbs 31 women and to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.

These lessons must be taught to our daughters as they grow. Perhaps we should have fewer material possessions so we can invest in our children's eternal inheritance rather than earthly wealth. It is not just about academic education—home education matters too. It is wise to establish a structured plan to nurture both character and academic growth in our children. After all, the wisdom of this world, which we often prioritize, is foolishness to God (1 Corinthians 3:19). You can integrate these teachings into your prayer life, ask thoughtful questions, engage in practical activities, hold discussions, memorize Scripture, and evaluate progress regularly. This holistic approach will help your daughter grow spiritually in every area you aim to develop.

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." – Proverbs 31:10. This verse encourages us to pray for our daughters to have humble and gentle hearts before God, to be willing to listen, and to obey His Word. Give your daughters the opportunity to interview a godly grandmother or mother who loves the Lord and seeks His counsel. Allow them to speak with their father or uncles and ask what qualities attracted them to the women they married. Who are the women in the Bible who exemplify these qualities? Consider women like Deborah, Esther, Huldah, Elizabeth, Job's wife, Ruth, Lot's daughters, Tamar, Sapphira, Gomer, Priscilla, Abigail, Jezebel, Bathsheba, Rachel, and Rebekah.

Read Titus 2 and make a list of the qualities of a God-fearing woman. Study 1 Timothy 5:3-10, which outlines the criteria for honoring and supporting widows. Ask yourself reflective questions about your daughter: Does she love God, and is her salvation important to her? Does she enjoy reading the Bible, or does she only listen when others read to her? Does she understand God's Word and seek to obey it? Does she have a personal relationship with God? When she makes mistakes, does she feel remorse and seek forgiveness from God and those she has wronged? Is she drawn to the world's ways in how she dresses, the games she plays, and her outlook on life? Does she have any weaknesses of character? What steps is she taking to overcome them? Do the fruits of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23 manifest in her life? Is she growing to reflect the virtues found in Proverbs 31 and Titus 2? Does she have goals that honor God and seek to serve her family, or is she self-centered and pursuing her own pleasures?

"Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value." – Proverbs

31:11. A husband trusts his wife when she takes her responsibilities seriously. We must prepare our daughters by training them in this mindset. A daughter's education begins at home. Teach her household skills and arrange for her to learn from a diligent, faithful woman. Encourage her to ask, "Why is it important to work with integrity?" Discuss examples of faithfulness from the Bible, including Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Naaman's servant girl, Delilah, Michal, Potiphar's wife, Haman's wife, Herodias, Eve, and Tabitha. The era of formal initiation ceremonies for girls has passed—today, it is up to parents and the faith community to instruct them. Do not delegate this responsibility to an aunt or sister-in-law.

Young girls often face the temptation to gossip and flatter. As parents, we must model truthfulness, avoid slander, jealousy, anger, pride, and hypocrisy in our speech and actions. Encourage her to interview someone at church: "Why do you trust this person and not that one?" Can you trust your daughter to speak truthfully, or does she mix truth with falsehood? Does she keep her promises? If she lies, does she try to cover it with another lie? Does she speak negatively about others behind their backs? Does she return borrowed items? Is she trustworthy in relationships and goals, or does she deceive herself? Does she use flattery or manipulation to get what she wants? Does she claim, "I was just joking," when caught doing wrong? Does she speak thoughtlessly, criticizing others without kindness? Is she comfortable approaching you with sensitive matters?

Discuss questions like, "Why is it wrong for a wife to speak poorly of her husband, parents, or others?" and "Why should a student avoid speaking negatively about their teacher?" Faithfulness is essential both in childhood and adulthood. Discuss the consequences of divorce, and encourage her to write an essay on the topic. Is she willing to help a friend who is struggling with love and humility rather than criticizing them publicly? Does she hold grudges or end friendships easily? Is she possessive of her friends, or does she allow them to befriend others? Does she forgive quickly? Does she value the opinions of her friends and younger siblings? Is she jealous when others succeed? Is she faithful in guarding her purity, preserving herself for her future husband? Does she understand that marriage is a lifetime commitment?

As a girl, being a good listener is a vital quality, especially when she becomes a wife. She should practice listening attentively without interrupting, arguing, or dominating conversations. A wife listens to her husband as the leader of the household and engages in discussions about family matters. Her children will also need her attentive ear—this is a skill she must learn and cultivate. Many women need to listen more and speak less. Gossip, criticism, and nagging often stem from talking excessively instead of listening. Teach

your daughters the value of listening, drawing from the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and Paul's letters. Observe people you consider wise—how do they speak and listen? What can your daughter learn from them?

Why is it important for a wife to listen to her husband and children before responding? Encourage her to write an essay on the importance of listening to a husband or child. Reflect as a parent: Does she listen to God's voice and obey the Holy Spirit's prompting? Does she pay attention to sermons and remember their messages? Does she listen respectfully when you or her father speak to her? Does she show humility and attentiveness when being corrected? Does she remember instructions and follow through? Is she eager to give advice before hearing the full story? Does she dominate conversations, or does she listen carefully?

A young woman should embody love and selflessness. Encourage her to memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and recite it within two weeks. If she truly loves others, how will she treat them? If she loves God and desires to do His will, how will it be evident? How can she show love to her siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles? How should she treat her "enemies," according to God's Word? Titus 2 encourages older widows to teach younger women to love their husbands. Love is also something that must be taught, and it is essential that we teach our daughters, especially in today's self-centered world. Many people today say, "I am doing this for myself," or "I am always doing things for others, now it is time to focus on me." Widows who remember their husbands often express deep appreciation, saying, "If only I had known."

Read together and discuss the three types of love (Phileo—brotherly love, Agape—God's love, and Eros—romantic love between a husband and wife). How do these types of love differ?

Does she show patience when others make mistakes, or does she get angry quickly?
Does she show God's love to others even when she disagrees with them?
Is she willing to overlook small offenses from others?
Does she get along with others, work cooperatively, and do people enjoy being her friend?
Does she prioritize helping others' needs before her own, or does she put herself first before her siblings or friends?
Does she rush to take the best seat, the biggest piece of bread, or the nicest toy so that others do not get it?
Does she focus excessively on the weaknesses and faults of others?
Does she criticize her friends publicly?

Does she seek to build others up, or does she like to boast and praise herself?
Does she hold on to others' mistakes and remember them often?
Does she laugh and take pleasure when others face punishment?
Does she seek opportunities to serve others, or does she want to be served herself?
Does she show love even to those who wish to harm or undermine her?

Obedience and having good manners are very important for a young girl. Let us prepare our daughters to obey God.
To live a life of peace and joy, it is essential to obey a husband if God has appointed her to marry. Arguments, sulking, constant complaining, and trying to dominate others are not good qualities. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but we must rise again.

Our mother Eve, by not obeying and staying close to her husband, became the first sinner in the world. Often, we think men have more vices and sins like murder, robbery, and lying. However, let us remember it was a woman's disobedience that brought us to where we are! The man also has his duty—to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. This is perhaps a greater task than what is asked of the woman if performed as required.

I once heard a mother say that men are more generous than women. I was surprised, but later realized it was true because most governmental programs of social welfare or international aid are often managed by men! Therefore, mothers, let us teach our daughters generosity and the unique roles of each gender so that this teaching reaches our grandchildren as well. On the negative side, women often quarrel with people nearby, like neighbors, while men go to war and engage in larger conflicts. All these things, the Proverbs 31 woman should understand to guide her children wisely.

Barbara, the wife of former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, reportedly said when her son became President, "I have ruled the world twice—first when my husband was president, and now my son!" This woman recognized that a mother holds a certain position, not necessarily the one given to a man, but she has her own portion.

In the model God gave us, it is not difficult to obey a husband because it appears that he bears the greater responsibility in marriage while the woman is the helper. Obeying a husband brings great joy and is a command from God. If you do not believe this, ask a mother whose daughter-in-law does not respect her son, and she will tell you how painful that situation is.

A girl must understand God's command in Ephesians 6:1, "Children, obey your

parents in the Lord, for this is right."

In what ways can a girl demonstrate obedience to her parents?
What other authorities besides parents should she obey? (Church, government, workplace, etc.)
Read the Bible and study the examples of those who obeyed and those who did not—such as Achan, Cain, Noah, and Jacob. Read Deuteronomy 28.

Why can God's name be dishonored by a disobedient child or wife?
Does she obey promptly, without arguing or complaining?
Does she carry out instructions cheerfully, or does she respond with a bad attitude?
Does her facial expression show a spirit of humility before God and the authorities He has placed in her life?
Do her actions reflect obedience?
Does she obey other authorities you have entrusted with her care, such as a nanny, aunt, or teacher?
Does she understand that God is the ultimate authority?
Does she value your decisions even when they do not always make sense to her?
Does she know how to appeal respectfully if she wishes to be heard again?
Does she show respect to police officers, teachers, and government authorities?
Does she spend time learning and obeying God's Word?
Does she obey whether you are present or absent?
Does she obey joyfully or grudgingly?

Maintaining peace at home is crucial for a young girl.
Girlhood is a preparation ground for how she will conduct herself in the world. Good relationships are a gift from God, and preserving and nurturing them is a responsibility. Let us teach our daughters to avoid sulking, holding grudges against parents, or harboring bitterness toward their siblings. Hatred or malice is not a good thing. We must forgive to bring healing, growth, and spiritual maturity. Read about reconciliation, conflicts, warnings, and quarrelsome women in the book of Proverbs.

How should an enemy be treated?
Let your daughter write about forgiving others and being forgiven. Study God's Word and the examples of forgiveness and reconciliation. We may know the Word of God, but without practicing forgiveness, we will face much pain, broken relationships, and even risk eternal separation from God if we are not careful.

A girl's relationships within her family prepare her to maintain healthy

relationships with her own family in the future.

Do the parents model reconciliation and forgiveness, or do they enjoy quarrels? As a mother, reflect on where you may need to offer correction. Discuss the quarrelsome woman in Proverbs and other examples in the Bible—Sara and Hagar, Rachel and Leah with Jacob, Peninnah and Hannah, Michal and David, Miriam and Moses, Job and his wife, Euodia and Syntyche. What were their conflicts about? What were the results? What can we learn?

Read Hebrews 12:15-16 and discuss with your daughter. Discuss anger, revenge, forgiveness, and patience.

Does she get along well with her siblings, or is she always arguing while defending her "rights"?
Is she quick to speak, or does she listen when corrected?
When in conflict, does she examine her own heart to see if she is at fault?
Does she forgive others, knowing she also makes mistakes?

Is she willing to approach someone who wronged her and seek reconciliation?
Does she desire peace, or does she hold onto grudges?
Does she know how to resolve issues without causing more conflict?
Does she pray before discussing reconciliation?
Is she willing to be reconciled even if it requires multiple attempts?
Does she seek peace quickly, or does she harbor anger for a long time?

These lessons are essential, as she will be wronged by her husband or children in the future, and she will also wrong them. Therefore, she must learn to foster peace while growing up.

Humility is essential—submitting to God's authority allows His Spirit to work in her life. She should be open to correction without argument and willing to confess her faults.

Living a pure life—thoughts, words, and deeds—is vital for her now and when she has her own household. Teach her to pray daily to obey God and resist temptation.

What is temptation? Why do we sin, and what are the consequences of sin?Read together from the Word about sin, the life of darkness, and the relationships associated with sin. How many have sinned? What is the wage of sin? Who overcame temptation, and who avoided it?

Read Proverbs 7 and learn how to avoid the behavior of the adulterous woman.

Does she know that there is a battle between Satan and God and that she is involved? Does she know where Satan came from? Does she understand that when she has problems, she should not go to witch doctors or sorcerers but to God-fearing people?

Does she know why she is here on earth?
Does she understand how to achieve victory? Does she know how to use the Word of God to overcome temptation? Does she avoid places with traps of temptation, or does she put herself in harm's way?

Does she choose friends who love God, or does she associate with those who lead her into evil?
Does she know how to flee from temptation? Does she accept counsel about bad friends? Does she obey you in everything, such as curfew times and activities to engage in?

Does she have a habit of flirting with boys or using questionable language that may cause people to suspect her of immoral behavior?
Does she pray to God to help her avoid sin? Does she avoid having boyfriends and understand that dating is not pure, but courtship is?

Does she use her time wisely, or does she read inappropriate books or watch indecent images?
Does she waste her time daydreaming about unproductive things? Does she come to you with sensitive questions appropriate to her age, or is she afraid to ask you (about relationships, bad friends, etc.)?

It is essential to teach our daughters patience and the virtues of heavenly behavior.
We should teach them while they are young before they mature. They should be patient in many areas, for example, by not starting romantic relationships early but following the plan of courtship. We do not recommend starting courtship until they are mature—around the age of 18—but it is advisable that they become independent to avoid being a burden.

General friends are often the ones they will marry.
She should avoid secret conversations with boys, giving them false hope of an improper relationship. It is best to be transparent about everything happening because parents have significant experience, especially in today's world, to help their daughters avoid sorrowful marriages.

Mothers should be ready to discuss these matters openly.
Your child cannot learn from someone else as well as they can from you. It

is wise for a mother to help her daughter establish standards for the kind of husband she wants to marry, ensuring she is ready to obey and respect him. Look at examples like Isaac and Rebekah, David and Michal, Esau, Samson, and Solomon.

Read books like “I Kissed Dating Goodbye” by Joshua Harris and discuss the dangers of dating and the benefits of courtship.

Is she willing to listen to your advice about choosing a life partner?
Does she believe that God will help her find a spouse, or does she want to rush the process? Is she willing to grow spiritually to build a better home, or is she desperate to get married quickly?

Does she read romance novels that spread false teachings about love and marriage?
Is she committed to preserving herself by avoiding sexual temptations found in music, books, images, friends, and movies?

Has she come to you with questions about God’s plan for sex and sexual purity?
Does she understand God’s purpose for sex? Has she grasped what it means to mature as a young woman by rejecting lies and learning how to maintain purity?

Take time to discuss these matters regularly, not just once.
Is she prepared to live her entire life alone if God has called her to a life of singleness?

Selflessness is crucial for a young woman.
Look at the life of Ruth and how she devoted herself to her husband and his family, ultimately receiving a blessing. A daughter should respect her parents while she is young and living under their care.

Does she respect her elders?
Does she mock or disregard them? Does she expect her grandparents to help her but refuses to do anything for them in return?

Does she listen respectfully to her uncles, aunts, and other elders?
Does she reach out to her grandparents for advice? Does she regularly communicate with them? Parents must set an example by loving and respecting their own parents.

Does she willingly help the elderly in her community?

Does she express gratitude to relatives who assist her, or does she take their help for granted?
“She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.” (Proverbs 31:13)
We should teach our daughters to be industrious and diligent. “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” They must work whether they feel like it or not!

Daughters should learn to work with their hands, complete their schoolwork, and follow a daily to-do list.
Tasks could include feeding chickens, making the bed, doing laundry, sweeping, mopping, and caring for animals.

Learn from ants, bees, and other creatures about the importance of hard work.
Take time to observe these creatures with your daughter. Let her see you working diligently so she can learn to do the same without laziness.

Assign extra tasks for small payments if you can afford to.
If possible, let her open a savings account to learn how to manage money wisely.

Study the dangers of oversleeping and laziness.
Examine the lives of Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ruth, or Tabitha. Consider the examples of Rachel and Rebekah, who worked hard before being courted.

Give her a section of the garden to manage.
Study the discipline of athletes, scientists, writers, and inventors and the hours they dedicate to their work. Observe diligent women you know and the things they do. What are the consequences of laziness?Ask yourself these questions:Does she do her best work?Does she only work when being watched?Does she complain or expect rewards for basic tasks?Does she wait for others to do the work, offering excuses?Does she complete her daily tasks without reminders?Does she check her work before reporting it, or does she rush through it?Does she take care of her belongings?Does she return things to their place after using them?Does she procrastinate or give up when the work gets tough?

“She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar; she also rises while it is yet night;” (Verse 14). The qualities of entrepreneurship, diligence in work, and managing resources are very important. A girl should be taught to work with her hands, how to manage money, how to make a budget, and how to shop at the market or store. If possible, she should compare prices in different markets before purchasing. She should be taught the dangers of

wastefulness and misusing resources. She should know how to buy nutritious but affordable food.

Teach her business skills, how to determine the value of items, and how to bargain when possible. Does buying in bulk or larger quantities reduce costs? If she cooks a large amount of food and portions it for two days, does it help save money? Teach her how to shop wisely and how to save money. She should be taught gardening to reduce the need to buy everything, especially vegetables.

Does she know how to find good second-hand clothes and clean or repair them to make them presentable for herself or her younger siblings? Many families spend a lot on expensive recreation; does she know affordable and appropriate leisure activities? I observed in Dar es Salaam how Indian families would go to the beach to enjoy the breeze and eat cassava chips or drink coconut water at a reasonable price. Meanwhile, other families would go to expensive entertainment venues, eating fried chicken at big hotels, along with soda, pizza, ice cream, and other costly and unhealthy foods. It is essential to teach our children these lessons.

Can she store and repurpose leftover food properly? For example, can she make soup from leftover vegetables and beans by adding other ingredients? If unexpected guests arrive, does she know how to stretch a small amount of food to serve many? Teach her how to raise egg-laying chickens or dairy cows if possible. A girl should also learn how to preserve food during the dry season.

In the past, many communities dried vegetables, sweet potatoes, and other foods, but nowadays, this knowledge is fading. During the rainy season, we have an abundance of vegetables, but during the dry season, there are shortages. Observe if she buys unnecessary items without thinking. Does she fall for advertising that encourages impulse purchases? Is she willing to buy items on sale or wait patiently for better deals?

Does she know how to sew, knit, and engage in other skills to reduce household expenses? If you send her to the market, can she compare prices and bring back affordable and quality goods? If you give her a shopping list, does she follow it or buy items not on the list? When shopping, can she distinguish between nutritious food and junk food? Can she stick to a budget and use it wisely? Does she neglect her belongings, allowing them to spoil or get damaged?

A girl should also be taught how to manage time effectively. Time is a valuable

gift given to everyone. Children should be taught how to manage their time and redeem it to serve their husband, children, community, and church. Teach her how to plan her time for household tasks. Assign her projects with deadlines. Make a list together of tasks that can be completed in five, ten, or fifteen minutes. Time management is a precious skill.

Encourage her to carry a book to read while waiting for a bus or to knit or do something useful. Provide her with books that will help her improve her life (lifelong learning). Consider how time played a vital role in the creation story in Genesis 1. Create a daily schedule together, including waking up, brushing teeth, bathing, and reading the Word of God. Let her interview older people about what they would do differently if they could go back to their youth.

What regrets do they have about wasting time or neglecting responsibilities? What time-saving shortcuts can she use when cooking, cleaning, or sewing? How did biblical figures like David, Josiah, Christ, Daniel, Miriam, Joseph, Moses, and Samuel use their time wisely? Make a list of activities that are limited to certain seasons of a girl's life, such as education, childbearing, marriage, and old age. Ask her if she is doing what is appropriate for her current stage of life.

Buy her a planner and a monthly calendar and review them weekly. Ask yourself if she is using her time wisely to plan for the future or if she is merely daydreaming. Is she investing her time in eternity by reading God's Word and praying? Does she follow a daily schedule, or does she spend her time aimlessly? How does she use her leisure time? Does she waste time on her phone, TV, or computer? When given a task, does she waste time or manage it well? Does she spend too much time grooming herself? Does she sleep according to a set schedule? Does she arrive early at church, school, or other appointments?

Does she procrastinate, saying, "I will do it tomorrow," or wait until the last minute? Can she multitask, for instance, preparing vegetables while waiting for beans to cook, or does she sit idle? Is she actively seeking productive ways to use her time wisely?

As a girl and eventually a mother who will care for her husband and children, it is crucial for her to know how to do laundry, maintain personal hygiene, cook, and handle all domestic responsibilities. Can she delegate tasks to her younger siblings and, in the future, instruct a household helper without wasting time?

Observe how you manage tasks and teach her to do the same. Encourage her

to invest in household tools little by little as she earns money. These may include a sewing machine, needles, a hoe, cooking pots, and other essentials. Does she know how to use a sewing machine and repair her clothes? Can she use a needle to mend garments, sew buttons, or knit cloths? Can she read patterns for a sweater, a knitted cloth, or a sewn garment?

Work with your daughter on a project, such as decorating a wedding hall, and write down the steps to complete it. Reflect on the lives of Joseph, Deborah, and Daniel. How did God prepare them to become leaders? God is also preparing our girls to take on family responsibilities and beyond.

Does she complete the tasks you assign her? Can she break down large projects into smaller tasks and delegate them to others (delegation)? Does she teach her younger siblings patiently? When given a shared task, does she want to do everything herself, or does she cooperate with others? Can she follow directions accurately? Can she inspect the work of others under her supervision?

Does she lead others with humility, or does she oppress them by asserting her authority? Does she work alongside her younger siblings or merely watch them? Do others enjoy working with her, or do they avoid her?

A woman can cook 1,000 meals a year, and many people remember their mothers' cooking. It is important to teach our children how to cook well. Let us also learn recipes from other tribes and plan meals based on what we grow and what is available in that season. Does she know how much each family member should eat? Nowadays, with globalization, one can access recipes from various sources like books, websites, and more. Could you and she write your own simple recipe book for your church?

Experts say that any recipe with more than seven ingredients is not healthy. Teach her to cook, not with too many spices but for health first, then taste, and later presentation. Some recipes take a short time to prepare, while others are more cost-effective. Ask friends, church members, and relatives for new recipes, collect and write them down. You could volunteer to hold a cooking class once a month for about three hours at your church.

What kitchen tools are necessary for cooking? Can you learn how to bake bread, make jam, or peanut butter? Look through cooking magazines. Ask mothers, "Why is mealtime important?" Does she know how to bake? Fry? Boil? Can she use kitchen appliances skillfully, safely, and maintain them properly? Can she follow a recipe correctly? Can she double the portions if needed, for instance, making ugali for six people instead of three? Can she

manage time and serve food on the table promptly? How does she know if the food is cooked properly? Does she clean the utensils she used after cooking? If the mother falls sick, can she manage everything by herself? Can she prepare tasty and appealing food? Are the people she cooks for more important than the food itself? Does she prefer expensive, decorative dishes instead of being economical and cooking nutritious meals? Can she budget for a month's worth of food? Does she collect good recipes and learn those that are practical? Does she know how to cook for people with special health needs like diabetes, allergies, heart disease, or high blood pressure? Does she enjoy developing her cooking talent and selling food? As a mother, are you willing to help her start a small food business (restaurant)? What other factors are important about food besides good nutrition and taste?

Another key area is organizing things. Proverbs 31:15 mentions planning the home properly, which promotes peace of mind and reflects God's nature of order and beauty. Guests love to return when our homes are calm and well-arranged. A girl who learns to organize from a young age will be an asset to her family and workplace.

Some people are naturally gifted in organizing, like women from the Far East, who arrange flowers effortlessly, but most of us need to be taught and encouraged repeatedly. If you as a mother are not naturally organized—like me—seek help by reading and learning from others.

The first law in heaven is order. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says everything should be done in an orderly manner. Teach young girls to return their toys after playing. Let them learn to make their beds. Plan your day in the morning and even write down your tasks, or else the day will end without accomplishing much. Learn how to schedule plans in a calendar or notebook. Teach children to organize their books, pictures, dolls, study desks, letters, and schoolwork. Teach them to set long-term and short-term goals.

Organize the kitchen, their cabinets, and bookshelves together while teaching them how to prioritize. When planning a trip, involve them in organizing what to pack, maps, booking hotels, making necessary calls, travel dates, and the route to follow. Plan with your child for hosting guests or a small party. Set a budget and follow it. Plan games, decorations, and how to raise funds for the party. If possible, read books like Don Aslet's "Clutter's Last Stand" or "Clutter-Free."

Visit homes of well-organized women and, with their permission, observe how they arrange their kitchen, cabinets, or living rooms. Organize household records such as health documents (vaccination records, first aid information,

and doctor's appointments). Also, keep certificates like birth certificates and school reports in a specific place.
Get a new file and divide it into sections to record phone numbers and addresses, calendar appointments like sports and events, babysitter instructions, and children's clothing sizes—each on its own page. Keep this file in an easily accessible place for reference. Identify disorganized areas in your home and work together to improve them.

Give your daughter tasks like organizing photo albums and labeling pictures. Together, arrange receipts, insurance papers, or teaching materials for church. Help her organize her room and decorate it affordably. Check out www.Titus2.com for resources on managing homes. Ask your daughter to write an essay on "The Value of an Organized Home."

Does she return everything to its place, or does she leave her clothes on the floor at night? Does she pile things up instead of organizing them? Is her wardrobe, purse, or school bag in order? Can she pack her luggage neatly for a school holiday? Does she throw things carelessly? Does she struggle to find items like needles, thread, schoolwork, or shoes? Can she tidy up a messy area? Can she prioritize tasks? Does she hoard junk and refuse to let go of unnecessary items? Can she keep track of appointments, addresses, and phone numbers without losing them? Is she so mentally fixed on her plans that she gets frustrated if they change? Can you trust her to manage the house for a day if you leave? Does she write down her long-term plans?

"She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard." (Proverbs 31:16). This verse emphasizes planning when buying items, managing seeds, and organizing the farm for efficiency and better yields. Even as a child, she can do small tasks like washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning the house, caring for younger siblings, running errands, and changing baby diapers. Doing small tasks will prepare her to organize bigger things in the future.

Many people emphasize school, and that is good, but children study mainly to get jobs eventually. Everything they do has meaning for the heavenly King's glory and also builds character, which is the only thing they will take to heaven. We should not despise small beginnings because they shape our children into strong and courageous women. A girl should start setting goals for tasks to complete before playing. Assign her small tasks to do and plan with her as she grows.

By the age of 14 and above, she can start setting small goals, even entrepreneurial ones. Does she have spiritual goals for the future, like sharing

God's love? A woman's goals should align with her husband's—discuss why that is important. Is there something difficult that God wants her to do in her life? Does she desire to please God and give Him glory, focusing on eternal matters rather than temporary ones? Are her future goals aligned with God's Word or with worldly pleasures? Does she plan her daily activities and future goals and write them down? Does she agree with your family's goals and support them practically? Is she willing to forgo temporary pleasures to achieve her goals (e.g., studying for exams instead of playing)? Does she have a desire to learn new things and apply those skills? Does she know that Jesus is coming back and that it is essential to prepare for that great event?

Gardening helps in many aspects of a woman's life. It usually blesses both the gardener and others. A garden can bring beauty, provide exercise, and offer a peaceful place to relax. It does not need to be large—even in the city, friends have grown flowers or tomatoes in cans, providing enough to eat and share. The joy of planting seeds and watching them grow is invaluable. Every girl should learn to plant vegetables and flowers! She should receive practical training on how to garden effectively because it is a useful service for those in need.

Many of us with gardens have shared our produce with those in need and received blessings in return. It is good for a girl to write an essay on the benefits of having a garden. Does she know the difference between weeds and crops? When you work in the garden, do you include her? Does she know how to prepare the soil for planting and where to find agricultural knowledge? Can she manage pests that harm crops? Does she seek gardening advice from others? Have you given her a small section of the garden to cultivate? Can she plan and manage a garden for one growing season?

The virtuous woman in Proverbs, when planning to buy and plant a field, demonstrates entrepreneurship and financial wisdom. Since our daughters will grow up to manage their own finances, their husbands' resources, and help their children with various plans, financial training is essential. A child should be taught how to divide any money she receives—giving a tithe, setting aside savings, and allocating the rest for expenses. It is helpful to study stories such as the widow's offering in Mark 12, the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, and the rich fool in Luke 12.

A girl should ask others, including her parents, to share testimonies of God's blessings for those who return tithes. Lessons on the dangers of greed, trusting in wealth, debt, and wasteful spending are important. Children should be taught both short-term and long-term financial goals. How will she earn money for something she wants to buy? Parents should discuss and, if

possible, support small business ideas for their children. It is crucial to teach a child that giving is better than receiving and that God blesses those who give cheerfully. If possible, open a bank account for her.

What principles should guide us when borrowing items? Can she compare prices before purchasing something? Study examples like Abraham, Job, Solomon, Zacchaeus, Sapphira, and Hezekiah. Keep a record of monthly expenses together. Create a yearly clothing budget. Discuss the proper way to lend money to others. Encourage her to interview a few women on how they manage their finances or save money.

What is the difference between tithes and offerings? Does she give tithes and offerings cheerfully? How can a wife support her husband by being a good steward of family resources? When preparing the household budget, involve her so she understands the family's monthly expenses. Which recurring expenses could be reduced or eliminated? What are the benefits of a wife staying home versus working outside the home? Does she understand that everything she has is a gift from the heavenly Father? Is she thankful to God for what she has?

Does she save money, or does she spend it carelessly? Is she generous, or does she hoard what she has? Does she live beyond her means? Does she spend money on fleeting pleasures instead of saving for the future? Can she plan a budget based on her available resources?

"She girds herself with strength and strengthens her arms" (Proverbs 31:17). Just as a soldier prepares for battle (Ephesians 6:17), so must we and our daughters. For them to understand God's Word deeply, we must teach them systematically and in an orderly way so they grasp the core doctrines of faith.

Every child should have their own Bible. By the age of seven, a child should have a personal Bible-reading time, even if only for ten minutes a day. It may be helpful to start with a Bible written in simple language. We have used the Clear Word Bible and the International Children's Bible, although there are currently no Swahili Bibles specifically for children. We have begun writing a children's Bible and Bible stories—pray for us to complete this work.

We cannot know or love God without reading His Word. Eternal life is knowing God, trusting Him, and walking with Him daily (John 17:3). Prayer is how we speak to God, while reading the Bible is how God speaks to us.

As a parent, a mother must be an example. Do your children see you reading God's Word every day? A child should begin memorizing the 66 books of the

Bible in order, perhaps using a song. Encourage them to copy and memorize Scripture passages. Reading God's Word should be a daily habit, just like eating. If you feel too busy, a solution is to skip a meal until you have read the Bible—you will eventually feel hungry and remember to read it. As soon as a child learns to read, they should start reading the Bible.

Use a reading chart to track daily Bible reading—perhaps one page or one chapter a day. Study the history of how the Bible came to us and basic facts about it—for instance, the original languages, the books of the Law, history, poetry, and Psalms. The Bible was first printed in 1456 using Gutenberg's printing press, has changed countless lives, was written over 1,700 years by about 40 authors, and contains 1,189 chapters. It is not just a book of good advice or helpful thoughts—it is the voice of God and the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth!

Let the girl read the Bible and insert her name, for example, in 1 Corinthians 13. Wherever the word "love" appears, let her first insert the name of God, and then read it again, replacing "love" with her own name. Summarize the key message (theme) of each book of the Bible. Take the girl to attend Bible study classes at church. Read Psalm 119 together and discuss it. Explore different ways of studying the Bible and pray for the grace to apply what is written. Enroll the girl in Bible study courses by mail or online, such as amazingdiscoveries.org, amazingfacts.org, secretsunsealed.org, or voiceofprophecy.com. When she reads a Bible verse, encourage her to write down the following: What does this verse say? What does it mean? How can it be applied to my life? What should I do about this verse? After a week, let her evaluate if anything in her life has changed because of that verse.

Does she read the Word of God every day without being reminded? Does she have a desire to read it? Is it transforming her life and giving it meaning? Can she provide examples of how God's Word applies to her life? Does she ask questions when reading the Bible? Does she share what she learns with others? Does she seek answers to her questions from the Bible? Can she find specific verses easily? Does she have a basic understanding of the history of the Bible? Does she know how to use Bible study tools like commentaries, concordances, and cross-references? Memorizing Scripture is essential. In times of temptation, you will overcome the evil one by the promises you remember—"It is written." Hiding God's Word in your heart is the greatest weapon against sin (Psalm 119:10). The Holy Spirit will remind us of the right Scripture when we face a specific temptation. Let her start by memorizing one verse each week. Young children have excellent memories, and because their minds are not yet cluttered, memorization becomes easier. Nothing expands the mind and increases knowledge like memorizing God's Word.

Discuss the meaning of the verses she memorizes as she progresses. Good chapters to start memorizing include Psalm 23, Psalm 91, 1 Corinthians 13, the Ten Commandments, or Ephesians, which deals with relationships. You could also record her recitations. It is helpful to have a notebook where you write down what you study. Can she memorize 20 Bible verses? Teaching a girl the habit of daily prayer is crucial because, as she grows, she will know how to bring her problems to God. This habit will also help her manage family challenges in the future through prayer. Always teach those you mentor to bring their problems to God. Pray together in the morning and evening, and let her pray by herself as well. Discuss the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6. Whenever she feels tempted to speak negatively about someone, encourage her to pray instead.

Let her keep a small notebook to record her prayer requests and their dates. This will help her look back and thank God for answered prayers. Encourage her to pray for those in need, the government, her family, school, church, the elderly, those who are discouraged, and the sick. She should also learn to pray for those who hurt her. Every prayer should include praise, confession of sins, thanksgiving, and requests. Let her interview people of faith—missionaries or preachers—about how prayer has opened doors or how God has answered their prayers. Which women in the Bible approached Christ with specific requests? Write down God's promises and how to claim them—there are over 3,500 promises in the Bible. Encourage her to start praying for her future husband, even if she is only a young girl.

Let her read stories of faith such as those of Hannah, Moses, Solomon, Nehemiah, and David. Study the lives of Augustine, John Newton, and others who attribute their transformation to their mothers' prayers. As the girl matures, teach her the principles of fasting and prayer. Does she close her eyes when she prays? Is prayer a real conversation with God for her, or just a ritual? Does she ask for God's guidance before making decisions? Does she naturally turn to prayer when she faces problems? Does she show reverence during prayer, or is she distracted? Does she believe that God answers prayer? Do you share with her the prayers you've had answered through her? Does she express gratitude in her prayers, or is she always asking for things?

It is also crucial to teach our daughters self-control—to manage their bodies and emotions. Teach her the importance of denying herself, going to bed on time, and waking up on time. Encourage her to read the Bible and pray first thing in the morning. Teach her to eat on time and to practice good hygiene without being reminded (brushing her teeth, combing her hair, cutting her nails, bathing, and washing her clothes). She should learn to eat only when she

is hungry—not out of boredom. Teach her to wait four to five hours between meals. Self-denial extends to avoiding laziness, gluttony, immodest clothing, immoral behavior, and bad company.

What kind of music does she listen to? Encourage her to ask others to point out her bad habits so that, by God's grace, she can overcome them. Does she understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise, or does she eat whatever she enjoys? Does she know that the Bible emphasizes the importance of what we eat? Let her study the lives of people who practiced self-denial to achieve great things—such as Daniel, Esther, and Joseph. Ask her to write an essay on "Gluttony." Sit together in a public place and observe people. Based on their walk, their eyes, their clothing, or their posture—what kind of message are they communicating? Which individuals appear confident, disciplined, or lazy? What does the Bible say about our bodies? Study the effects of overeating or poor eating habits (junk food) and examine the dietary laws in the Old Testament from the time of Noah.

Is she trying to live a healthy and clean life without being reminded? Does she brush her teeth daily? Does she wash her underwear daily? Does she bathe daily without being told? Does she exercise and practice self-control in her diet? Does she know her body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

Does her appearance reflect self-denial and self- respect?Does she control her body to avoid disturbing others?Does she always seem exhausted? Is she frequently sick?Does she sit with proper manners?Are there things that could help her maintain health and strength?Does she display nervous habits, such as biting her nails?Does she care about how she appears to others?Does she care too much about her appearance?It is important to teach our daughters to seek appropriate counsel. God is the ultimate counselor, but He also provides people to help us. She can ask godly older women for advice. As she grows older, she will often need guidance. It is better to humbly seek counsel than to ruin things by relying solely on oneself. God's Word in James 1 says that if anyone lacks wisdom, they should ask God, and He will give it generously. Parents should share times when they sought advice and benefited from it.

The book of Proverbs is an excellent resource, often saying, "My son, listen to my instruction…" How should she seek wise counsel for spiritual matters, household issues, social situations, or finances? Titus 2 instructs older women to mentor younger women. Study examples in the Bible of those who received both good and bad counsel.What is wisdom?Read Ephesians 5:22-24 and discuss:What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband while seeking advice from others?How should a wife respond if her husband gives unwise counsel, like Abigail did?I remember the advice my mother gave me before

finishing the 12th grade when she noticed young men coming to inquire about courtship or marriage. Even when I was in seminary—where I was the only girl—or in college studying chemistry as the only female, I encountered many young men considering marriage. My mother advised me:

“When young men come to express interest, do not respond with arrogance or rudeness, even if you are focused on your studies and do not wish to marry. Reply with kindness and respect, even to those you feel are unworthy due to their bad behavior. Kindly ask for time to think about it, and after a few days, tell them that you are still in school or have other commitments and that it will not be possible. Perhaps in a few years, your outlook will change. Since you answered kindly, they might return later, and you may find a worthy husband. Even if they do not return, they will speak well of you to others, and this good reputation may lead to a suitable match.”

She continued, “The world changes—today they want to marry, but you are not ready. Tomorrow, you may want to marry, but they will not be available because of your rudeness. Remember, it is not a woman’s role to chase after a man like Potiphar’s wife. Let men pursue you, and from those who do, you can choose one. It is shameful for a woman to pursue a man, even if you love him—let him pursue you. Although, these days, many women seem eager to chase after men!”

“A man was created to seek, and he feels fulfilled when he finds and wins a woman’s heart. Above all, pray earnestly—more than three times a day—for a good husband, because only God knows who is truly suitable. Some men who seemed unpromising have become excellent husbands, while those who appeared ideal have turned out to be cruel. The human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked—who can know it, but God alone? A woman should understand that a good husband is a gift from the Lord, not something she can secure by her own wisdom.”

People change—some who marry seemingly stable partners find their spouses turn abusive, while others who marry less promising partners see their spouses transform for the better. A spouse’s character can improve when given room to grow.Look at the Bible for examples of parental advice:Does your daughter seek your counsel on both ordinary and sensitive matters?Does she accept your advice about her friends, or does she argue?Does she think she is always right?Does she seek spiritual guidance?Does she desire to know God’s will by studying His Word?Does she delight in the counsel of God and those who love Him, or does she prefer her own ways?Since we are part of the community of believers, we should support and encourage one another. Involve your daughters in church activities and biblical discussions. Encourage them to

value serving in the church by helping with cleaning, assisting others in need, and appreciating those who teach and lead them.Do our daughters:Learn to sit quietly and respectfully in church?

Understand the importance of the Lord's Day and participate in Bible reading Recognize the role of women in both the Old and New Testaments?Complain about going to church or find excuses to avoid it?Frequently leave the sanctuary during service to use the restroom or get water?Apply the lessons taught at church to their lives?Pray beyond just thanking God for meals—do they pray about their lives?Have close friends who are part of the church?Take joy in being in the house of the Lord?Remember and share what they learned in church?Serve others using the talents God has given them?Listen attentively?Pray for the needs of the church?Understand and use their spiritual gifts?Admire godly women in their church, or do they idolize worldly celebrities?

"She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night" (Proverbs 31:18).
The virtuous woman is patient and persevering. As parents, we must avoid shielding our children from every hardship. Children need to see that God is faithful even in difficulty. Let them hear testimonies of God's greatness from older believers and read about those who endured through trials. Hebrews 11 provides examples of people who, through faith, overcame challenges with God's help.

When facing difficulties, ask:

What is the worst that could happen?

Who holds ultimate authority over everything?

Obedience and trust demonstrate to others that God is sovereign and faithful.

Read the lives of notable people who did not give up during extreme hardships or failures. Study the Psalms and read accounts like "Voice of the Martyrs" about those who have recently suffered or died for their faith. Reflect on Isaiah 53 and the stories of those who endured trials to the end.

Ask your daughter:

Does she quickly lose hope and refuse to try again after failure?

Does she complain and indulge in self-pity when things do not go her way?

Does she dwell on problems without seeking solutions?

Can she manage her emotions during hardship without harboring resentment?

Does she act as though her troubles are the worst in the world?

Does she find comfort in Scripture during difficult times?

Does she examine herself for hidden sins when she faces trials?

Does she recognize that God uses hardships to teach and refine her?

Does she glorify God through how she handles her struggles?

Does she trust that trials can help her grow in maturity?

“She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy;” Proverbs 31:19-20.

God has shown us kindness and invites us to show kindness to others, even to those we do not know, and to extend love to them. A woman learns generosity while she is still young. A home that welcomes those who need comfort, fellowship, help, and love is an ideal home. A mother brings joy by participating in helping others. Many are told that they have welcomed angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13).

Teach children to be generous by delivering food to the sick, helping those in need—such as the elderly and the ill—and inviting people into your home. Teach children how to greet a guest upon arrival, introduce them, receive their belongings, engage in conversation, serve them food, and make them feel at ease.

Discuss:

What should the host do?

How can they assist their family when an unexpected guest arrives?

How can they help the children of a guest who comes to visit with their mother?

Think of someone who welcomes you warmly when you visit them and try to imitate them.

How can someone welcome visitors to church and make them feel loved? Read examples from the Bible of those who welcomed guests. Who welcomed angels? Consider the examples of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 and John 12. Can she quickly prepare a simple meal to offer guests? Does she know what food children like?

For overnight guests, can she assist in making them comfortable? Is there a difference between how a husband and a wife welcome guests? Does she sit with the guests or isolate herself?

Is she willing to share her belongings with visitors? Does she know how to engage in adult conversations respectfully? Does she make an effort to start conversations with guests? Does she strive to be kind to guests of all ages? Does she help guests feel "at home"?

When her friends visit, does she take responsibility for welcoming and serving them? Does she show good manners when sitting at the table with guests? Does she warmly greet and welcome visitors to the church?

Does she dislike visitors because of the extra work they bring? Does she understand that her hospitality is a way of serving God? Does she see her home as a tool to reach people with the knowledge of God?

On the other hand, she should also know how to be a good guest when visiting others:

Be cheerful and polite wherever she is.

Dress modestly, even when preparing for bed.

Know how to respond to situations wisely.

For example, what should she do if she hears her hosts arguing? What tasks can she assist her hosts with?

Being a compassionate woman is essential. Helping the poor and giving people hope—both spiritually and physically—is vital. "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done" (Proverbs 19:17).

God's children are not stingy but generous. Teach children to share their toys, clothes, and other belongings. Plan how to assist widows, the sick, the disabled, the lonely, orphans, and the elderly in your church. Set aside money to support those in need—for example, prisoners, missionaries, caregivers, expectant mothers, people with mental illnesses, and those who have been abused.

How can you help them?
What Bible verses would bring comfort to them? Consider visiting www.persecution.com for more ways to help persecuted believers.

Read the Gospels and observe how Christ cared for the needy. How did He help the poor, the sick, widows, and orphans? Listen to news reports and think of ways you can help those affected by disasters.

Can you assist your neighbors who are poor but prefer jobs over handouts? What does compassion mean?

Does she notice when others are suffering or in need?

Does she feel sorrow and show kindness toward those in need?

Does she know how to speak comforting words to those in pain?

Does she give her time and resources out of love for God, or does she give only to be seen by others?

Is she eager to follow Christ by serving others?

Does she find joy in serving?

Does she volunteer in service projects?

We must also care for people's spiritual needs. As women, we are involved in this work daily. We are commanded to go into all the world and share the Good News.

It is helpful for her to understand how to share her testimony briefly:

How did she become a Christian?

How has God changed her life?

She should know the story of the cross, even in summary:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

We are saved by grace alone. God gives us grace through faith. We must confess our sins, have genuine repentance, and trust in Christ as our Savior to be assured of salvation.

Can she explain to a friend what salvation means? Can she pray with someone and guide them in a sincere prayer of repentance? Can she organize a Bible club for neighborhood children?

People often meet physical needs to open the door to meet spiritual needs. Can she raise funds for a church project, such as construction or community outreach?

Does she believe that Jesus died and rose again to pay for her sins? Has she accepted Christ as her Savior and Lord? Does she feel compassion for those who are lost without knowing God? Does she pray for those who do not know God? Does she know the Bible verses to guide someone to believe in God? Is she ashamed to confess Christ before others? Does she love to obey God? Do her actions align with the Word of God? Does she pray for and encourage those who serve God? Does she give what she has to support God’s work, or is she only concerned with life here on earth?

Being righteous is one of the characteristics of a virtuous woman. It is good for her to understand the laws of the land, to vote, and to respect leaders. She should know that leaders are appointed by God and that it is important for them to act justly. Whom should she choose when she votes? There are many issues that a Christian should consider: such as abortion, euthanasia (assisted dying), capital punishment, homosexuality, pornography, taxation, fornication, or lying. How should someone who loves God engage with these issues? Should they vote for leaders who support such things? Are there leaders who love God and have brought blessings to people? Read about the lives of Daniel, Noah, or Rehoboam.

Does she know her leaders, and does she understand what authority means? Can she present her views to local and higher authorities? Does she understand

how a bill becomes a law? Is she aware of current affairs in the country? Can she discern misleading ideas from “human wisdom” in the media? Does she show the appropriate respect for government leaders, even those who are selfish or corrupt? Is she making efforts to change unjust laws by speaking to local leaders? Does she care for those who have been wronged? Does she understand that all authority is established by God?

“She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.” (Proverbs 31:21)

A virtuous woman prepares for the future. It is good for a young girl to know emergency contact numbers, such as those for family members, the police, or the fire department. Joseph prepared Egypt for times of famine (Genesis 41), and we should also teach our children to prepare. Teach them what to do in case of a fire, where to escape, and how to help their younger siblings. Does she know where to find a flashlight, matches, or candles?

If she is left to care for young children, train her well on how to watch over them and handle potential dangers. Are there poisonous plants nearby? What should she do if a child drinks kerosene or falls into water? Interview a mother who has faced child safety issues at home and learn how she handled them. Teach the girl the dangers of water, electricity, and gas, and how to turn them off safely.

First aid is crucial, and every child should learn according to their age. If a child suddenly becomes ill, does she know what to do, whom to ask for help, and when to take the child to the hospital? Are there specific dangers where you live? Can she identify spoiled food and discard it to prevent food poisoning? Should food leftovers be kept or discarded? How should meat, eggs, or fish be stored?

Which direction should a pot handle face? When handing someone a knife, which side should she hold? Does she know how to use a pressure cooker safely? Teach her how to preserve vegetables by drying or canning. She should also learn basic safety skills for using vehicles like bicycles, motorcycles, or cars. Can she change a tire? Does she know how to get vaccinated safely? Do your research thoroughly.

A book like “Where There Is No Doctor” is helpful to have at home. When is home first aid insufficient, requiring hospital care? Teach the girl about alternative medicine and how to grow medicinal herbs such as echinacea, ginger, and garlic. Consider taking classes on water rescue and self-defense. Learn the safety precautions regarding having weapons at home, such as

arrows, clubs, rat traps, poisons, or firearms.

Does she know what to do if no one else is around during an emergency? Can she swim? Can she recognize potential dangers? Does she act carefully to avoid harming herself or others, such as by leaving water on the floor or throwing objects carelessly? If her vehicle breaks down, can she assist? Does she know how to handle home emergencies? Does she handle food with cleanliness and care? Does she know what to do during an earthquake or storm? Can she use tools safely? Does she understand how to protect herself from diseases? Can she defend herself if attacked? More importantly, does she trust God as her ultimate protector and provider?

“She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.” (Proverbs 31:22)

A woman who fears God also appreciates beauty and skill. She strives to learn how to sew and master a craft. She makes an effort to dress well, even at home, and not to be careless. She should learn to make her bed and tidy her room in the morning. A room transforms completely just by making the bed! She could help make chair covers, tablecloths, and even grow flowers for the home.

If she cares for young children, teach her how to mend their clothes. Can she sew on a button? If you cannot teach her, find someone who can. She should learn to insert zippers, sew bags, handkerchiefs, baby clothes, skirts, or aprons. She could even use her skills to help those in need. Encourage her to attend sewing or crafting classes to increase her knowledge. Mothers can also teach girls these skills in churches or community groups. A book like “Simple Secrets to a Beautiful Home” by Emilie Barnes is excellent for young girls to read.

Is her room organized? Does she try to make her room clean and attractive? Are the tables, chairs, clothes, and bed linens in order? Does she take time to decorate her home with simple things like flowers, and does she participate in decorating the church? Are her wall decorations wholesome, or do they feature worldly celebrities and magazines that promote vanity?

This woman wears fine linen and purple—royal garments. She is a daughter of the King! If you can afford it, have a few nice clothes, but also remember to help those in need. Being a child of the King also means adopting noble behavior. Teach your daughters polite manners, such as saying “thank you,” “please,” “sorry,” and “excuse me.” They should know how to remain quiet in church and other places, speak respectfully, and avoid loud arguments.

Do they know how to address others properly? Teach them etiquette when visiting others. A helpful book is “Visiting Other Families in Polite Moments” by Gary and Cathy Maldaner. Consider which lessons to teach your children when they visit others.

When you visit a hotel or restaurant, how should you behave with politeness and dignity? This includes how to serve food, how to request a menu, how to use utensils like a spoon, fork, or napkin (mouth wipe), and understanding dining etiquette. Write these rules down and learn them together. For instance, who should be served first when you are guests somewhere? Books like “Manners Made Easy” by June Hines Moore can be helpful.

Learn how to answer a phone call politely and how to introduce yourself when meeting new people. Understand how to give compliments or words of encouragement, how to welcome a guest at your door, and how to express gratitude when receiving praise or after a visit. Know how to excuse yourself when leaving for the restroom, how to set a table properly, how to serve others, and how to politely get someone’s attention without interrupting rudely.

Learn how to be a gracious guest when invited somewhere. Avoid being selfish or self-centered. Understand how to write a thank-you note to your hosts after a visit.

How should a young girl learn to carry herself with grace and dignity? Read the Gospels and observe how Christ behaved as a guest, a friend, and a teacher. How did He greet people, speak to them, and take His leave? Reflect on the stories of Nabal (1 Samuel 25) and Hanun (2 Samuel 10) to understand the consequences of bad manners.

(Philippians 2:2-4):

This passage encourages us to consider others as more important than ourselves. How does this apply to your relationships?

Write down behaviors that annoy others or demonstrate poor etiquette. Identify how a girl can change these bad habits. Observe people you admire and study their polite habits—do they respect others more than themselves? Compare their behavior to your own and seek out a gracious woman to learn from.

How does the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) relate to our manners?

Invite a guest and allow a girl to set the table, arrange flowers, prepare a meal, and be a gracious hostess. In the Bible, those with good manners showed kindness and humility. Where does the Bible instruct us to be polite and kind, such as caring for the elderly or serving others before ourselves? Why is it impolite to talk while chewing food?

Does she treat others the way she wants to be treated? Does she exhibit good table manners and speak politely? Does she know how to excuse herself when

necessary? Does she love people and display good etiquette with humility and love? Do others enjoy talking to her or visiting her? Do you often feel embarrassed by her behavior when you have guests? Does she show respect for elders, express gratitude, and care for other people's belongings?

Teach children to be modest in both speech and dress. Help them understand that their appearance and words can either uplift or offend others. Children should know their responsibility to reflect wisdom in how they dress and speak, remembering they are children of the King.
From a young age, girls should be dressed modestly. It is confusing to allow them to wear revealing clothing when they are little and then restrict it when they reach adolescence. Young girls should wear shorts under dresses to maintain modesty while playing. Avoid allowing a child to walk around with exposed shoulders without an additional covering.

Guidance from 1 Timothy 2:
This chapter describes a woman who honors God. What kinds of clothes or fashion lack modesty? Establish a dress code that reflects godly values. Consider the types of trousers a girl wears—do they cling tightly to private areas? Do her clothes expose her chest or cleavage? Are her dresses too short?

Encourage daughters to discuss their wardrobe with their fathers to ensure their clothing does not create temptation for young men or adult men.
Use clothing catalogs to evaluate modesty together as a family. Observe people's outfits in public and discuss which ones are modest and which are not. Establish guidelines for a girl's wardrobe that reflects her commitment to represent God, including appropriate hairstyles, nails, and makeup.
Why did God provide Adam and Eve with garments to cover themselves rather than allowing them to remain with the fig leaves they made? This suggests that proper clothing matters to God.
Examine fashion from different countries and across historical periods. Do these styles reflect cultural values and modesty? Discuss the goal behind a girl's wardrobe—does she dress to please God or to attract human attention?

Some countries now have spaces where families go without any clothing (nude beaches). Why is this wrong? Consider the story of Noah's curse upon his son who saw his nakedness. What does the Bible say about covering private areas?

Encourage fathers to be involved in their daughters' wardrobe choices. Have them go shopping together and discuss why certain clothes are appropriate or inappropriate. Fathers should also assess their own clothing for modesty.

Study the woman in Proverbs 7 who lures men through seductive behavior

and compare her to the virtuous woman in Revelation who is clothed with the sun. What kind of men are attracted to immodest women? Fathers should explain to daughters how young men perceive revealing clothing and the inappropriate attention it invites.
When a girl dresses, she should consider how her appearance may affect men's thoughts. Modesty is not only about clothing but also about a respectful spirit and behavior.
As a girl matures, discuss courtship around age 18. Teach her how to maintain a godly balance between grace and modesty without being legalistic.

Does she dress and behave in a way that brings glory to God? Does she lead others toward purity or temptation? Prepare daughters early for a life that reflects God's character in their appearance, speech, and actions.

It is said that men are tempted to lust after women, and women are tempted to make men lust after them. Discuss this.

Does she desire to please God with her dress, or does she want to glorify herself and attract people's attention? Does she accept counsel regarding her attire, or does she wear whatever pleases her? Does she understand how men's eyes perceive clothing and what they think when they see a woman dressed in a certain way? Does she protect men from sinful thoughts through her dress? Does she wear clothes that cover her, or does she like to expose her body?

Does she dress like a girl, or does she prefer to dress like a boy? Does she seek to seduce men through her clothing, behavior, and speech? Does she overdo modesty to the point where she looks odd or unlike a young woman? Is she proud of dressing modestly and judgmental toward those who do not? Is she legalistic about her attire, focusing on outward appearance while harboring a rebellious spirit within? Does she impose her standards of appropriate dress on others?

"Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land;" – Proverbs 31:23. A man who is respected publicly must also be respected at home. Proverbs 12:4 emphasizes that a wise and respectful woman helps her husband grow in leadership and responsibility.

Respecting a husband begins when a girl is young, by honoring her father. Nagging is a habit to be avoided. She must learn to respect and recognize that her father and mother are authorities placed in her life by God. She should learn to respond politely when called by her father, assist him by welcoming him home, carrying his coat, preparing his meals, and serving him. She should

learn to thank her father and understand the things that please him, such as a newspaper, music, or books. Write a list of things that please or displease your father.

Read the book of Proverbs to understand the relationship between parents and children. Also, study Ephesians 5:33.

What actions demonstrate respect for your father? How does your mother show respect for your father? As women, we must strive to be examples for our children to follow. How do we support our husbands as helpers? How can a daughter show respect for her grandfather or brothers? Can you write a list of things that display disrespect? If a girl struggles to respect her parents, she should write down the reasons and examine what the Bible says about these issues.

Study the wives of Job, Michal, and Vashti—how did they fail to respect their husbands? Study Sarah and Esther—how did they show respect for their husbands? Observe children or women who lack respect for their husbands or parents. What kind of example do children receive from women who disrespect their husbands? How is a man's authority perceived in such a home? How is God's authority recognized in that household?

A daughter should discuss with her father the importance of respecting a husband. How should an employee, citizen, child, or wife respond if the authority over them does not deserve their respect (is unworthy of respect)? Are they still required to submit, even when the authority is sinful?

Does she speak to you and her father with respect? Does she use respectful words when addressing parents and other authorities? When you speak to her or call her, does she respond and turn her face toward you to listen? Do her facial expressions, gestures, and posture reflect obedience? Does she respect you both privately and publicly? Does she reveal your weaknesses to others? Does she correct or criticize you in front of others? Does she respect older people, police officers, and government leaders? Does she try to please you? Does she recognize you as the authority God has placed over her life? Does she value your opinions? Does she know how to express disagreement respectfully? Does she show embarrassment or shame in being your child? Does she mock or ridicule you in public?

Supporting a husband is crucial—young women should be taught this. This support enables our husbands to fulfill their God-given leadership responsibilities more effectively. A woman is a helper to her husband and should use her time and abilities to honor and serve him. By doing so, she can

become a crown to her husband. Sometimes, she may need to set aside her desires to serve her husband, and this is a lesson that should be learned early.

Some women may not consider this important because they are married to men who do not fear God, but even such men need to be respected (Matthew 20:28). Even the Son of Man came to serve others. Let her learn how to serve her younger siblings and brothers or sisters. She should ask her mother or other women, "What are your goals today?" She will see that many mothers focus on serving their families.

Let her learn how to please her brothers and sisters for a day. She should pray for her parents. Discuss ways to support her father in his work. Does she know how to set aside her interests to help others? She should observe how her mother supports her father. A daughter should ask her father how her mother has encouraged him in his God-given calling. How has she helped him throughout his life? Observe how daughters assist their fathers. Interview two men about how their wives have helped them succeed in life. How have their wives encouraged them to grow as leaders?

Study the lives of notable historical leaders and the roles their wives or mothers played in supporting their success (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

What role does a woman have in helping her husband? First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 show that a man needs his wife to support him in many areas. Look at Jesus as a servant—how did He serve others?

Consider women in the Bible like Sarah and Priscilla and how they supported their husbands. Study the lives of wives like Lot's wife, Haman's wife, Jezebel, and Herodias—how did they affect their husbands? Examine families where the wife refuses to support her husband—what are the outcomes? For wives who prioritize career ambitions over supporting their husbands, consider how this affects their children and spouses.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 highlight that men need their wives' support in many areas. Study how Jesus served others. Look at the examples of women like Sarah and Priscilla and how they aided their husbands. Consider the negative impact of women like Jezebel and Herodias on their husbands' lives. Reflect on the outcomes in homes where wives do not support their husbands. For women who prioritize their careers over their families, reflect on how this decision influences their husbands and children.

How can a family sin as a team? How can a wife be a help to her husband through her words—by praising his good qualities, being humble and respectful,

or through prayer? Write 15 ways to honor a husband. How can your role as a wife reflect the church's role as Christ's helper in your marriage?
Verse 24 shows the entrepreneurial spirit that our daughters should learn. We should teach our daughters how they can work from home to earn income and develop skills. A father or mother can create a small project to support the family—perhaps selling small items like water, sewing products, or baked goods. If there are jobs she can do for payment, she should take them.

Women like those in Acts 16:15 show us that women can sell fine goods. Discuss the benefits of a woman having an income-generating job at home rather than working outside the home. Learn about business licenses and government taxes. Interview women who run their businesses—what do they do? Consider a business that requires little capital and start it. How should a woman use the income she earns?

Does she do her work with excellence? Does she desire to please God with her work? Is she improving her craftsmanship? Does she have the skills to earn an income? Do others recognize her as a diligent worker? Do people like her products or services? Does she have entrepreneurial strategies? Does she enjoy working both outside and inside the home? When she sees a need, does she try to meet it? Does she want to earn money only for her own needs, or does she also desire to support her family and others?

"Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come;" (verse 25). This woman knows a life of faith, contentment, and gratitude. She understands that God holds the future. We need to help our daughters be content with what God and we, as parents, provide. We can discuss and write down things we are thankful for together. What is she grateful to her parents for? What is the difference between asking and giving thanks? Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Does she have jealousy or resentment? Study people in the Bible who were discontent. Whenever tempted to complain, read Philippians 2 and Isaiah 53. Should a daughter of the King live a life of discontent? Talk to an older woman about contentment. Discuss the meaning of the word covet. Write a list of things you are discontent with—your appearance, where you live, your family—then identify the root of this discontent in your heart and confess it to God. Look at Hebrews 11 and how each person listed lived a life of faith and contentment.

Is she thankful to God for what He provides? Does she demand things when shopping? Does she care if someone else gets more than she does? Does she desire what others have? Can she live through hard times and recognize God's

lessons through them?

Does she trust God as the provider? Does she focus on temporary things or eternal ones? Is she content with what she has, or does she want more? Does she express gratitude to her parents and appreciate their love? Does she give thanks for the services and kindness she receives? Does she love to complain and whine? Does she compete with others to get what she wants? Does she always fight for her rights? Does she indulge in self-pity? Does she envy other people's belongings or successes? Does she desire other people's blessings with bitterness?

God provides for our needs now and in the future. Who gave Adam his wife? What kind of people does God want us to be? Micah 6:6-8. Consider the women who supported Jesus' work—how many of them were unmarried? Encourage your daughter to recognize and visit unmarried women in her church community.

Can a daughter make her unmarried years meaningful through education, Bible study, ministry, Scripture memorization, and skill development? Does she understand the sin of same-sex marriage? Discuss this topic with her.

The Bible mentions women like Miriam, Rahab, Delilah, Mary, Martha, Esther, Anna, the widow of Zarephath, and the daughters of Zelophehad. How did their unmarried status help them serve God's purposes? How did God provide for their needs? What mistakes did they make, and what consequences did they face? 1 Corinthians 7:34-35.

Write down ways in which an unmarried woman without the responsibility of pleasing a husband can serve God effectively. How can her freedom allow her to be a blessing to God's work? What ways can she currently serve the church while being single? If God calls her to singleness, can she trust Him with that calling?

Talk to your parents about the possibility of being called to serve God without getting married. Why does God sometimes call people to remain single? How do these people support themselves? If you do not marry, will you live in your own home? Where will you seek counsel if you are single? Study the Bible's teachings on the calling to live a single life.

Read the book: "Did I Kiss Marriage Goodbye?" by Carolyn McCulley. Can a life of singleness be fulfilling and complete? Discuss the issue of loneliness.

Does she trust God for everything and find fulfillment in her relationship with Him? Does she understand that the enemy comes in many forms besides overt

sin—such as discouragement, hypocrisy, bad friendships, and weariness? Has she surrendered herself to serving others, starting within the home?

Does she have opportunities at home to learn how to be a wife and mother? Does she trust God to choose the right husband at the right time if that is His plan? Does she value your opinion about the boys who pursue her? Does she care more about marriage than obeying God? Does she daydream about marriage? Does she entertain inappropriate romantic thoughts?

Is it more important for her to be a mature, God-fearing woman or to get married to anyone? Does she feel jealous when her peers get married? Does she feel anxious knowing she might not get married? Is she aware that God may have called her to a life of singleness and service instead of marriage? Does she know that God has special plans for her, whether she gets married or not? Is she using her unmarried years to prepare herself for God's greater calling? Does she speak to single women in the church with kindness and love? Does she have a heart to care for the needs of the lonely?

Let us teach our daughters not to live lives of fear but of strength and courage. Let them understand the importance of prayer. When they feel afraid, they should rely on Him. Study God's promises and His protection. Look at how these women trusted God—Noah's wife, Lot's wife, Sarah, Esther, Jochebed, Deborah, and Ruth. Choose Psalms to read when feeling fearful. Consider the Israelites' fears in the book of Exodus. How did the people in Hebrews 11 demonstrate courage?

Interview several women and ask them about times they were tempted to be afraid—what happened when they were fearful, and what happened when they trusted God? Study the life of Sarah—what were her strengths and weaknesses? How did she respond when tested? Why is she mentioned as an example for those who have faith?

Does she fear trusting God to care for her? Does she have the faith of Romans 8:28? Does she know which Bible verses to read when she is afraid? When she is afraid, does she pray? Is she afraid to try something new? Is she afraid of what others think of her? Is she afraid of making mistakes? Is she afraid of the future? Can she say "no" when people ask her to do wrong? Is she afraid of getting hurt? Is she afraid to talk to people?

Does she worry, expect failure, and only see problems? Does she have the courage to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings with friends, siblings, teachers, or parents? Does she have the courage to admit when she's wrong? Is she willing to apologize when she offends someone? Does she fear God more

than humans? Can she tell a friend when they are sinning? Does she lose hope when she sins? Does she accept correction positively? Is she afraid to share her opinions? Is she afraid to witness about Christ? Is she afraid to express her feelings?

"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." The tongue cannot be restrained—it is full of restless evil and deadly poison. As parents, we must help our children "tame" their tongues early so they can be a blessing to their husbands, children, church, and community. David asked God to put a guard over his mouth. It is important to point out to our daughters when they speak improperly, and their friends can be guardians of their speech as well. We must not return evil for evil. How can we do this? Encourage your daughter to ask someone to hold her accountable for every careless word (Matthew 12:36-37).

Read and discuss James 3 together. Study people who have been helped by kind words and those whose lives were damaged by harmful speech. Consider words that lead to conflict, complaints, gossip, lies, exaggeration, false witness, and blasphemy. How can a woman control her speech? Study the story of Abigail or Pilate's wife. How can a woman offer words of encouragement or wise counsel? How can we control ourselves when speaking? How can we make our conversations a blessing (improving speech)?

Does she like to give people nicknames? Does she speak foolishly or in an annoying tone? Does she mock others? Does she enjoy whining and complaining? Does she like to gossip? Is her tone of voice harsh all the time? Does she yell when arguing with her siblings? Does she enjoy reporting others' mistakes? Does she use unkind words toward her siblings? Does she like to tease others? Does she enjoy criticizing, mocking, or belittling others sarcastically?

Does she take God's name in vain? Does she show respect for you and her father through her words? Do her words build others up or tear them down? Does she say whatever comes to mind, or does she filter her words? Does she correct others gently? Does she offer good advice? For a mother or wife, speaking with wisdom is crucial. Children must be trained to obey. A daughter should not be lazy in her work. We must teach our daughters how to have inner beauty beyond outward appearance.

Masakamomadi-Jersey 2012

GOD'S STEWARD

We are all God's stewards—everything we have is entrusted to us, and we will give an account for five or six key areas: time, talents, possessions, influence, relationships, health, and even our character. The greatest stewardship is to represent God correctly and walk in His footsteps. It means sharing the good news with others and living out that good news by offering our time and resources.

We cannot love without giving. Think about your friends and how your friendship is—often, you enjoy being with them and feel good about giving, even without being asked. You laugh wholeheartedly together. What about the Father of love, who loves us and provides us with every good thing—how much more should we give to Him?

Let us learn to live without selfishness and greed—that is where true joy and health are found. A cheerful heart is better than medicine, as Solomon said. We brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing out. Loving free things or preferring to receive more than to give is not a good thing.

Perhaps the greatest stewardship of all is to emphasize that stewardship goes beyond what we listed earlier—the most important stewardship is sharing God's mysteries of salvation or the gospel. It is about telling others of God's love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness—in short, revealing His character and His desire to live with us forever.

People will only recognize true stewards of God if they see us and our children loving others, acting justly, being humble, and showing mercy.

The widow who gave two small coins was commended not because of the little she gave but because of the zero she kept for herself! Too often, we give leftovers and what we do not need to the poor, orphans, widows, or those in need. Yet, to those we love, we give things they may not even need while keeping nothing back. Let us be cautious about this—I, too, have struggled with it and pray for wisdom to avoid it.

Jesus knew there were politicians and hypocrites (Pharisees), but He did not tell the widow to withhold her offering. Instead, He praised her for giving, even knowing there were greedy and corrupt individuals in the temple! This teaches us that it is our duty to return to God what belongs to Him.

Giving is for our own protection and that of our children—to shield us from greed and envy. The Tenth Commandment is the hardest to keep because it is invisible! It is easy to see jealousy in others when they have what we do not. We often judge how others should spend their money to help the

needy, but when it is our turn to give, we become hesitant and offer scraps to those in need—while spoiling our children with excess they do not even need, encouraging them to boast. Children will imitate our examples.

John D. Rockefeller, one of America's wealthiest oil magnates, was a miser and deeply unhappy. When he reached the age of fifty, he became seriously ill. A friend advised him to start giving generously to those in need, promising that he would find healing and a happier life. Rockefeller took the advice and lived to be ninety years old, spending his remaining years giving generously. The Rockefeller Foundation still supports schools, scholarships, and people with disabilities, among other causes.

Do not assume people give because they are wealthy—that is only half the story.

Jesus silenced the question of "Who is my neighbor?" forever by showing us that anyone in need—whether a relative, a stranger, a Chinese person, a Jew, or someone outside our group or tribe—is our neighbor.

Many times, I have been selfish and remembered a story I read when I was in first grade. It was about a very selfish woman. She had stepchildren who visited her where she lived. Her husband had set a trap for antelopes, and when she heard a noise, she knew that an antelope had been caught. She thought that those stepchildren would prevent her from enjoying the meat alone with her husband and biological children. She hurriedly sent the stepchildren away, as if she was chasing them back to their home. When she later went to check the trap, it turned out to be a leopard. It attacked her, and she was killed because she had no one to help her.

Many times, I have wanted to enjoy things by myself, where I could have invited others to share with me, but I failed to do so. I have encountered people who refuse to share their possessions, whether it's an inheritance or other resources, only for those things to be wasted or bring great sorrow. A person does not find true joy simply by what they own. True joy comes from knowing God, serving Him, and helping others. I believe extraordinary joy comes directly from God. When you serve or give, you feel overwhelmed by happiness—what I call a "smile attack"—even if you are wearing patched clothes, you experience a joy greater than those living in grand mansions. Speaking of grand mansions, a new trend has emerged where people build large houses but never welcome anyone inside. There was a kind-hearted woman who expanded her house so she could accommodate guests. Today, we build to gain praise, yet someone living in a thatched hut may be more helpful than those of us with big houses.

Some of us started from humble beginnings, walking barefoot. When we saw those who had many pairs of shoes, we thought they were cruel for not

sharing with us—if only they considered us, they would be blessed. Today, we give people worthless things—we buy expensive clothes, and when they no longer please us, we give them away just so others know they came from us.

Earthly possessions lose their value quickly. Today, I buy something new, and by tomorrow I wonder, "Why did I waste my money on this useless thing?" Some people refuse to give toward God's work, saying, "They will misuse my money at church, the temple, or the mosque." But think about it—if I give someone money to take to my parent and they misuse it, does that mean I will stop supporting my parent altogether? If there are people mismanaging church funds, they should be reported and held accountable. But do not withhold from God and miss your blessings because of people who are as fleeting as smoke.

If you think you have given too much to God, be at peace—He is not unjust. He will return to you everything you think you have overgiven. Your "change" will always come back to you! Remember, though, that the tithe—10% of your earnings—belongs to the Lord. The Word says that if you withhold your tithe, you are not merely stealing—you are robbing God with force, like an armed thief. A thief sneaks in when no one is looking, but a robber takes openly and by force. A believer who does not tithe is committing robbery—plain and simple. They are robbing God directly, and God knows it.

People say, "Show me your daily schedule and your budget, and I will tell you what your priorities are." Your checkbook is a theological document—it reveals what you believe about God and your love for Him. Do not hoard or deceive the poor by exploiting them in various ways. When we die, we cannot take our possessions with us, but we can send them ahead by helping those in need and giving to God's work.

It is also worth asking yourself how you spend your time online—what consumes your time? Last week, a woman told me she spends her entire day watching funny cat videos. What about you—what do you waste your time watching? This reflects who or what your god truly is.

Everyone has the gift of time—no one is without it! It is true that we may not have wealth, but what about time? Use your time and spiritual gifts wisely because the gifts of the Spirit are given to us to bless others. Read stewardship books like The Blessed Life and spend time praying for that work. You will be amazed at the love and joy you will experience.

I was shocked to learn that a billionaire from a poor country like India owns the most expensive house in the world, valued at two billion dollars! Meanwhile, Warren Buffet, the second-richest man in the United States, still lives in the same three-bedroom house he bought over fifty years ago. He drives an ordinary car and lives a simple life. He has been interviewed by many people,

and you can find his life story online.

Many people in developing countries act like someone who never expected to become wealthy—so they waste and flaunt their wealth in extravagant ways. There are two kinds of people who will never be rich—believers and Africans. I have taught this stewardship lesson in several countries across four continents. Africans and people who love God have responsibilities to their families and to support the gospel. If they truly understand this responsibility, they will always feel as if they do not have enough money—even if they are billionaires. Africans have many poor relatives, friends, and community needs. Even if I were to receive one hundred billion dollars today, there would still be much to do because we live in a global village.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who worked in West Africa as a physician, once said, "You are placed on earth by God, and you must remember your needy brothers." He dedicated his life to improving people's health in those countries. His life story is something everyone should read.

When billionaire John D. Rockefeller died, his accountant was asked by a newspaper, "How much did he leave behind?" The accountant replied, "He left it all!" He did not take anything with him—he left everything here on earth.

Even if we have many things, we cannot use them all. I can only wear one pair of shoes at a time, sleep in one bed at a time, and drive one car at a time. And no matter how much wealth we accumulate, we cannot eat tanzanite or gold. We still eat rice, beans, ugali, or vegetables. Let us teach our children to be generous and to help those in need.

Throughout life, we are always chasing happiness. We say, "Let me go to school, and I will be happy." Then, "Let me get a job, and I will be happy." Next, "Let me get married and have children, and I will be happy." Then, "Let me retire, and I will be happy." And so on—until old age arrives with its illnesses and frailty.

In 1969, my maternal grandmother visited us in Arusha. She was 48 years old, and to me, she seemed very old. I said to her, "Grandma, you are so old!" She replied, "Grace, I only turned my head, and suddenly I was old! It happened so quickly. One day, you will also grow old and wonder where the years went."

It is true—I came to America intending to stay for six years. Today, I have lived here longer than I ever did back home, and now I am older than my grandmother was in 1969. And I, too, marvel at how quickly time has passed!

We came into the world with nothing, and we will leave with nothing. However, we can send our treasures ahead (in advance) to heaven by doing good deeds—where moth and rust cannot destroy them. Give until it hurts,

not just what you were planning to throw away.

“I was hungry, and you fed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was in prison, and you visited me.” The Word tells us that doing these things from the heart—not out of obligation—is a passport to eternal life. Let us pray to be faithful stewards so that we will not hear the words, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” By the grace of God, I do not want to go to hell—what about you?

God will judge us for the wrong things we do and for the good things we fail to do (commission and omission). I know you will encounter people who are not good and will never be satisfied no matter how much good you do for them.

The Word of God says the Kingdom of Heaven is like a great pearl that, when a man found it, he sold everything he had to buy it. As children, we used to sing the song “Yankee Doodle,” which included a verse about a farmer who, while digging potatoes, found a diamond. He threw away his hoe, went to the city, bought a car, and became wealthy. The Kingdom of God is that valuable—something worth giving up everything to obtain.

Do not store up treasures on earth and become consumed by the love of money, for many have pierced themselves with sorrow because of it. People have done unimaginable things for the sake of money. The Bible says, “The love of money is the root of all evil.” Money can change your character—be careful. Many people who are poor criticize others for their greed, but when they become wealthy, they forget that they struggle with the same temptation. Often, we all have desires in our hearts, but poverty hides them because there is no opportunity to act on them.

Never stop giving your tithe (one-tenth of your income). Teach your children to give tithes and offerings. Encourage them to start small projects to earn money, even if it’s a little, so they can give from their own resources—not just from their parents—by the time they are around eight years old.

Many of us only do good for those we love, but even wicked people do the same for their friends and family. African culture emphasizes generosity to those we know—if we care for orphans, they are usually our relatives. If we help someone, it is usually a family member. One admirable thing about many Westerners is that they give to strangers through charities or organizations, such as orphanages or cancer research. I am not saying to neglect your family—forgetting your relatives is like being an unbeliever—but in your generosity, after helping six orphaned relatives, extend your kindness to a stranger in need.

I once met a preacher and his wife who told me they do not tithe because

their income is small. I asked them, “Do you eat? Do you have clothes? Do you own a farm?” If so, they could give from their produce. Many husbands or wives prevent their spouses from tithing—do not fall into this sin. Two people can often see things more clearly than one, so do not be a one-person committee making all financial decisions in your household.

Tithing is for our benefit, not God’s—He owns everything. Whether I give Him a few cents or not, He will never be poor. It is like asking your child for a small portion of the potato you gave them to teach them to be generous. If you think you have given God more than you should, remember—He is not like a businessperson waiting to keep your change! If you give more than expected, He will repay you. No one has ever given to God and become bankrupt. Hallelujah!

In the time of Moses, the Israelites gave up to 33%—a third of their income! As a result, no one was in need. The community developed systems to ensure everyone had enough for shelter, food, and other necessities. God’s plan always brings blessing and prosperity.

Empower your children and others by providing resources and guidance to help them become self-sufficient. Many wealthy people complain or deceive others with big promises they never fulfill. Some people who once relied on others forget their helpers once they become successful—until they need relationships or an audience to admire their accomplishments.

As the saying goes, “You cannot outgive God.” Start serving and loving God with all your heart and passion. He will provide the vision, the mission, the passion, and the provision.

Your influence is very important. When people love and respect you, do not misuse that position without wisdom. If someone offers themselves to you for evil purposes, do not accept it.

Pastor Kulakov from Russia once shared that when he was teaching high school students, a girl fell deeply in love with him and told him privately that she loved him and wanted them to be in a relationship or for him to marry her. Pastor Kulakov informed the girl’s mother, and she advised him, saying, “My dear son, when those under your authority love you and want to give themselves to you, do not misuse your authority. Even if this girl were an adult, you should not accept her offer of friendship unless you are ready to marry her. Do not ruin her life simply because she loves you.”

I also knew Dwight Nelson, a preacher from Michigan. One day, during a service I attended, he shared a story about a trip he took that week. He drove from Michigan to California, a distance of about 4,000 kilometers, in an old Honda. He said his car broke down about seven times along the way. After his sermon, the following week, about ten people volunteered to buy him a new

car! He had influence. Although he could have accepted the new car, he told those people to contribute the money to a charity fund to help those in need.

How many orphans, widows, the poor, or strangers are you helping today in your life? I ask myself the same question! Please reflect on this because it is the essence of humanity and true religion. Evaluate yourself today. Do you have cars lying unused in your yard, which people who did not work for them will fight over after you die? Start distributing your wealth where it is needed.

Colgate, the wealthy man, loved God deeply. He gave more than 10% of his wealth to help those in need and to support God's work so that many could go to heaven. However, when he died, he forgot to write a will. His children did not care about others or God, and they squandered his wealth, forgetting the values their father upheld. Today, write your will—it does not mean you will die soon. Not at all. Give your children just enough to help them work hard and manage their lives independently without becoming destitute. As you raise them, show them that you care for the poor, widows, and orphans, and teach them to live blamelessly.

In Israel, it was God's plan for every family to own land so that poverty would not exist. People with land will never be poor if they work hard to cultivate it. Developed countries began by ensuring food self-sufficiency and preserving it in storehouses. Later, they became distracted by buying weapons. They could not purchase weapons without first having food security!

Not giving tithes is like visiting someone while bringing them a basket of groceries and other gifts. After you leave, they keep even the basket. In African culture, they should not return the basket empty—they should try to put something in it as a token of gratitude. What would you think of such a person? That they are ungrateful. This is how we treat our God. After blessing us abundantly, we hold onto everything, even the "basket!" But when we give, we are blessed. He said we should test Him and see if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings.

Some people have been blessed to give more than 10%. For example, a pharmacist in Switzerland was so blessed that he gave 90% of his income as tithe because all his needs were met. Do not be stingy or count small things greedily. If you have plenty, follow John the Baptist's message: "Anyone who has two coats should share with the one who has none."

If your size hasn't changed, you don't need to keep buying clothes and other unnecessary items. As a traveler to heaven, use your money to save souls, not to accumulate things. After all, the Holy Spirit is not the "Spirit of Possessions," as evangelist Mukangara humorously puts it.

Simplify your life—they say, "Less is more." You may have fewer possessions, but your heart is full of joy, and your spirit is enriched, making you feel richer

than Bill Gates because God has given you a contented heart. Even when you wear simple things, people marvel and ask, “Where did you get that?” You radiate an unexplainable beauty.

I believe heaven will be wonderful, not because of material things, but because of the joy in our hearts—sitting by the flowing river, sharing laughter with loved ones, and enjoying the company of angels and the voice of God. All your troubles will be gone—no death, sorrow, crying, pain, or evil. Material things will not matter—gold will merely be the pavement we walk on!

If you have talents, beauty, a good personality, or writing skills, use them to win souls. Do not let them fill you with pride, thinking, “I am the best.” Be humble. Do you know that a truly humble person is unaware of their humility? Once, a village awarded a very humble man with a medal for his humility. The next day, when he wore it, they took it back because he was now boasting about it!

Budget wisely to avoid debt. I have been burdened by housing debt and pray day and night to be free from it. Fear debt as you would a deadly disease. Love only. If you are in debt, you may fail to give to God because you are afraid of imprisonment. Some even claim, “God understands that I have debts, so I cannot give my tithe or offering.”

Learn to live within your means. Do not buy what you do not need or live on credit. Many husbands control household finances alone. But if your wife does not work, she has many needs. Imagine if the roles were reversed—she earned the money and did not involve you at all, except for occasional reports.

Children often recognize their mothers’ sacrifices. When they start earning, they tend to support their mothers, leaving behind fathers who were stingy and uncaring. These fathers may end up lonely, cooking their own meals. Some children even take their mothers abroad, leaving the fathers behind. Yet, it is a sin to neglect either parent.

Mothers should defend their husbands and co-parents. Sometimes, mothers paint an exaggerated picture of their suffering, failing to acknowledge their husbands’ positive contributions. We must be careful not to sow seeds of hatred in our children.

Once, during an argument with my husband, I vented my frustrations to my seven-year-old child. He responded, “Don’t worry, Mom—when Dad comes home, my sibling and I will beat him up.” His younger sibling was only three years old! That’s when I realized my mistake and prayed for God’s forgiveness. I know He has forgiven me.

I used to give freely when I had no debts, but now I constantly complain about my debts. Let us pray for each other to overcome this burden and for God to

bless our incomes.

“Shall I come before the Lord empty-handed?” That is a children’s song. Should I withhold from God because of a mortgage or school loan? It is shameful.

Teach your children to give tithe and offerings. Let them see you giving during worship services. Reduce digital transactions occasionally so they can witness you giving physical money. Teach them how to manage finances to avoid future troubles.

Help orphans, charities, and ministries that bring people to the Lord. Do not neglect your family—“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives is worse than an unbeliever.”

Do not let anyone, including your spouse or relatives, hinder you from helping those in need. I have never seen anyone become poor by helping the poor. God’s promises are true.

Some will criticize a peaceful marriage, suggesting that a loved wife must be “controlling” or that the couple will eventually separate. Focus on your spiritual journey—judgment day is coming for us all.

One person rejoiced and laughed when his neighbor’s child encountered misfortune, saying, “He has joined our group. He has become like us, or his children will be worse than mine!” Yet, that person never inquired about your children and may have even prayed for you.

Another person saw a man opening a car door for his wife and remarked, “This must be something new; either it’s a new wife or a new car!” Do not be someone who wishes for others to fail—pray for them. God still has the power to change people—after all, Saul became Paul without even asking for it.

I once lived with my friend and his wife in Michigan. They showed me a letter from their brother who had supported their high school education. It read:

“Dear ones, we paid for your education and told you to buy us a truck and a tractor. To this day, you have not done so. You went to America, and now you have changed. We will pray that God cuts off your legs so that you will remember us and see our worth!”

These friends cried bitterly because they had come to study in the United States through their own efforts. They were paying rent and surviving by doing small jobs—one guarded the graves of white people, while the other changed adult diapers for elderly white people. You will encounter such people, but do not let it discourage you from helping those in need when you have the means. Every day when you wake up, commit your plans to the Lord and ask Him to guide you.

Carry books and read while waiting for a bus or something else. Give people

the gift of good books. It's not enough to smile and laugh with people without offering them something good if you have it. Your influence should not aim to elevate yourself but to make God visible in your life. Even if you have been blessed with a beautiful home, invite people in and lovingly tell them about the coming judgment on the world.

Do you know the Scriptures say that God has three books? One of them records deeds. These books will be brought out on the Day of Judgment, and every act—whether good or bad—will be revealed. The movie of our lives will be played out, and everything we have done will be shown, even the things we were supposed to do but did not.

Do you remember those secret things you do—things you do not want your spouse, child, sibling, or anyone else to know? All of them will be revealed. However, the sins we confess will not be brought up. When God forgives, He erases them completely and buries them as deep as the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean—seven miles deep! Even if our sins are as red as blood, they will become as white as the snow on Mount Kilimanjaro if we confess them. Beloved reader, have you confessed your sins today and sought forgiveness to start a new chapter of your life?

One way to set a good example for your children is by helping others become self-reliant rather than making them dependent on you. Teach a person how to fish instead of just giving them fish. Provide your children with education or land so they can be independent. Help orphans and widows.

In his book "Rich Christians in the World of Hunger," Ron Sider presents astonishing insights. He explains that research shows that God has been remarkably faithful: "I will make you the head and not the tail." He states that 80% of the world's wealth is in the hands of people who profess faith in God and Christ. Yet, he laments that many believers are incredibly stingy. Although God has blessed us with trillions, we often give only loose change to the poor instead of developing programs to empower them.

Rather than offering sustainable resources like cows, goats, or other productive ventures, we give temporary relief like flour—something that will be consumed without generating more. This is a kind of cruelty. It is far better to provide education or small capital to help people lift themselves out of poverty. Let them not always stand before you flattering and bowing.

The Chinese say: If you want to make a difference for one day, eat at a fancy restaurant. If you want to make a difference for a month, get married (a poor example). If you want to make a difference for a year, plant a garden. But if you want to make a difference for a lifetime, invest in people—help them gain education or send children to school.

We often claim that the poor are liars or lazy. But when we were in need,

we did not think like this—we wanted help, and we were grateful when we received it. Now that we are doing well, we analyze too much before offering help, insisting on thorough investigations to ensure people are genuine. But is it your job or mine to judge the authenticity of their needs? Only God has that task.

Some say, "If I give them money, they'll spend it on alcohol." While that may be true, when will you help a widow, an orphan, or a poor person if you spend so much time scrutinizing their motives? Jesus' words—"I was hungry, thirsty, naked, and imprisoned"— do not suggest we conduct investigations before helping. God will judge—our role is to give.

I sometimes watch disaster images—people suffering in floods or other crises—and feel moved. Yet, even though I see their pain, how often do I give even a dollar to help? It is unfair to treat human suffering as mere entertainment while refusing to lift a finger to help.

Do not let anyone become dependent on you through begging. Some believers are incredibly stingy when they have much but are quick to tell others how to serve God when they have nothing.

I once met a Tanzanian friend who boasted that his suit cost $5,000! Yet, when we hear of people in need, we only give a few coins, thinking we are being generous. In reality, we are shortchanging both the poor and ourselves.

Let me also speak to those who ask for help while insulting or harassing others. If your situation is dire and you need assistance, do not curse or abuse people. Be respectful when asking for help, even from family members—they have the right to decide whether to help you or not.

I struggle against selfishness and pray daily for the grace to continue giving because we cannot touch the Creator without touching His creation. No matter how much you have, you cannot wear two pairs of shoes at once, drive three cars simultaneously, or sleep in two beds at the same time. Even if I visit you, you won't eat gold or diamonds—you'll still eat the same simple food. Give generously until it hurts, not just the loose change you don't care about. Remember, the widow who gave two small coins was praised for giving all she had left.

Check your home for items you no longer need—give them away. I, too, have accumulated things I plan to give away someday. A woman I know realized she had 200 DVDs and cassette tapes she no longer used. She decided to sell them and use the money to support God's work.

A friend from South Africa, Grace Zuzo, once told me, "If you have 20 or 30 outfits, that's enough. Any clothing you haven't worn in over a year isn't yours—give it away."

I have realized that when I give away my clothes, it is not always a genuine sacrifice. Often, I only give things that are out of fashion or that I no longer want. While the poor may benefit, my giving lacks true generosity. I spend large sums on my wardrobe but hesitate to give real money to support God's work—choosing instead to give my worn-out leftovers to the poor.

I have been reflecting on these things. You too can ponder them.

When you buy something just to own it and appear fashionable, then give it away, it may seem fine if you give it to a fellow human being. However, when it comes to God, you might need to reconsider. If you worship in the same church or live in the same village with the people you give your used items to, you may be humiliating them. When everyone sees them wearing your second-hand clothes, they will know that you are the one who donated them.

Some people build houses in every city, which do not generate any income but instead incur maintenance costs. They only visit once a year with their workers so that the poor people in the area can celebrate and say, "The rich man has arrived." A friend from Korogwe made me laugh when he said that his house had been empty for so long that even monitor lizards had moved in and lived there.

Buying things without careful consideration is a problem, except when it comes to investments. Some people build large mansions like caves and are unable to even dust some of the rooms. Their children have moved away, yet they struggle to clean the floors and remove cobwebs instead of focusing on serving others. Large mansions were never a part of African culture, but now we are embracing them while Westerners are trying to downsize. They build big houses because of their long winters, which keep them indoors. But we have the blessing of the sun—we can live in smaller houses, spend time outdoors, breathe fresh air, and enjoy the sunshine! Our Maasai brothers only go indoors to sleep—they do not spend the whole day inside, and that is healthy.

Nowadays, there is a challenge of managing wealth and time. Therefore, we advise spiritual leaders not to have more than six children. This is no longer the age to bear ten children as in the past. One friend said, "I will keep having children until my eggs are finished. God created us to have children, so I will give birth to as many as He gives me." Yet, God also created the natural cycle of safe days when a woman cannot conceive. Use those days because, even if you are capable, how will you prepare for the judgment of God which is coming soon if you still have young children for 30 years?

However, inquire about family planning methods that do not terminate a conceived pregnancy. Raising children today is tough—be careful not to get overwhelmed because parenting is a lifelong commitment. Even if they argue

with their spouse or face troubles, they will always come back to you, and you will have to start over with your grandchildren because a parent's love never ends.

It is easier to be kind to strangers, but our words often cut down those closest to us. We must remain humble everywhere. In our parenting guidebook, many parents—especially mothers—speak words that crush their children's spirits. We may not believe these words, but we utter them out of anger: "You'll never amount to anything in life!" That is a heavy blow—it's better to discipline the child with a rod. Or, "You're a dog, just like your father!" Are these truly the words of a human being created in the image of God?

Think about it—dogs give birth to dogs. And if you married a "dog," what does that say about your choice? Our words are also a testimony. Do you enjoy cursing and speaking foul language all the time to those inside and outside your home? Stop—it does no good to your health. Find some soap, bleach, and a toothbrush to clean your mouth every time you utter filthy words, and eventually, you will stop.

Let us avoid the habit of swearing. Doug Batchelor from Amazing Facts encouraged me. He said that even after knowing God for several years, he still struggled with swearing. Despite being a powerful preacher who preached everywhere, he was overwhelmed by cursing. Finally, he knelt down and prayed, "Lord, my mouth is unclean. I try not to curse, but when I get angry, I unleash all kinds of words. Help me." He said from that day on, all the swearing stopped. That is my prayer too—that God may deliver me from swearing. And when you gain victory over anything, give thanks to God and share your testimony. They say that testifying about God's goodness brings down the devil—"They overcame him by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb."

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." We made a vow to God that if He helped us finish school, we would give 25% of our income back to Him in tithes and offerings and help those in need. When I finished school and started earning $2,000 a month, I moved out of my place to allow new people to be helped by the kind missionaries. Then, I began giving 25%—eventually up to 50%—in tithes, offerings, and to those in need.

God blessed us, and we worked with pastors and laypeople to build about 80 small churches ("bush churches") and sponsor 350 laypeople for various training programs. The pastors and laypeople also made us their partners in organizing around 65 public evangelistic meetings.

It has been a journey of faith. We discovered that a Christian has no limits—whatever a believer is doing, join them, and you will receive a blessing. We never sat down to plan everything because we are not planners by nature,

but many people have blessed us by including us in their plans.

Indeed, we cannot do great things, but we can do small things with love. And even if our work is just a drop in the ocean, let us remember that every drop is what makes the ocean.

We used to think that if we had more money or time someday, we would do this or that for God's work. But we found that there was never a time when we had extra savings. Instead, we gave little by little from each paycheck and devoted our time and resources consistently.

My brother-in-law once laughed at the small churches we were building and said, "These foundations are weak—they will collapse. I am waiting until I can build a $50,000 church with a youth center on the upper floor." Ten years later, he came back to me and said, "I've realized that the right time may never come because money comes in and disappears. It's better to build these small church shelters like you do!"

One day, a pastor called us to build a church for the needy in Kigoma. We had no resources. He said, "Don't you even have 100 dollars to get women to fetch water, mix the mud, and bring wood so I can build these people a house made of mud and thatch?"

Before we think of the stars in the sky, let us first consider the small things that God enables us to do each day. Who knows—perhaps one day He will entrust us with greater tasks? Our greatest need is prayer; please join us in prayer so that the Lord may use us in His field. He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion—this is an encouragement to us in our stewardship. Our response should be, "Here I am, Lord, send me!" In short, let us remember that not only 10% of all we have belongs to the Lord, but 100%.

I have often asked myself, "Where will I get the resources?" Since I gave birth when I was over 40 years old, and my children are still young, I have wondered—if I give to others, how will my children go to school? Indeed, it is a challenge to provide education, and we have started this work, which is no small task. I am nearing retirement, my strength is fading, but my children are still young.

One day, while walking through the neighborhood I used to live in—Jersey City, New Jersey, just three miles from Manhattan, where those tall buildings were bombed by terrorists—I saw a man with a very large and beautiful white dog. I ran up to him and asked how much the dog weighed. He said, "140 kilograms!" I was amazed. He continued to boast, saying, "This dog eats a lot!" I asked how much he spends on the dog's food each month, and he said, "I spend a thousand dollars every month!"

I was shocked because there were six of us in my household, and we probably

spent less than 500 dollars a month, while this man was spending twice that amount on just one dog. Then, the answer came to my heart—this man loves his dog and has asked his God to help him fulfill his desire to keep a pet. If you love people, ask God to help you—He will never abandon you. He will assist you in doing the work of helping others and furthering His mission.

Let us support one another in prayer so that we may become faithful stewards and overcome selfishness. May God also open the windows of heaven for us—after all, a house has more windows than doors!

If you were told today that you only had 24 hours to live and that you would die tomorrow, what would you do immediately? John Wesley said, "I would live just as I live every day." He outlined his daily schedule:

"I will wake up in the morning, read the Bible, and pray. Then I will take food to the widow and her children. After that, I will attend the morning worship service, work in my garden for two hours, visit people house to house, and share the Gospel…"

David asked, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" He realized that God owns everything. What could a mere mortal give to God? David concluded that the only thing he could do was to thank the Lord, tell others about His goodness, obey His commands, and uphold His testimonies

The Bible mentions seven major covenants that God made with people

1. The First Covenant—Adam (Genesis 1–3

2. The Second Covenant—Noah (Genesis 6–9)

3. The Third Covenant—Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3)

4. The Fourth Covenant—Moses and the Nation of Israel (Known as the Sinai or Mosaic Covenant; Exodus 19–24)

5. The Fifth Covenant—Phinehas (Numbers 25:10–13

6. The Sixth Covenant—David (2 Samuel 7:5–16)

7. The Seventh Covenant—The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

Read the following scriptures. What do they mean when they mention the "everlasting covenant"?

Genesis 9:16

Genesis 17:7

Isaiah 55:3

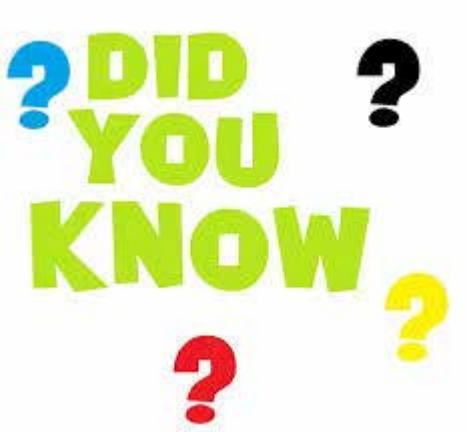
Hebrews 13:20

We agree together that the New Jerusalem is not in ruins or desolation as in the time of Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther, and Zerubbabel. Instead, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth.

AMAZING FACTS BIBLE STUDY

WE SHALL TAKE THE ENGLISH VERSION!

AMAZING NEWS



AMAZING BIBLE TEACHINGS FOR EVERYONE

BIBLE STUDIES

In These Morally Challenging Times

Lesson 1

In these morally challenging times—where billions of people are deceived by trusted corporate fraud, spiritual leaders are exposed as liars, lying in politics is commonplace, and those you rely on often hurt you the most—is there anything left that you can trust? Yes! You can completely trust the Bible! Why? Just consider the evidence...

The Bible is not a collection of human ideas. Its authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

1. What does the Bible claim about itself?

The Bible says:
"All Scripture is God-breathed." (2 Timothy 3:16)
"Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)
"The Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35)

Answer: It claims divine authority. It was written by people who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. It cannot be broken or proven untrue.

Jesus quoted the Bible and declared it to be the truth.

2. How did Jesus demonstrate His confidence and faith in the Scriptures?

Jesus said:
“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”
“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”
“It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.’” (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10)

“Your word is truth.” (John 17:17)
Answer: Jesus quoted the Scriptures when facing Satan’s temptations. He also declared that the Bible is truth (John 17:17). He consistently referred to Scripture as the authoritative truth in His teachings.

Before Cyrus was born, God’s prophet in the Bible named him as the general who would overthrow Babylon.

3. Does Bible prophecy confirm that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit?

The Bible says:
“I am the Lord ... I declare new things; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.” (Isaiah 42:8-9)
“I am God ... declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.” (Isaiah 46:9-10)

Answer: The Bible’s predictions of future events confirm its divine inspiration as they are fulfilled. Consider the following examples of fulfilled Bible prophecies:

Four world empires would arise: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8).

Cyrus would be the military leader who captures Babylon (Isaiah 45:1-3).

After Babylon’s destruction, it would never be inhabited again (Jeremiah 51:37).

Egypt would never again have a commanding role among nations (Ezekiel 29:14-15; 30:12-13).

Global disasters and fear would increase toward the end of time (Luke 21:25-26).

A moral and spiritual decline would occur in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

4. Can we expect the Bible's scientific statements to be accurate?

The Bible says:
"Your word is true from the beginning." (Psalm 119:160)
"The Spirit ... will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13)

Answer: Yes, the Bible is true. The Holy Spirit, who guided the Bible's authors, always speaks the truth. Here are a few scientific statements from the Bible confirmed by modern science:

"He ... hangs the earth on nothing." (Job 26:7) – This scientific fact came from Job, the oldest book of the Bible.

"He ... sits above the circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22) – The Bible declared the earth is a sphere centuries before humans discovered it.

"To make the weight for the wind." (Job 28:25) – Long before scientists knew, God said the air has weight.

"By Him [Jesus] all things consist." (Colossians 1:17) – The Greek word translated "consist" literally means "hold together" or "stick together." Many Bible translations say, "hold together." This addresses the mystery of nuclear physics—why do atoms hold together? Science says they should fly apart, but they do not. Some scientists marvel at what unknown force holds them together. The Bible reveals that this mysterious force is the Creator Himself—God.

The Bible is not only a spiritual guide but also provides accurate insights into the natural world—long before human discovery.

Many diseases would not exist if ancient God's moral laws were followed.

5. Are the biblical health principles relevant to the 21st-century mind?
Answer: Cover excrement with dirt (Deuteronomy 23:12, 13).
The biblical instruction during the time of Moses that bodily waste should be buried was given 3,500 years ahead of its time and saved countless Jewish lives. Serious problems still arise today when sanitation is not properly handled.

"Neither let us commit fornication." (1 Corinthians 10:8).
The word "fornication" refers to all forms of sexual immorality, including homosexuality and other practices that God forbids in Scripture. There would be no outbreaks of sexually transmitted diseases or AIDS if this modern biblical

counsel were obeyed, nor would abortion be the global scandal it is today.

Avoid alcoholic beverages (Proverbs 23:29–32).
If this highly effective biblical solution were followed, imagine what it would mean:

Millions of alcoholics would become temperate, respectable citizens.

Millions of families would be reunited.

Countless broken homes would be restored.

Thousands of lives would be saved through sober driving.

Thousands of government leaders, businesspeople, and professionals would make clear-headed decisions.

Billions of dollars would be freed up for humanitarian use.

The use of alcohol has brought unspeakable sorrow to many people.
Remember: God not only tells us how to live happily amid today's terrifying problems but also gives us the extraordinary power to do so (1 Corinthians 15:57; Philippians 4:13; Romans 1:16). The Bible's health principles are practical and urgently needed, but few pay attention to them. For more information on health, see Study Guide 13.

Archaeological discoveries repeatedly confirm the accuracy and truth of the Bible.

6. Are the historical statements in the Bible accurate?
The Bible says, "I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right." (Isaiah 45:19, RSV).

Answer: Yes, the historical records of the Bible are accurate. What God says in His book is true. Sometimes, evidence to confirm certain biblical historical facts may not be available immediately, but over time, such evidence emerges. Consider the following:

For years, skeptics claimed the Bible was unreliable because it mentioned the Hittite nation (Deuteronomy 7:1) and cities like Nineveh (Jonah 1:1–2) and Sodom (Genesis 19:1), which they believed never existed. However, modern archaeology has confirmed the existence of all three.

Critics also claimed that the biblical kings Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1) and Sargon (Isaiah 20:1) never existed, but archaeological evidence has since confirmed their existence.

Some doubters argued that the Bible's mention of writing (Exodus 24:4) and wheeled vehicles (Exodus 14:25) during Moses' time was false. However, modern findings have proven these practices existed during that era.

At one point, the only record of 39 kings of ancient Israel and Judah during the divided kingdom came from the Bible, leading critics to question their existence. Yet, archaeological inscriptions have confirmed many of these kings. Time and again, new discoveries validate biblical people, places, and events—proving the Bible's accuracy.

7. One of the greatest miracles of the Bible is its unity. Consider these amazing facts:

Answer:
A. The 66 books of the Bible were written:

On three continents.

In three languages.

By approximately 40 different people—kings, shepherds, scientists, lawyers, military leaders, fishermen, priests, and a physician.

Over approximately 1,500 years.

On the most controversial subjects.

By people who, in many cases, had never met.

By writers with widely different backgrounds and levels of education.

B. Yet, despite these differences:

The 66 books maintain perfect harmony with one another.

New concepts are often introduced, but they do not contradict what other biblical writers say about the same topics.

C. This is astonishing!

If you ask several people who have witnessed the same event to provide a report, their accounts will usually differ and often contradict each other. Yet, the Bible—written by 40 authors over 1,500 years—reads as if it were written by a single mind. Indeed, it was: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit "moved" the writers—He is the true Author of the Bible. Although the four Gospels sometimes present events differently, they complement one another perfectly.

Accepting Christ and obeying the Scriptures transforms a drunkard, an immoral person, and a sinner into a loving, temperate, and pure Christian. Skeptics cannot explain this reality.

8. What evidence of the Bible's inspiration is found in the lives of people?
The Bible says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Answer: The transformed lives of those who follow Jesus and obey the Scriptures provide the most heartwarming evidence of the Bible's divine inspiration. A drunkard becomes sober; the immoral become pure; addicts are set free; the irreligious become devout; the fearful become courageous; and the rude become kind.

An American critic once visited an island where the inhabitants had been cannibals. Seeing an old man reading the Bible, he mockingly remarked that the book was filled with "fables long since debunked." The islander smiled and replied, "My friend, you should be grateful we believe this book—otherwise, you would be our dinner." The Bible truly changes people, offering undeniable proof of its divine inspiration.

9. What evidence of the Bible's inspiration appears when we compare Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah with New Testament events in the life of Jesus?
The Bible says, "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." (Luke 24:27). "For [Apollos] vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 18:28, NKJV).

Answer: The Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were specific and were fulfilled so clearly by Jesus of Nazareth that both He and Apollos used these prophecies to prove to the Jews that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. There are over 125 prophecies about the Messiah. Here are just 12 of them:

Prophecy		Maandiko ya Agano la Kale	Utimilifu wa Agano Jipya
1.	Native of Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Mathew 2:1
2.	Virgin birth	Isaiah 7:14	Mathew 1:18-23
3.	Of the lineage of David	Jeremiah 23:5	Revelation 22:16
4.	Attempted murder by herod	Jeremiah 31:15	Mathew 2:16-18
5.	Betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9	John 13:18 , 19 , 26
6.	Sold for 30silver coins	Zechariah 11:12	Mathew 26:14-16
7.	Crucifixion	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:16-18 , 37
8.	Lots cast for his clothes	Psalms22:18	Mathew 27:35
9.	Not a one was broken	Psalms 34:20 Exodus 12:46	John19:31-36
10.	Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53:9	Mathew 27:57-60
11.	Year,day,hour of his passing	Daniel 9:26 , 27 Exodus 12:6	Mathew27:45-50
12.	Resurrected on the third day	Hosea 6:2	Acts10:38-40

##table

Dr. Peter Stoner, former chairman of the departments of mathematics, astronomy, and engineering at Pasadena College in California, worked with 600 students over several years using the "principle of probability" to examine prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. They selected only eight prophecies out of the many available and ultimately determined that the likelihood of all eight being fulfilled by one person in a lifetime is one in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. What would the probability be for more than 125 Messianic prophecies? It could not have happened by chance!

*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.
The Bible teaches that the earth was created in six literal days.

10. What great benefit does a person receive by accepting the Bible as God's inspired Word?

The Bible says, "I understand more than the ancients because I keep Your precepts." (Psalm 119:100) "You ... have made me wiser than my enemies."

(Psalm 119:98) “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways.” (Isaiah 55:9)

The Bible’s account of the Flood provides answers that secular scholars seek. Answer: A person who accepts God’s Word will soon know the answers to many complex challenges that secular scholars will never be able to find. For example, the Bible teaches:
God created the earth and all living creatures in six literal 24-hour days (Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:6, 9).

A worldwide flood destroyed every living creature except marine life and those inside Noah’s ark (Genesis chapters 6, 7, 8).
The various languages of the world originated at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).

God, who has always existed and knows everything, shares these three truths with us, knowing that we could never discover them on our own. We currently “know in part” (1 Corinthians 13:9), and God’s knowledge “surpasses understanding” (Romans 11:33). Evolutionists will never know the true age of the earth because it was created with apparent age—just as Adam and Eve were.

The couple was only one day old on their second day of life, but they appeared as fully mature adults. Human measuring instruments cannot account for apparent age. In such cases, they are unreliable. Trust the Bible, and you will always be ahead of secular and worldly wisdom.

11. What major world events have highlighted the power and appeal of the Bible?
Answer: The collapse of communism and the weakening of the theory of evolution have emphasized the Bible’s authority.

True science will always align with the Bible because God is the author of both.

Note: The Soviet Union tried communism, rejected God, and adopted evolution—the core principle of Marxism. All three failed. Emerging democracies recognize that only one thing will work, and almost unanimously, they call for the Christian faith: “Bring us the Bible and Christian teachings and preaching. We must now build on the solid foundation of prayer and Christian faith. Nothing else will work. Nothing else will answer the great questions of life and bring peace to the hearts of our people. Please, do not make us wait! We are yearning for and need the Bible, God, and Christianity

now." Once again, God's Word prevails.

Evolution, like communism, is losing its credibility and coherence. We must remember that it is nothing more than an unproven and shaky theory. Here are just three points:

1. Robert Gentry's book, Creation's Tiny Mystery, has unsettled many evolutionists with its clear evidence of an instantaneous creation. His book, Mystery in the Rocks, is easy to understand and based on his research—it is available from Amazing Facts.

2. Recent molecular biology evidence shows that a single cell is so complex that the accidental origin of life is mathematically impossible.

3. The drastically revised scientific dating of the layers in the Grand Canyon—contradicting earlier claims—exposes the irresponsibility and inaccuracy of evolutionary methods.

The atheistic theory of evolution, which claims that humans and apes evolved from a common ancestor, denies the biblical teaching that people were created in the image of God. It rejects the existence of God, denies Jesus as the Savior, undermines the Bible, and mocks the truth of eternal life in heaven. Satan loves the theory of evolution because it undermines the credibility of salvation. Communists are learning—are you?

The Bible appeals to people everywhere because it provides clear answers to life's most perplexing questions.

12. Why is the Bible so appealing worldwide?

The Bible says:
"Your word is ... a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)
"These things I have spoken to you ... that your joy may be full." (John 15:11)
"In the image of God ... He created them." (Genesis 1:27)
"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)
"I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3)
Answer: Because it answers life's most puzzling questions:
Where did I come from?

God created us in His image. We did not emerge accidentally from a cosmic accident. We are the sons and daughters of the Almighty King (Galatians

3:26). We are so valuable to God that when Adam and Eve sinned, He gave His Son to die and pay the penalty for our sins, setting us free. God wants to restore us to His image and, soon, to restore us to Eden—the paradise Adam and Eve lost.
Why am I here?

Our life's purpose today should be to discover the Bible's wonderful answers to life's perplexing problems and to accept Jesus' offer to restore us to His image (Romans 8:29).
What is the future?
There is no guesswork about the future. Jesus will soon return to take His people to the glorious home He has prepared for them in heaven. There, with great joy and happiness, people will live forever (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:3, 4).

13. I thank God for giving me positive answers to the perplexing questions in life.

Answer

Questions for Thought

1. I am disturbed that the Bible gives such shocking and explicit accounts of sin when recording the lives of certain people mentioned in it. Is this really necessary? (Romans 15:4)
Yes. This is one of the main reasons the Bible is trustworthy. Most biographies either omit or downplay faults and often exaggerate virtues. Telling it as it is gives people confidence that the Bible can be trusted because it does not hide the truth. Moreover, Satan's strategy is to make people believe they are too sinful for God to save or accept them. How joyful it is for those people to see Bible stories of individuals like them—or even worse—whom God redeemed from sin and justified! (Romans 15:4)

2. Is the entire Bible inspired by the Spirit? Many believe only parts of it are. (2 Timothy 3:16)
The Bible answers: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible does not merely contain God's Word—it is God's Word. It is the manual for human life and conduct. Ignore any part of it, and you will encounter unnecessary difficulties and troubles.

3. The Bible is an ancient book with outdated words and concepts. Don't you think it's unsafe to rely on something so far removed from our modern,

enlightened age? (1 Peter 1:25)

No. Its age is part of its greatness. In fact, that is one of the proofs of its divine nature. The Bible says, "The Word of the Lord endures forever." (1 Peter 1:25). The Bible stands firm like a rock—it is God's book, His Word. It cannot be destroyed. Humans and even entire nations have burned, banned, and tried to discredit and destroy the Bible, yet in the end, they discredit themselves. They fade away, and their attacks are forgotten. Yet the Bible remains the world's best-selling and most sought-after book. Millions would die for it if necessary. Its message comes from God and is 100% reliable. Before reading it, pray and ask God to open your heart as you study.

4. Some of the world's most intelligent people, who have studied the Bible thoroughly, believe no one can truly understand it. If the Bible is really God's book, shouldn't everyone be able to understand it?
People with brilliant minds who can comprehend and explain nearly anything are often stumped when they read the Bible. The reason is that spiritual matters "are discerned only through the Spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:13, 14). The deep things of God's Word will never be understood by worldly intelligence, no matter how gifted a person may be. Unless someone sincerely seeks an experience with God, they cannot understand God's truths. The Holy Spirit, who explains the Bible (John 16:13; 14:26), is beyond the comprehension of the natural, worldly mind. On the other hand, a humble Christian—even without formal education—can receive astonishing insights from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 11:25; 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10).

5. The Bible is full of errors. How can you believe it is inspired? (Isaiah 28:9)
Many of the so-called errors in the Bible have been shown to be misunderstandings or misjudgments by critics. They are not errors at all—just misunderstood truths. The inspired Bible:

Will always tell you the truth.
Will never mislead you.
Can be trusted completely.
Is reliable and authoritative, not just in spiritual matters, but also in other areas it addresses, including history and science.

Satan is always seeking to find faults in Scripture, which is not surprising—he even found fault with God in heaven. While copyists may have made minor errors in certain cases, nothing alleged affects the truth of God's Word. Doctrine is not based on a single verse but on the overall message of Scripture. We know of no claimed errors that would affect the substance of biblical truth. Some things in Scripture remain difficult to reconcile, and there will

always be room for doubt for those who prefer to doubt. However, we believe that even the so-called errors—just as in the past—will eventually be revealed as false claims. The more people try to undermine the Bible, the brighter its light shines.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which fulfilled prophecies confirm that the Bible is inspired? (4)
[ ] Cyrus would conquer Babylon.
[ ] Ronald Reagan would be president of the United States.
[ ] Egypt would never again be a dominant world power.
[ ] Morality would deteriorate in the last days.
[ ] Germany would experience a 20-year drought.
[ ] Babylon, once destroyed, would never be inhabited again.

2. Jesus demonstrated His belief in the inspiration of the Bible by:
[ ] Speaking loudly about the topic.
[ ] Quoting from it while teaching.
[ ] Calling down fire on skeptics.
[ ] Declaring it from the temple steps.

3. What scientific facts are mentioned in the Bible? (3)

[ ] The earth is round.
[ ] Air has weight.
[ ] God holds atoms together.
[ ] The chemical formula for water is H2O.
[ ] Ocean water contains salt.

4. Which of the following health principles are found in the Bible? (2)
[ ] Drink four liters of water daily.
[ ] Avoid alcohol.
[ ] Exercise every morning and night.
[ ] Avoid sexual immorality.

5. The following statements about the Bible are true: (3)
[ ] About 40 people contributed to writing the Bible.
[ ] The Bible was written over 10,000 years.
[ ] Only parts of the Bible are inspired.
[ ] The real author of the Bible is the Holy Spirit.
[ ] The Bible is the best-selling book.

6. Which prophecies about the Messiah did the Bible make? (3)
[ ] He would be born in Nazareth.
[ ] He would ascend to heaven repeatedly.
[ ] He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.
[ ] Herod would try to kill Him.
[ ] He would be crucified.
[ ] He would rise on the third day.

7. Which Bible principle, if followed, would most effectively prevent AIDS?
[ ] Do not commit adultery
[ ] Do not worship idols
[ ] Eat regularly.

8. Which statements about evolution are true? (3
[ ] It is an unproven theory.
[ ] It undermines Christianity.
[ ] It is a verified fact.
[ ] It proves humans and apes share common ancestors.
[ ] It is a communist ideology.

9. What evidence supports the Bible's inspiration? (5)
[ ] It records both good and bad individuals.
[ ] It changes the lives of its followers.
[ ] Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus.
[ ] It predicted the rise of four world empires.
[ ] Its unity.
[ ] It reveals the exact time of Christ's return.

10. God created the world in six literal 24-hour days
[ ] True
[ ] False

11. In Noah's time, a global flood destroyed all living things except sea creatures and those in the ark
[ ] True
[ ] False

12. The world's languages originated at the Tower of Babel
[ ] True
[ ] False

Did God Create Satan?

Lesson 2

Many people worldwide are deceived by an evil force intent on destroying their lives—a master schemer known as the Devil or Satan. But this prince of darkness is more than you might think... Some say he's just a mythical figure, but the Bible reveals that he is very real. He deceives families, churches, and even nations to increase sorrow and pain. Here are amazing biblical facts about this prince of darkness and how you can overcome him!

Sin Originated with Satan, Who Is Also Called the Devil

1. With whom did sin originate?
"The devil has been sinning from the beginning." (1 John 3:8)
"That ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan." (Revelation 12:9)

Answer:
Satan, also known as the devil, is the originator of sin. Without the Scriptures, the source of evil would remain unexplained.

2. What was Satan's name before he sinned? Where did he live at that time?
"How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12)
Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." (Luke 10:18)
"You were on the holy mount of God." (Ezekiel 28:14)

Answer:
His name was Lucifer, and he lived in heaven. Lucifer is compared to the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 and to the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 2

Lucifer Was a Heavenly Angel Created by God
He was perfect in wisdom and beauty and stood near God's throne.

3. What was Lucifer's origin? What position did he hold? How does the Bible describe him?
"You were created." (Ezekiel 28:13, 15)
"You were the anointed cherub who covers." (Ezekiel 28:14)
"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty; every precious stone was your covering. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you." (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

Answer:
Lucifer was created by God, just like all other angels (Ephesians 3:9). He was the “covering cherub,” or angel. One mighty angel stands on the left of God’s throne and another on the right (Psalm 99:1), and Lucifer was one of these highly exalted angels. His beauty was flawless and dazzling, and his wisdom was perfect.

Ezekiel 28:13 suggests that Lucifer was specially gifted as a master musician. Some believe he led the heavenly choir of angels.
Satan Wants People to Worship Him
He even tried to persuade Jesus to worship him.

4. What happened in Lucifer’s life that led him to sin? What blasphemous sin did he then commit?
“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.” (Ezekiel 28:17)
“For you said in your heart: … ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; … I will be like the Most High.’ “ (Isaiah 14:13, 14)

Answer:
Pride, jealousy, dissatisfaction, and self-exaltation developed in Lucifer’s heart. He decided to attempt to overthrow God and demand worship from all created beings. This was the most severe form of treason.

Lucifer was not satisfied with the high honor God had already given him. He desired God’s position and power. His rebellion led to the great conflict between good and evil that continues to this day

Remember: Why is worship such a big deal? Worship is at the heart of the ongoing conflict between God and Satan. People were created to find true happiness and fulfillment only when they worship God alone. Even the unfallen angels in heaven must not be worshiped (Revelation 22:8, 9). Satan sought worship from the beginning. Many centuries later, when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, worship was still the main issue (Matthew 4:8-11). In these last days, God is calling all people to worship Him (Revelation 14:6, 7). This enrages Satan so much that he will try to force people to worship him—or else be killed (Revelation 13:15).

Everyone worships someone or something—power, fame, food, pleasure, wealth, personal opinions, etc. But God says, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3). If we do not worship Him alone, He considers us to be against Him (Matthew 12:30). This is startling, but it is true. If anything or anyone else takes first place in my life instead of God, I may unknowingly

be supporting and worshiping Satan. Does God hold the first place in my life, or am I unknowingly elevating Satan? It's a tough question, isn't it?

Lucifer's discontent led to open rebellion against God. A third of the angels in heaven joined him in an attempt to overthrow God. As a result, Lucifer and his followers were cast out of heaven.

5. What happened in heaven as a result of Lucifer's rebellion?
"And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." (Revelation 12:7-9).

Answer:
Lucifer convinced a third of the angels (Revelation 12:3, 4) to join his rebellion against God. God had no choice but to cast Lucifer and his angels out of heaven. This was the most significant battle ever fought. Lucifer's goal was to seize God's throne, even if it meant murder (John 8:44). After his expulsion from heaven, Lucifer became known as Satan (which means "adversary") and the devil (which means "accuser"), while his followers became known as demons.

Satan's headquarters are on earth. He hates humanity and seeks to hurt God by destroying people.

6. Where is Satan's headquarters now? How does he feel about people?
"The Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.'" (Job 2:2).
"Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." (Revelation 12:12).
"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8).

Answer:
Contrary to popular belief, Satan's headquarters are on earth—not in a place of fiery torment. God gave Adam and Eve authority over the earth (Genesis 1:26). When they sinned, they lost that authority to Satan (Romans 6:16), who became the ruler, or prince, of this world (John 12:31). Satan intensely hates humans because they were created in God's image. Since he cannot hurt God directly, he directs his hatred toward humanity—God's children. He is a cruel,

hateful murderer whose aim is to destroy you and thereby hurt God.
Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with death as the penalty for disobedience.

7. What was the one thing God forbade Adam and Eve to do? What was the penalty for disobedience?
“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:17).

Answer:
They were forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for eating from it was death.
Satan took the form of a talking serpent to deceive Eve into eating the forbidden fruit.

8. What agent did Satan use to deceive Eve? What lies did Satan tell her?
“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden?”’ (Genesis 3:1).

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’” (Genesis 3:4, 5).

Answer:
Satan used a serpent—the most intelligent and attractive animal God had created—to deceive Eve. Some believe the serpent originally had wings and could fly (Isaiah 14:29; 30:6). Remember, it did not crawl until after God cursed it (Genesis 3:14). Satan’s lies were: (1) “You will not die,” and (2) “Eating the fruit will make you wise.” Satan, the inventor of lies (John 8:44), mixed truth with falsehood to deceive Eve. The most effective lies contain some truth. It was true that they would “know evil” after sinning. In His love, God had shielded them from the knowledge of sorrow, pain, suffering, and death. Just as he does today, Satan made the knowledge of evil seem attractive.

Satan lied to misrepresent God’s character, knowing that no one would turn away from a loving God unless they misunderstood who He truly is.

Eating the forbidden fruit made Adam and Eve align themselves with Satan, God’s bitter enemy.

9. Was eating a piece of fruit really such a serious sin? Why were Adam and Eve expelled from the garden?

“If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.” (James 4:17).

“Sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4).
“The one who does what is sinful is of the devil.” (1 John 3:8).
“And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden…” (Genesis 3:22, 24).

Answer:
Yes, eating the fruit was a serious sin because it was direct disobedience to one of God’s few commands. It was an open act of rebellion against God’s law and authority. By rejecting God’s command, Adam and Eve aligned themselves with Satan and caused a separation between themselves and God (Isaiah 59:2). Satan hoped that by getting them to sin and then eat from the tree of life, they would become immortal sinners. But God removed them from the garden to prevent such a disaster.

10. What astonishing facts does the Bible reveal about Satan’s methods of harming, deceiving, discouraging, and destroying people?

Answer: Satan uses every possible means to deceive and destroy people. His demons can appear as righteous people—even ministers. Satan himself will impersonate Jesus, performing miracles like calling fire down from heaven. But you have been warned—do not be deceived. When Jesus returns, every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7), and He will remain in the clouds without touching the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

The Bible says Satan	
The Bible says satan deceives/ oppresses (Revelation 12:9 , 13)	Misquotations/incorrect quotations in the Bible (Mathew 4:5 , 6)
False accusations /murders(Revelation 12:10 John 8:44)	Traps (2 Timothy 2:26 1 Peter 5:8)
Wages war against God’s people (Revelation12:17)	Binds/Incites betrayal (Luke13:16 Job 13:2 , 21)
Prisonners (Revelation 2:10)	Wealth/Obstacles (Luke 22:3-5 1 Thessalonians 2:18)
Performs miracles / lies(Revelation 16:13 , 14 John 8:44)	He appears as an angel of light (2 corinthians11:13-15) .
Brings diseases/suffering(Job 2:7)	His demons disguise themselves as pastors (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) .
Slander(“Devil means accuser”)	He calls down fire from heaven (Revelation13:13)

Satan's End-Time Deceptive Power Will Be So Great That Nearly the Entire World Will Follow Him

11. How powerful and effective are Satan's temptations and strategies?
He deceived:
One-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3-9)
Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
Everyone except eight people in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20)
He will make the lost feel saved (Matthew 7:21-23)
Almost the entire world will follow him (Revelation 13:3)
Only a few will be saved (Matthew 7:14; 22:14)

Answer:
Satan's success rate is so high that it seems unbelievable. He deceived one-third of the angels. In Noah's time, everyone except eight people was deceived. Before Jesus returns the second time, Satan will appear as an angel, pretending to be Christ. His deceptive power will be so great that our only safety will be in refusing to go and see him (Matthew 24:23-26). If you firmly refuse to look or listen, Jesus will protect you from being deceived (John 10:29).

At the end of the world, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, which will reduce him to ashes and bring his existence to an end forever.

12. When and where will the devil receive his punishment, and what will it be?
"So will it be at the end of this world. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire." (Matthew 13:40-42)
"And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." (Revelation 20:10)
"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)
"I will bring forth a fire from within you; it will devour you. And I will turn you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who see you... and you will never exist again." (Ezekiel 28:18-19)

Answer:
The devil will be cast into the lake of fire on this earth at the end of the world. The fire will consume him, turn him into ashes, and end his existence forever. This fire will also destroy all sinners. In this final display, no one on God's side will die, and no one on Satan's side will survive.

Note: It is impossible to fully express the sorrow and pain the Father and the Son will experience when Satan is destroyed. He was once closer to them than any other created being—a cheerful and personal friend. Destroying him and the millions of people who followed him will cause the Father and the Son more pain than the fire will cause anyone being consumed.

God's people in heaven will be safe from sin forever. It will never rise again.

13. What permanently solves the terrible problem of sin? Will sin ever arise again?
"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11; see also Philippians 2:10-11; Isaiah 45:23)
"Affliction will not rise up a second time." (Nahum 1:9)

Answer:
Two major events will resolve the problem of sin permanently:

First, every creature in heaven and on earth—including Satan and his angels—will willingly kneel and publicly confess that God is true, just, and righteous. No questions will be left unanswered. All sinners will openly admit that they are lost because they deliberately rejected God's love and salvation. They will acknowledge that justice requires their eternal death, and they will agree that they deserve it.
Second, sin will be eradicated from the universe by the complete and final destruction of sin, sinners, Satan, and his angels.
God assures us that sin will never arise again to destroy His perfect universe. Jesus made the destruction of sin possible.
14. Who guarantees the final and complete removal of sin from the universe?
"For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)
"Since the children have flesh and blood, He also shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14)

Answer:
Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus made the removal of sin from the universe certain.

God, our Father, loves us more than any earthly father could ever love his children. He cannot wait to welcome us into His new kingdom.

15. How does God the Father feel about people?
“The Father Himself loves you.” (John 16:27; see also John 3:16; 17:22-23)

Answer:
The Father loves people just as much as the Son does. Jesus’ primary mission was to reveal His Father’s character through His own life so that people would understand how loving, caring, and approachable the Father truly is (John 5:19).

Satan Misrepresents the Father
Satan falsely portrays the Father as cold, harsh, and unapproachable—attributes that reflect Satan himself. He even blames his own evil actions and disasters on God. Jesus came to erase these lies and to show that our heavenly Father loves us more deeply than a mother loves her child (Isaiah 49:15). Jesus’ greatest passion was to demonstrate God’s patience, compassion, and abundant mercy.

The Father Is Eager to Welcome Us
To give His people eternal happiness, our heavenly Father has prepared a wonderful home for them. Our dreams here cannot compare to what He has in store! It is hard for Him to wait to welcome His people on that joyful homecoming day that lies ahead.

Let us share the message! Let us be ready. The remaining time is already ticking away.

16. I am glad to know that God the Father loves me as much as Jesus does.

Questions of Thought

1. Was the fruit that Adam and Eve ate an apple?
We don’t know. The Bible doesn’t say.

2. Where did the idea of depicting Satan as a red creature, half-man and half-beast with horns and a tail originate?
It came from pagan myths and pleases Satan. He knows that people who think of him as a fictional monster will be led to deny his existence. Those who do not believe in Satan are the first to fall prey to his schemes.

3. God told Adam and Eve, “On the day you eat from the tree, you will surely die.” (Genesis 2:17). Why didn’t they die that day?
The Bible speaks of two kinds of death:
(1) The “first” death, which everyone experiences (Hebrews 9:27).

(2) The “second” death, which the wicked will suffer in the lake of fire at the end of time (Revelation 21:8).
The difference is that there is no resurrection from the second death—it is eternal death.

Jesus Died the Second Death for Everyone
When Adam and Eve sinned, they would have immediately died the second death if not for the fact that Jesus stepped in and offered His life on Calvary for everyone. His supreme sacrifice spared them (Hebrews 2:9).

When Adam Sinned, His “Immortal” Nature Became “Mortal”
Regarding the first death, the literal translation of the word “die” in Genesis 2:17 is “dying you will die,” which is noted in the margins of many Bibles. This means that Adam and Eve would enter the process of dying. Before sinning, the couple had an immortal, sinless nature. This immortality was sustained by eating from the tree of life. At the moment of sin, their natures changed to mortal, sinful natures—just as God had predicted. Since they were barred from the tree of life, decay and deterioration, leading to death, began immediately. The grave became certain. The Lord emphasized this later when He told them, “For dust you are, and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19).

4. Since God created Lucifer, isn’t He responsible for his sin?
Absolutely not. God created Lucifer as a perfect, sinless angel. Lucifer made himself Satan. Free will is a foundational principle of God’s government. God knew Lucifer would sin when He created him. If God had refused to create him because of this foreknowledge, He would have been rejecting that fundamental principle of free choice.

“Free Will” is God’s Way
Therefore, even knowing what Lucifer would do, God still created him. The same applies to the creation of Adam and Eve. And, closer to home, this truth applies to you and me. God knows how we will live before we are born, yet He still allows us to live and choose whether to support His government or Satan’s. God is willing to be misunderstood, falsely accused, and blamed for years while allowing everyone to freely choose whom they will follow.
Only a Loving God Can Risk Granting Complete Freedom to All
This precious and essential gift of freedom can only come from a righteous, open, and loving God. It is an honor and a joy to serve such a Lord and Friend.
Choose to Serve God

The problem of sin will soon come to an end. In the beginning, everything was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Now, “the whole world lies in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). People everywhere are choosing to serve either God or Satan.

Use your amazing, God-given freedom to choose to serve the Lord.

5. Why didn't God destroy Satan when he first sinned and thus end the problem of sin?
Because sin was an entirely new thing in God's universe, and its inhabitants did not understand it. Perhaps even Lucifer himself did not fully understand it at first. Lucifer was a highly talented and greatly respected angelic leader. His approach was undoubtedly one of concern for heaven and the angels. It may have sounded something like this:

"Heaven is wonderful, but it could be improved with more input from the angels. Too much unquestioned authority (like the Father and the Son possess) tends to blind leaders to real-life situations. Angels should not have to take orders; we should give orders. God knows my suggestions are right, and He feels threatened. We must not allow our exalted leaders to jeopardize heaven's existence. They will listen if we unite—let's not be weak. We must act; otherwise, we will all be destroyed by a government that does not value us."

A Third of the Angels Joined Lucifer
Lucifer's arguments persuaded many angels, and a third of them joined him. If God had destroyed Lucifer immediately, some angelic beings who did not fully understand God's character might have begun to worship Him out of fear, saying, "Maybe Lucifer was right. Be careful. If you disagree with God, He might kill you." So, nothing would have been resolved. Instead, the problem would have grown worse.

God Accepts Only Willing, Loving Service
The only service acceptable to God is cheerful, voluntary service motivated by love. Obedience for any other reason is not acceptable.

God Allowed Satan Time to Demonstrate His Principles
Satan claimed that he had a better plan for governing the universe. God is allowing him time to reveal his principles. The Lord will bring sin to an end once every being in the universe is convinced that Satan's government is unjust, hateful, merciless, deceitful, and destructive.

The Universe Is Watching This World
The Bible says, "We have been made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." (1 Corinthians 4:9). The entire universe is watching as each of us participates in the conflict between Christ and Satan. When the conflict is over, every being will fully understand the principles of both kingdoms and will have chosen to follow either Christ or Satan. Those who have chosen to

align with sin and Satan will be destroyed with him, and God's people will be taken to the eternal safety of their heavenly home

Review Questions

1. Who did sin begin with? (1)

_____ Michael
✓ Lucifer
_____ Gabriel

2. Where was Lucifer living when he first sinned? (1)

_____ On Earth
✓ In Heaven

_____ On the North Star

3. Check the things that once described Lucifer: (6)

✓ A created angel

✓ Full of wisdom

_____ Rode a white horse in heaven

✓ Perfect in his ways

_____ Guardian of heaven's gate

✓ The finest musician

✓ Perfect in beauty

✓ Covering cherub

4. Mark the statements that are true about Lucifer's rebellion: (5)

✓ He was cast out of heaven

_____ He repented and stayed in heaven

_____ He hid in a royal palace

✓ His name became Satan

✓ He was the first sinner

✓ Jesus saw him fall

✓ One-third of the angels fell with him

5. What did Lucifer want? (2)

✓ To be worshiped

✓ To overthrow God and take His place

_____ To travel throughout the universe

6. Check the statements that are true about Satan: (4)

_____ He is a red creature with horns and hooves

_____ His home is in hell

_____ He loves people

✓ He can appear as an angel of light

_____ He cannot perform miracles

✓ He is a liar and a murderer

✓ He can call down fire from heaven

✓ Many people will follow him and be lost

7. What is true about Adam and Eve's fall? (3)

_____ Satan disguised himself as an angel

✓ Satan called God a liar

_____ We know Satan gave them an apple

_____ Satan came to Adam first

✓ Satan hoped they would become immortal sinners

✓ In tempting them, Satan mixed truth with lies

8. What is true about Satan's final punishment? (4)

✓ He will turn to ashes in the fire

_____ His angels will escape

_____ The fire will be in heaven

✓ Satan and his angels will admit they were wrong

✓ The fire will also destroy sin and sinners

✓ Satan will acknowledge God's justice

9. Why didn't God kill Lucifer when he sinned? (4)

✓ Angels might not understand

✓ Others might fear God

_____ Lucifer was too powerful for God

_____ Good angels wouldn't allow it

✓ Time was needed to expose Lucifer's plan

✓ Time was needed to confirm God's plan

10. What one thing will ultimately vindicate God's government? (1)

_____ God will perform some miracles

✓ Every being in the universe will kneel, confessing God's love and justice

_____ Heaven's angels will beg everyone to serve God

11. What is true about sin? (5)

✓ Jesus has made the destruction of sin certain

✓ Sin is breaking God's law

✓ Sin separates us from God

_____ Sin is easy to overcome

✓ Satan invented the sin of lying

✓ After its destruction, sin will never arise again

12. Which statements are true? (5)

✓ Satan attributes his character to God

✓ God loves us more than our parents do

_____ What is called "God's works" are actually Satan's acts

✓ Jesus' life revealed God's character

_____ God the Father is harsh

✓ Most people do not understand God

Rescue from Above

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:3, 1 John 4:9-10, Romans 5:8

Lesson 3

Imagine the terror of being stranded in the ocean with hungry sharks and looming dangers! Now, think of the joy and relief you would feel if you were rescued safely. The truth is, every person on this planet is lost in a sea full of dangers. We need urgent rescue—not from a boat or a helicopter, but from our Heavenly Father. God loves you so much that He sent His Son to save you. You may have heard this before, but are you sure you fully understand what it really means? What does it mean to you, and how can it change your life? Read on and find out!

God cares about you personally. What a wonderful reason to rejoice!

1. Does God really care about me?
This is what He says: “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you.” (Isaiah 43:4)
“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” (Jeremiah 31:3)

Answer: God’s endless love for you and me is beyond our understanding. He loves you as if you were the only lost soul in the universe. He would give His life for you or me, even if there were no other sinner to redeem. Never forget this truth—you are precious in His sight. He loves you.

There has never been a greater display of love than the cross.

2. How has God shown His love for us?
“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
“In this, the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9, 10)

Answer: Because He loved us so much, He was willing to see His only Son suffer and die rather than be separated from you and me forever. We may never fully understand it, but He did it—for you alone, for me alone!

There has never been a person whom Jesus did not love.

3. How could He love someone like me?
“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Answer: Certainly not because I earned it or deserved it. None of us has earned anything except the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). But God's love is unconditional. He loves thieves, adulterers, and murderers. He also loves the selfish, the hypocritical, and the irreligious. But most amazing of all—He loves me! And because He knows that my sins can only bring sorrow and death, He wants to save me from my sins. That is why He died.

Jesus' death was the full payment for every sin you could ever commit. When you accept this incredible gift, you become part of Jesus' personal family.

4. What does His death do for me?
"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1)
"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:12)

Answer: Christ died to satisfy the death penalty against me. He was born as a human so He could experience the kind of death I deserve. Then He offered to credit my account with what He did. In other words, His sinless life is counted as mine so that I am considered righteous. His death is accepted by God as full payment for all my past mistakes, and by accepting what He has done as a gift, I am adopted into God's family as His child. It's mind-blowing!

Take a moment to reflect on these simple truths:

Because of my sins, I am sentenced to death.

I cannot pay this penalty without losing eternal life because if I died for my sins, I could not raise myself back to life. I would be dead forever.

I have a debt I cannot pay! But a Friend comes—in the person of Jesus—and says, "I will pay. I will die in your place and settle the debt for you. You will not have to die for your sins."

I must accept the offer! Simple, isn't it? I openly confess and accept His death for my sins. When I do this, I become a son or daughter of God!

Jesus gave His life to pay a debt you could never pay.

5. How do I receive Him and pass from death to life?
Accept three things:

1. I am a sinner. "For all have sinned." (Romans 3:23)

2. I am condemned to die. “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

3. I cannot save myself. “Without Me, you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Then, believe three things:

1. He died for me. “...that He might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9)

2. He forgives me. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9)

3. He saves me. “He who believes in Me has everlasting life.” (John 6:47)

Answer: By praying, believing, and accepting God’s greatest gift—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you drowning in sin? Jesus will save you immediately if you call upon Him.

6. What must I do to receive this gift of salvation?
“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:24)
“A man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.” (Romans 3:28)

Answer: The only thing I can do is accept it as a free gift. My works of obedience cannot contribute anything to my justification. All who ask for salvation by faith will receive it. The worst sinner is accepted on the same basis as the most moral person. The past does not count. Remember, the Almighty God loves everyone equally, and forgiveness is available to those who ask.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

The power of Jesus transforms a vile sinner into a loving saint.

7. When I join His family through faith, what changes does Jesus make in my life?
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Answer: When Christ is received into my heart, He destroys the old sinful

nature and truly transforms me into a new spiritual being. The old life of sin becomes distasteful and undesirable. For the first time, I experience glorious freedom from guilt and condemnation. I begin to see how empty my life was without Christ. Instead of feeding on the scraps under the table, I now feast at the King's banquet. One moment with God brings more joy than a lifetime of serving Satan. What an exchange! Why did I wait so long to accept it?

The most valuable gift parents can give their children is to be Christians.

8. Will this changed life truly be happier than the pleasures of my old life?
Jesus said: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15:11)
"If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:36)
"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

Answer: Many people believe that the Christian life will not be joyful because of restrictions and self-denial. The opposite is true! When you accept the love of Jesus, a remarkable joy wells up from within. An unmatched peace and happiness fills your life. When it comes to excitement—there is no comparison between the old life of selfishness and failure and the new life of victory and joy. Like a bad dream, the painful past fades, and you experience the "more abundant" life that God intended for you.

When Jesus enters your life, His miraculous power transforms obedience from a burden into a joyful privilege.

9. But can I really do all the things a Christian should do?
"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

Answer: Here is where the greatest miracle of the Christian life is revealed. There is no forced effort to "be good." What you do as a Christian flows naturally from the life of Jesus living within you. Obedience becomes a natural response of love. Being born of God as a new creation, you want to please Him because His life has become part of your life. Pleasing someone you love is not a burden—it is a delight!
"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

It is not difficult to please someone you truly love.

10. Do you mean that even the Ten Commandments would not be difficult to obey?
"If you love me, keep my commandments." – John 14:15. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." – 1 John 5:3. "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him." – 1 John 2:5.

Answer: The Bible always connects obedience with a relationship of love. Born-again Christians do not find it burdensome to keep the Ten Commandments. With all past sins covered by His atoning death, my present and future obedience stems from His victorious life within me. Indeed, because I love Him so much for transforming my life, I go beyond the requirements of the Ten Commandments. Every day, I search the Bible to discover signs of His will, seeking even the smallest ways to express my love for Him. "And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." – 1 John 3:22 (emphasis added).

Keeping the Ten Commandments in an attempt to earn salvation will only lead to sorrow and despair. But someone who has received the gift of salvation rejoices in walking the path of obedience to God's laws.

11. How can I be sure that the obedience mentioned in the Bible for God's people is not legalism?
"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." – Revelation 14:12. "And they [the saints] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." – Revelation 12:11.

Answer: Do not confuse obedience with legalism. Legalism is the attempt to earn salvation through good works. The Bible describes the saints as having four key traits: (1) keeping the commandments, (2) believing in the blood of the Lamb, (3) sharing their faith with others, and (4) choosing to die rather than to sin. These are the true marks of a person who is in love with Christ and has fully committed their life to follow Him.

Baptism is the marriage ceremony that unites me with Christ.

12. What significant act seals a loving relationship with Christ, and what does it signify?
"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." – Romans 6:4. "That the body of sin might be done away with." – Romans 6:6. "For I have betrothed you to one husband,

that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." – 2 Corinthians 11:2.

Answer:
Baptism signifies three major events in the life of a true believer:
(1) Death to sin,
(2) New birth into life with Christ, and
(3) A spiritual marriage to Christ for eternity.

This spiritual union grows stronger and sweeter over time as long as love continues to grow. Just like in any marriage, the loss of love can turn paradise into misery. When love fades, the home is held together only by mechanical, forced duty under the law of marriage. Similarly, when a Christian stops loving Christ deeply, their religion becomes mere obedience to a set of rules.

My love for Jesus grows as I share it with others.

13. How can I be sure that my faith and love in my marriage to Christ will continue to grow?
"Search the Scriptures." – John 5:39. "Pray without ceasing." – 1 Thessalonians 5:17. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." – Colossians 2:6. "I die daily." – 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Answer: No relationship can succeed without communication. Prayer and studying the Bible are absolutely essential for maintaining and growing this relationship. His Word is a love letter I must read daily to nourish my spiritual life. Speaking to Him in prayer strengthens my commitment and opens my mind to exciting and deeper insights into His care for me. Each day, I am amazed to discover new details of His amazing provision for my joy.

God Seals Our Spiritual Marriage
To seal our spiritual marriage for eternity, He has promised to never leave me (Psalm 55:22; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5), to care for me in sickness or health (Psalm 41:3; Isaiah 41:10), and to provide for every need I may face (Matthew 6:25-34). Just as I received Him by faith and found His promises to be sufficient, I continue to trust Him for every future need, and He never leaves me.

14. It is my desire to invite Jesus into my life and experience a new birth.
Answer:

Questions for Reflection:

1. How could the death of one man pay the penalty for the sins of all humanity? I have lived a terrible life of sin. I am afraid that God would have to do something very special to redeem someone as bad as me.
Romans 3:23 tells us that "all have sinned." Because "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and "all have sinned," a "special act" is needed for every human being ever born. Only someone whose life equaled the value of all humanity could die for the sins of the entire world. Since Jesus is the Creator and Source of all life, the life He gave was equal to the lives of all who would ever live. Not only did the atonement require Someone whose life could represent all created beings, but the One who died had to have the power to rise from death. Why? To administer the benefits of His atonement to all who would accept it by faith. "Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." – Hebrews 7:25.

2. If I accept Christ and His forgiveness but then fall again, will He forgive me again?
Yes, we can trust God to forgive us again if we truly repent and confess our sins. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." – 1 John 1:9.

3. How can I approach God in my sinful condition? Wouldn't it be better to have a priest or minister pray for me?
Since Jesus Christ lived in the flesh and "was tempted as we are" (Hebrews 4:15), we have a God who understands us and desires to show us mercy. Hebrews 4:16 invites us to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." Through Jesus Christ, we can directly approach God without a human mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 declares, "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

4. Is there anything I can do to help God save me?
No. His plan is entirely based on grace (Romans 3:24; 4:5); it is "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). While it is true that when God grants us grace through faith, He also gives us the desire and power to obey Him, even this obedience comes from His free grace. Obedience—serving and following Him out of love—is the true evidence of discipleship and the natural fruit of faith in Jesus Christ.

5. If God forgives my sins and restores me to His family, does that remove any future punishment for my sins, or will I still need to perform some kind of penance?

Scripture declares, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Christ paid the full penalty for our sins, and those who accept Him by faith owe nothing in terms of acts of penance to be cleansed. They are already considered “washed” by the blood of the Lamb! Isaiah 43:25 offers a beautiful promise of forgiveness: “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”

Micah 7:18–19 also reveals the compassionate heart of our Redeemer:
“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.
He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

Questions of Questions

1. What is the greatest gift that God poured out from all of heaven to mankind? (1)
_____ The Bible.
_____ His Church.
_____ Jesus Christ.
_____ The Law.

2. The greatest display of love the world has ever seen was (1)
_____ The loaves and fish.
_____ The death of Jesus on the cross.
_____ Pentecost.
_____ Peter’s confession.

3. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was for (1)
_____ Everyone.
_____ Only the righteous.
_____ Only for sin.
_____ Those predestined for salvation.

4. What kind of person does God love the most? (1)
_____ Church members.
_____ Prostitutes and thieves.
_____ Everyone equally.
_____ Born-again Christians.

5. Christ was born into the human family to (1)
_____ Pay the penalty for sin.
_____ Know how weak we are.
_____ Become a skilled carpenter.

6. To receive salvation, a person must (1)
_____ Take a Bible course.
_____ Join a church.
_____ Speak in tongues.
_____ Accept it as a gift.

7. We are saved by (1)
_____ Good works.
_____ Grace.
_____ Desire.

8. Forgiveness and acceptance lead us to feel (2)
_____ That we can start sinning again.
_____ Regret for denied pleasures.
_____ Joy and peace.
_____ Assurance of eternal life.

9. Obedience should be based on (1)
_____ Fear of hell.
_____ The desire for friends' approval.
_____ Love for Jesus.

10. Christian conduct, or keeping the commandments, is (1)
_____ Legalism.
_____ One of the fruits of true conversion.
_____ Unimportant.

11. Marriage to Christ is compared to (1)
_____ Joining a convent or monastery.
_____ Baptism.
_____ Wearing a wedding ring on the right hand.
_____ Taking a vow of celibacy.

12. The two main ways to remain in love with Christ are (2)
_____ Reading the Bible daily.
_____ Giving generous offerings.
_____ Avoiding pork.
_____ Maintaining a continual attitude of prayer.

The Colossal City

Lesson 4

Talk about a big city! New York, Tokyo, and London are nothing in comparison! Just wait until you learn the astonishing truth about this enormous city that can travel through the skies. It's all true, not science fiction! The details in this Study Guide will delight your soul and give you hope for the future.

God is the Architect and Builder of the Holy City.

1. Who is the architect and builder of this heavenly city?
"Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." (Hebrews 11:16)

Answer:
The Bible declares that God is building a magnificent city for His people. This city is real and tangible, just like any city you have ever known.

God's amazing city is located in heaven, His dwelling place.

2. Where is this amazing city that God is preparing?
"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." (Revelation 21:2)
"O Lord my God ... hear in heaven Your dwelling place." (1 Kings 8:28-30)

Answer:
This magnificent city currently exists in the far reaches of space in God's dwelling place, which is called heaven.

Behold the size of the city compared to several states.

3. How do the Scriptures describe this amazing heavenly city?

Answer:
(A) SIZE
"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." (Revelation 21:16)
The city is a perfect square. Its circumference is 12,000 furlongs, or 1,500 miles (a furlong is 1/8 mile). Each side of the city measures 375 miles.

(B) NAME
The city is called “New Jerusalem” in Revelation 21:2.

(C) WALLS
“Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits ... The construction of its wall was of jasper.” (Revelation 21:17, 18)
The wall surrounding the city is 144 cubits, or 216 feet high (one cubit is 18 inches). It is made of solid jasper, a radiant and indescribably beautiful gem. Imagine it—a wall nearly 20 stories high, built of solid jasper!

(D) GATES
“It had twelve gates ... three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west ... The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.” (Revelation 21:12, 13, 21)
The city has 12 gates—three on each side—each made from a single pearl.

(E) FOUNDATIONS
“The wall of the city had twelve foundations ... adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 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.” (Revelation 21:14-20)
The city has 12 complete foundations, each made of precious stones. Every color of the rainbow is represented, making the city appear to rest on a shimmering rainbow from a distance.

(F) STREETS
“The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” (Revelation 21:21)

(G) APPEARANCE
“The holy city ... prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”
“Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”
“Its length, breadth, and height are equal.” (Revelation 21:2, 11, 16)

The city, with all its precious jewels, gold, and dazzling beauty, will be illuminated by the glory of God. In its radiant beauty and purity, it is compared to “a bride beautifully adorned for her husband.”

The miraculous tree of life in heaven grants eternal youth and vitality to all who partake of it.

4. What amazing feature of this glorious city guarantees every citizen eternal strength and youth?
“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:2)
“Take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.” (Genesis 3:22)

Answer:
The tree of life, which produces 12 kinds of fruit (and is located in the center of the city—Revelation 2:7), grants eternal life and everlasting youth to all who partake of it. Even its leaves will have healing properties. This tree will yield new fruit every month.

The holy city will descend to Earth and become its capital.

5. Is it true that this amazing city will descend to Earth?
“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelation 21:2)
“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)
“The righteous will be recompensed on the earth.” (Proverbs 11:31)

Answer:
Yes, this glorious holy city will descend to this earth and become the capital city of the newly restored Earth. All the righteous will have a home in this magnificent city.

Sin and sinners will be destroyed by fire from God.

6. What will happen to sin and sinners?
“All the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up.” (Malachi 4:1)
“Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.” (Revelation 20:9)
“The elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10)
“You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.” (Malachi 4:3)
“Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:13

Answer:
God will destroy sin and all sinners by fire. This fire will melt the earth and turn everything to ashes. Then God will create a perfect new earth, and the

holy city will become its capital. The righteous will live in peace, joy, and holiness forever. God promises that sin will never rise again (Nahum 1:9).

In His new kingdom, the Lord will live among His people.

7. What comforting and thrilling promises does God give to those who enter His new kingdom?

Answer:
A. The Lord will live with them face-to-face (Revelation 21:3).
B. There will be eternal joy and happiness (Psalm 16:11).
C. Pain, death, sorrow, and suffering will be gone forever (Revelation 21:4).
D. They will never grow tired (Isaiah 40:31).
E. Everyone will be made physically whole (Isaiah 35:5, 6).
F. All evil will be gone forever (Revelation 21:8, 27).

The vast seas of today will not exist in God's new kingdom.

8. How will the new world be different from our world today?

A. The great seas as we know them today will disappear (Revelation 21:1). Currently, the seas cover three-quarters of the earth's surface. This will not be the case in God's new kingdom. The entire world will be a magnificent garden, interspersed with lakes, rivers, and mountains (Revelation 22:1; Acts 3:20, 21).

B. Deserts will become gardens (Isaiah 35:1, 2).

C. All animals will be tame. None will hunt others, and a young child will lead them (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).

D. There will be no more curse (Revelation 22:3).

E. There will be no violence of any kind (Isaiah 60:18). This means no crime, storms, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, injuries, etc.

F. Nothing impure will be found in the new world (Revelation 21:27). There will be no cigarette butts, tobacco, drunkards, bars, alcoholic drinks, brothels, obscene images, or any other form of evil or impurity.

Children, playing together, will fill the streets of the New Jerusalem.

9. Will there be children in God's kingdom? If so, will they grow up?

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets." (Zechariah 8:5)
"You shall go out and grow like calves of the stall." (Malachi 4:2)

Answer:
Yes, there will be many boys and girls in the Holy City (Isaiah 11:6-9), and these young ones will grow up (Malachi 4:2). We have greatly diminished in stature, intelligence, and longevity since Adam, but all these will be restored (Acts 3:20, 21).-

10. Will people recognize each other when they reunite with loved ones in heaven?

"Then I shall know just as I also am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Answer:
The Bible clearly teaches that righteous loved ones who have died will be resurrected to join the living righteous in God's kingdom (Isaiah 26:19; Jeremiah 31:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Scripture also teaches that people in God's new kingdom will recognize each other, just as people recognize each other on earth today.

In heaven, real people will experience true joy. The deepest desires of the human heart will be fulfilled.

11. Will people in heaven be real, with flesh and bones?

"Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said to them, 'Peace be to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? ... 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.' ... So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence." (Luke 24:36-39, 41-43, 50, 51)

"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

"The Lord Jesus Christ ... will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body." (Philippians 3:20, 21)

Answer: After His resurrection, Jesus proved to His disciples that He was flesh and bones by allowing them to touch Him and by eating food. This same Jesus of flesh and bones ascended to His Father and will return to earth. The righteous will be given bodies like Christ's, and they will be real people with flesh and bones forever. The difference is that the heavenly body will never die, decay, or deteriorate.

The idea that the saved in heaven will be floating spirits playing harps on clouds is not supported by Scripture. Jesus did not die on the cross to offer a meaningless and boring future for those who accept His love and follow His way of life. Many people are not excited about this kind of existence and therefore have little or no desire for God's heavenly kingdom—often choosing it only out of fear of hell. If people everywhere understood the truth about God's holy city and the new earth, millions would begin to grasp His love and turn to Him with all their hearts. Anyone who misses God's kingdom has made the greatest mistake of their life.

No human language can fully describe the glory and joy of heaven's pure music.

12. How will the righteous spend their time in God's kingdom?

"They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat ... And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah 65:21, 22)

Answer:
The righteous will build their own houses on the new earth (in addition to having a city mansion prepared by Christ—John 14:1-3). They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. The Bible is clear—real people will do real things in heaven and will fully enjoy everything.

Heaven will give us the opportunity to be friends with patriarchs and prophets of the Bible.

13. What other exciting activities will the redeemed participate in?

Answer:
A. Sing and play heavenly music (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Psalm 87:7; Revelation 14:2, 3).
B. Worship before God's throne every Sabbath (Isaiah 66:22, 23).
C. Enjoy unfading flowers and trees (Ezekiel 47:12; Isaiah 35:1, 2).

D. Visit loved ones, patriarchs, prophets, etc. (Matthew 8:11; Revelation 7:9-17).
E. Learn about heavenly animals (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25).
F. Travel and explore without weariness (Isaiah 40:31).
G. Listen to God sing (Zephaniah 3:17).
H. Fulfill the deepest desires of the heart (Psalm 37:3, 4; Isaiah 65:24).
I. The greatest joy—being like Jesus, traveling with Him, and seeing Him face to face (Revelation 14:4; 22:4; 21:3; 1 John 3:2).

Heaven will be more glorious and rewarding than anything we can imagine.

14. Can human language truly describe the glory of heaven?

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Answer:
Even in their wildest dreams, human beings cannot begin to comprehend the wonders of God's eternal kingdom. Everything Adam lost will be restored (Acts 3:20, 21).

Jesus is preparing heaven for you personally. You matter to Him.

15. Is this kingdom being prepared for me personally?

"Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

Answer:
Yes, it is prepared for you personally. The Lord's invitation is for you. If you reject it, friend, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

16. How can I be assured of a place in this glorious kingdom?

Answer:
The Bible makes it clear. Give your life to Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...

17. I have decided to accept Jesus' offer to live with Him forever in His heavenly kingdom.

Answer
Thought Questions
1. How can heaven be a place of happiness when the saved think about their

lost loved ones?
The Bible says that God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 21:4). Surrounded by the beauty and joys of the new earth, God's redeemed people will forget the tragedies and heartaches of the past; "The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

2. The Bible says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). So, how can the redeemed have flesh and bones?
Here, the Bible uses the word "flesh" to describe an unconverted person. A similar concept is explained in Romans 8:8-9: "Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God." John 3:6 says, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." In this context, "flesh" refers to an unconverted person, while "spirit" refers to a converted or "born again" person. So, 1 Corinthians 15:50 simply means that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are first converted and transformed. After His resurrection, Christ declared that He was indeed "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). According to Philippians 3:21, we will have bodies like His.

3. Is the apostle Peter the one guarding the gate of the holy city?
No! The Bible says in Revelation 21:12 that the New Jerusalem—the holy city of God—has twelve gates, and at the gates are twelve angels. There is no biblical reference suggesting that any apostle is guarding the gates.

4. Is the holy city really large enough to accommodate all the saved people of all ages?
If the city were densely populated and each saved person were given just 100 square feet of space, there would be room for 39 billion people—many times the earth's current population. Many statisticians believe that if everyone who has ever lived were saved, there would still be plenty of room in the city. However, the Bible makes it clear that only a few will be saved (Matthew 7:14), so there will be more than enough space in the great city.

5. Sometimes I wonder if the reward is worth the sacrifice. It feels like Satan is about to defeat me at times. Does the Bible encourage me?

Yes! In fact, the apostle Paul must have had someone like you in mind when he wrote, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). One glimpse of that eternal kingdom will make even the worst trials and suffering on earth seem insignificant. The redeemed will cry out, "Hallelujah, heaven is cheap enough!"

6. Will little children who die be saved in God's kingdom?
We do not have a specific answer from the Bible on this question, but many believe that infants will be saved based on Matthew 2:16-18. This passage describes the wicked King Herod killing all the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under. The Old Testament prophesied this tragic and cruel event, and God told the grieving mothers to stop weeping because their children would one day be restored to them: "Restrain your voice from weeping... [the slain children] will return from the land of the enemy... your children will return to their own land" (Jeremiah 31:16-17). This is a clear reference to the resurrection.

7. Do I understand correctly that heaven, the home of the saved, will be here on earth?
That is correct. Although the holy city is now located in God's dwelling place, He will move it to this earth. Sin and sinners will be destroyed by fire, and the earth will be made new and given to the righteous in all its glory and beauty as it was in Eden. The holy city will be the capital of the new earth, and God will move His throne here (Revelation 21:2-3; 22:1, 3) and live with the righteous forever. Wherever God dwells, that is heaven. God's plan is to restore to humanity everything that Adam lost—the glory of perfect life on a perfect planet. Though Satan and sin interrupted God's plan, it will be fulfilled. We must be part of this new kingdom—it is far too dangerous to miss it.

8. Why do so many teach and believe that the home of the saved is a cloudy place with ghost-like inhabitants floating on clouds, doing nothing but playing harps?
These teachings come from Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44). He is eager to distort God's plan of love and present heaven as an unreal, dull place so that people lose interest or become skeptical about God's Word. Satan knows that once people understand the Bible truth about the home of the saved, his power over them will be broken because they will begin to make plans to enter that kingdom. This is why he works so hard to hide the truth and spread lies about heaven.

Review Questions

1. The holy city in heaven (1)

_____ Is not real but only symbolic.

✓ Is a real city currently being prepared by God in His dwelling place.

_____ Only exists in the imagination of some people.

2. This holy city (1)

_____ Will be destroyed by a nuclear explosion.

_____ Will be captured by Satan and his army.

✓ Will descend to this earth and become the capital of the new earth.

3. From the list below, check the true Bible facts about the holy city: (7)

✓ It is called the New Jerusalem.

_____ It is the size of London.

_____ Its walls are made of topaz.

✓ The city is as long as it is wide.

✓ Its streets are made of pure gold.

_____ The city has 14 foundations.

_____ The apostle Peter stands at its gate.

✓ Each of its 12 gates is made of a single pearl.

✓ Its circumference is 1,500 miles.

✓ All its foundations are made of precious stones.

✓ The city is in perfect proportion.

4. The tree of life (1)
✓ Is a real tree that will give God's people strength and eternal youth.

_____ Is a metaphor meaning that God will give His people power.

_____ Existed at the beginning but will not be included in the new earth.

5. From the list below, check all the true Bible promises for people in God's new kingdom: (5)

_____ The Lord will perform weddings daily.

_____ The tree of life will bear 20 kinds of fruit.

✓ The Lord Himself will live with His people.

_____ Saints will grow tired after a million years.

✓ There will be no death or sorrow.

✓ People will never grow weary.

_____ The disabled will be carried by angels.

_____ Angels will act as doctors and perform all tasks.

✓ The blind will receive sight.

✓ Jealousy, fear, hatred, lying, envy, and impurity will vanish forever.

_____ Children will never grow up.

6. Check the statements below that describe the truth about the new earth: (6)

✓ The seas of today will no longer exist.

_____ Deserts will become larger.

_____ Animals will be kept in heavenly cages.

✓ Storms, earthquakes, and floods will no longer occur.

_____ Angels will carefully remove cigarette butts from the streets daily.
✓ Flowers and trees will never wither or fade.

✓ Heaven will be on this earth.

✓ Sin will never arise again.

✓ The glory of it all cannot be fully described.

7. The righteous in the kingdom of heaven (1)

_____ Will be ghost-like spirits playing harps and floating on clouds.

_____ Will not recognize loved ones or friends who may be there.

✓ Will have real bodies of flesh and bones and will know each other.

8. We know that people in heaven will be real and do real things because (1)

_____ Science has fully proven it.

✓ The Bible says we will be like Christ, who was real (He had flesh and bones) after His resurrection and did real things.

_____ Many preachers say so.

9. I can be sure of a place in that heavenly kingdom if (1)

_____ I say every day that I love the Lord.

_____ I am scared enough of hell.

✓ I accept and follow Christ and keep His commandments.

10. What will the saved people do in the kingdom of heaven? Check the true Bible facts from the list below: (5)

✓ Build houses and live in them.

✓ Plant vineyards.

_____ Kill animals and eat them.

✓ Play heavenly instruments and sing praises to God.

✓ Worship before the throne of God.

_____ Go to hell and mock the lost.

✓ Eat the fruit of the tree of life.

Keys to a Happy Marriage

Lesson 5

Perhaps you've heard that nearly half of all marriages today end in divorce, leaving broken-hearted spouses and confused children. Don't let this happen to you! Whether your marriage is going through tough times, is happy, or even if you're not yet married but considering it, here is free yet proven advice to help your marriage last. It comes directly from God, who created and designed marriage! If you've tried everything else, why not give God a chance? Follow the keys in this guide, and you can protect your home.

Seventeen Principles for a Happy Marriage from God's Great Book
1. Establish your own home, even if it must be just one room.
"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." – Genesis 2:24

Answer:
God's directive is clear. Married couples should leave their parents and establish their own household, even if finances require it to be a single room. Husband and wife should decide together on family policies and then inform their relatives. They must remain firm no matter who opposes them. Thousands of divorces could be avoided if this principle were carefully followed.

2. Don't forget that God Himself joined you together in marriage.
"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." – 1 Peter 4:8 (RSV)
"Her husband … praises her." – Proverbs 31:28
"The married woman is concerned … with how to please her husband." – 1 Corinthians 7:34
"Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor." – Romans 12:10

Answer:
Continue (or perhaps revive) the courtesies of courtship in your marriage. Successful marriages don't just happen—they must be nurtured. Don't take each other for granted, or complacency will ruin your marriage. Keep growing in love by showing affection, or it will fade, and your marriage will crumble. Love and happiness are not found by seeking your own interests, but by giving to others. Spend as much time together as possible if you want to get along well. Learn to greet each other warmly. Relax, visit, shop, watch, and eat together. Don't neglect little courtesies, encouragements, and acts of love. Surprise each other with small gifts or favors. Try to "out-love" each other.

Don't take more out of your marriage than you invest in it. Divorce itself is not the main destroyer of marriage—lack of love is. Given the chance, love always wins.

3. Remember that God joined you together in marriage.
"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife … So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." – Matthew 19:5, 6

Answer:
Has love almost vanished from your home? The devil (the great home-breaker) is behind it. Don't forget that God Himself joined you together in marriage and intends for you to stay together and be happy. He will bring happiness and love to your life if you obey His divine laws (commandments). "With God, all things are possible." – Matthew 19:26. Don't give up. The same God who places love in a missionary's heart for a leprous outcast can easily give you love for your spouse if you allow Him to.

4. Guard your thoughts—don't let your feelings trap you.
"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." – Proverbs 23:7
"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." – Exodus 20:17
"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." – Proverbs 4:23
"Whatever things are true, … noble, … just, … pure, … lovely, … of good report; … think on these things." – Philippians 4:8

Answer:
Wrong thoughts will destroy your marriage. The devil will tempt you with ideas such as: "Our marriage was a mistake," "He/she doesn't understand me," "I can't take this much longer," "We can always get a divorce if necessary," "I'll go back to my mother's," or "He smiled at that woman." Stop entertaining such thoughts, or your marriage will be doomed, because your thoughts and feelings control your actions. Avoid seeing, speaking, reading, or hearing anything (or associating with anyone) that suggests impurity or unfaithfulness. Unchecked thoughts are like a car in neutral on a hill—anything can happen, and the result is always disastrous.

5. Never retire for the night angry with each other.
"Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." – Ephesians 4:26
"Confess your trespasses to one another." – James 5:16
"Forget those things which are behind." – Philippians 3:13
"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." – Ephesians 4:32

Answer:
Harboring anger and holding grudges (whether big or small) is dangerous. Unless resolved quickly, even small issues become magnified in your mind, affecting your whole outlook on life. This is why God says to let go of your anger before bedtime. Be mature enough to forgive and sincerely say, "I'm sorry." After all, no one is perfect, and you're on the same team—so be a good sport and admit when you're wrong. Besides, making up is a delightful experience that draws married couples closer together. God recommends it—and it works!

6. Keep Christ at the center of your home.
"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." – Psalm 127:1
"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." – Proverbs 3:6
"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:7

Answer:
This is the greatest principle—it encompasses all the others. Put Christ first! The true secret to genuine happiness in the home is not diplomacy, strategy, or tireless efforts to overcome problems, but rather a union with Christ. Hearts filled with Christ's love can never be far apart. With Christ in your home, your marriage will succeed. The gospel is the cure for homes filled with hatred, bitterness, and disappointment. It prevents thousands of divorces by miraculously restoring love and happiness. It can save your marriage too—if you're willing.

7. Pray together.
"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." – Matthew 26:41
"Pray for one another." – James 5:16
"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach." – James 1:5

Answer:
Pray aloud! This is a wonderful rule that works beyond imagination. Kneel before God and ask Him for genuine love for each other, for forgiveness, strength, wisdom—and for solutions to your problems. God has personally promised to answer. Prayer doesn't instantly fix all mistakes, but it creates a heart willing to do right. No family breaks apart while sincerely praying together for God's help.

Forgiveness is always better than divorce.
8. Accept that divorce is not the answer.
“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” – Matthew 19:6. “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” – Matthew 19:9. “A married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives.” – Romans 7:2.

Answer:
The Bible is clear. Marriage is meant to be indissoluble and unbreakable. Divorce is only permitted in the case of adultery—but even then, it is not required, only allowed. Forgiveness is always better than divorce, even in cases of moral failure. Marriage is a lifelong commitment. God established it in the Garden of Eden at the very first wedding. The thought of divorce as a solution will ruin any marriage. This is one reason Jesus condemned it. Divorce always brings destruction, and separation is never the solution to a problem—it only creates greater difficulties. Broken lives, shattered dreams, misery, and ruined homes often follow divorce, and even success in life itself is often hindered.

God established marriage to preserve the purity and happiness of humanity, provide for our social needs, and uplift us physically, mentally, and morally. The vows of marriage are among the most solemn and binding commitments humans can make. Ignoring these vows leads to the loss of God’s favor and blessings.

9. Keep the family circle tight and private.
“You shall not commit adultery.” – Exodus 20:14. “The heart of her husband safely trusts her… She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.” – Proverbs 31:11,12. “The Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously.” – Malachi 2:14. “Keep yourself from the immoral woman… Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes… Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?” – Proverbs 6:24-29.

Answer:
Family intimacy should never be shared with outsiders—not even with parents. It is a serious sin and tragedy to break this God-given rule. A sympathetic third party who listens to complaints can be a tool of Satan to divide a husband and wife. Solve your household problems privately. No one else (except a pastor or professional marriage counselor) should be involved. Always be honest with each other and never hide secrets. Avoid jokes at your spouse’s expense. Defend each other strongly and shut out all intruders.

Regarding adultery (despite what some marriage counselors might say), it always harms you and everyone involved. God, who knows our minds, bodies, and emotions (and knows what helps or hurts us), says, "Do not commit adultery." When God says "Do not," we should not. Those who ignore this command will suffer the consequences. If any inappropriate attachment has begun, break it off immediately, or dark shadows may fall on your life that cannot be lifted.

With true love, your marriage cannot fail.

10. God defines love—make it your daily standard.
"Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres." – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (Weymouth).

Answer:
Please read the above passage carefully. This is God's true description of love. How do you measure up? Love is not just a feeling—it is a holy principle that influences every part of life. With genuine love, your marriage cannot fail; without it, your marriage cannot succeed.

11. Remember that criticism and nagging destroy love.
"Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." – Colossians 3:19. "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife." – Proverbs 21:19. "A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm." – Proverbs 27:15. "Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice the plank in your own eye?" – Matthew 7:3. "Love… always seeks to build up." – 1 Corinthians 13:4 (Phillips).

Answer:
Stop criticizing, arguing, and finding faults. Your spouse may have flaws, but complaining will not help. Do not expect perfection, or you will only become bitter. Overlook faults and focus on the good. Trying to correct or control your partner will destroy love. Only God can change people. A cheerful heart, kindness, patience, and love will remove most marital problems. Work to make your spouse happy, and the rest will follow. The secret to a successful marriage is not having the right partner, but being the right partner.

12. Avoid excess in anything—practice moderation.
"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training." – 1 Corinthians 9:25. "Love… is not self-seeking." – 1 Corinthians 13:5 (Phillips). "Whether

you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." – 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Answer:
Excessiveness in any area can ruin your marriage. So can neglect. Work, love, rest, exercise, recreation, worship, meals, and social life must be balanced, or trouble will arise. Overworking, under-sleeping, poor diet, and lack of exercise make a person critical and irritable. Gluttony dulls the mind and deadens the conscience. Sexual excess harms love and respect. A moderate and respectful sexual relationship, as recommended in the Bible (1 Corinthians 7:3-7), is essential. Avoid extremes and ensure balance to preserve a happy marriage.

13. Respect each other's rights and privacy.
"Love is patient… It does not envy… It is not rude or self-seeking." – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (Weymouth).

Answer:
Each partner is entitled to personal privacy. Do not go through your spouse's belongings without permission. Respect each other's need for private space. Complete trust is essential for a happy marriage.

14. Be clean, orderly, and reverent.
"Let everything be done decently and in order." – 1 Corinthians 14:40.

Answer:
Laziness, disorder, and neglect are tools of Satan to destroy love and respect. A clean, well-ordered home brings peace and satisfaction. A lazy husband or wife is a burden to the family and a reproach to God.

15. Speak softly and kindly.
"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." – Proverbs 15:1.

Answer:
Always speak softly and lovingly. Decisions made in anger or exhaustion are often poor. Practice self-control and patience in your words.

16. Be wise with money.
"God loves a cheerful giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Answer:
Share financial responsibilities and decisions. Discuss large purchases and

practice generosity and fairness with shared resources.

17. Communicate openly and honestly.
“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” – Proverbs 15:22.

Answer:
Discuss major decisions together openly. Cooperation and communication prevent mistakes and strengthen your relationship.

18. I want my home to be a place where heaven’s angels love to visit.

Answer:
Thought Questions

1. Which spouse should be the first to apologize after a quarrel?
The one who was in the right!

2. Can you suggest a law for a troublesome mother-in-law?
Yes! Mind your own business and be quiet! (See 1 Thessalonians 4:11.) In fact, this rule applies to all in-laws. Many marriages that could have been a little heaven on earth have turned into a nightmare because of in-laws. The duty of all in-laws is to leave the newly established household alone.

3. My husband is an ungodly man, and I am trying to be a Christian. His influence is terrible. Should I divorce him?
No! Read 1 Corinthians 7:12–14 and 1 Peter 3:1, 2. God gives a specific answer.

4. If my husband offends me, I won’t sleep with him. He says I’m wrong. Am I?
Yes! God gives a clear answer to this question in 1 Corinthians 7:4, 5.

5. My wife ran away with another man. Now, after repenting, she wants to come back home. My pastor says to take her back, but doesn’t God forbid this?
No. Absolutely not! God allows divorce for adultery, but He does not command it. Forgiveness is always better and always appropriate. (See Matthew 6:14, 15.) Divorce will bring devastating consequences to your life and the lives of your children. Give her another chance! The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) applies here. If you and your wife surrender your lives to Christ, He will make your marriage happy and fulfilling. It’s not too late.

6. What can I do? Men are always trying to get too familiar with me.
Be very careful with your behavior. God says, “Abstain from every form of

evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22.) Perhaps your behavior toward men—suggestive smiles, immodest clothing, inappropriate jokes, or a casual and inviting attitude—encourages their advances. There is something about Christian modesty and dignity that keeps people in their place. Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16.) When Christ shines through your life, you will have fewer problems with improper advances.

7. Can you tell me simply and clearly what God's counsel is for someone who has fallen but has genuinely repented?
A long time ago, Christ gave a clear and comforting answer to a person who had fallen into moral failure but had repented. He said, "Go and sin no more." (John 8:11.) His counsel still applies today.

8. Is the "innocent party" in a divorce ever guilty too?
Absolutely. Sometimes the "innocent party," through lack of love, neglect, self-righteousness, unkindness, selfishness, nagging, and emotional coldness, can encourage wrong thoughts and actions in their spouse. At times, the "innocent party" may be just as guilty before God as the "guilty" one. God looks at our hearts and judges accordingly. "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7.)

9. Does God expect me to stay with an abusive spouse?
Physical abuse can be life-threatening and is a serious issue that requires immediate attention. An abused spouse and their family must find a safe living environment. Both husband and wife should seek professional help through a qualified Christian marriage counselor.

Quiz Questions

1. Marriage is: (1)
☐ The lifelong union of a man and a woman with God.
☐ A temporary arrangement to see if two people are compatible.
☐ Not necessary. Men and women are free to live together without it.

2. God recognizes only one cause for divorce. It is: (1)
☐ Incompatibility.
☐ An angry spouse.
☐ Adultery or sexual immorality.
☐ Ungodliness in a spouse.

3. Courtesies during courtship: (1)

☐ Should continue throughout married life.
☐ Should be abandoned quickly after the wedding.
☐ Are foolish and unnecessary.

4. The best guarantee of success in marriage is: (1)
☐ Having Christ in your heart and home.
☐ Forcing the wife to obey the husband.
☐ For the wife to threaten divorce to get her way.

5. For safety during a disagreement, do the following: (3)
☐ Speak softly and gently.
☐ Make your spouse admit they are wrong.
☐ Call the neighbors to resolve the issue.
☐ Force your spouse to be quiet.
☐ Leave and stay away for a few days.
☐ Pray together.
☐ Control your temper before bedtime.

6. Check the things that are keys to a successful marriage: (2)
☐ Close your family circle to outsiders.
☐ Live with your parents.
☐ Run to your mother when you're angry.
☐ Share your spouse's faults with close friends.
☐ Establish your own home.
☐ Write to an old flame for advice.
☐ Never apologize first after a fight.

7. The best ways to improve your spouse are: (2)
☐ Threaten to leave if you don't get your way.
☐ Nag and criticize.
☐ Strengthen your relationship with Jesus Christ.
☐ Make your spouse sleep alone.
☐ Be loving, grateful, and forgiving.
☐ Force your spouse to change.

8. Check the things below that threaten a marriage: (6)
☐ Criticism.
☐ A selfish husband.
☐ A wasteful wife.
☐ Laziness.
☐ A Christian home.
☐ Praying together.
☐ Problems with cleanliness.

☐ A spirit of forgiveness.
☐ Jealousy.

9. To succeed in major decision-making: (2)
☐ Husband and wife should consult together.
☐ The husband should force his will on the wife.
☐ Seek God's guidance through prayer together.
☐ Insist on having your own way.

10. A good rule for in-laws is: (1)
☐ Mind your own business and leave newlyweds alone.
☐ Insist that newlyweds live with you.
☐ Decide to give advice to newlyweds whether they want it or not.

11. In case of unfaithfulness in marriage, the best thing to do is: (1)
☐ Leave immediately and never return.
☐ Tell everyone how awful your spouse is.
☐ Be willing to forgive and save your marriage if possible.

12. Thoughts should be carefully guarded because: (2)
☐ Bad thoughts lead to bad actions.
☐ Your spouse can read your mind.
☐ Evil thoughts will destroy your marriage.

Written in Stone

Lesson 6

Many centuries ago, God wrote His law on stone, and you are still required to keep it today! It is absolutely true that breaking any part of God's law always brings harmful consequences. When crime dominates our cities, doesn't it make sense that for peace and safety, we should obey the laws of the land? Well, this same principle applies to God's law—the Ten Commandments—in our personal lives as well! They are not called the Ten Suggestions, the Ten Ideas, or the Ten Opinions. Since so much is at stake, you should take a few moments to seriously consider your responsibility.

"And the tablets were the work of God."

1. Is it true that God Himself wrote the Ten Commandments?
"And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God."
"Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets." (Exodus 31:18; 32:16)

Answer: Yes, the great God of heaven wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone with His own finger.

God says that sin is the breaking of His law.

2. What is God's definition of sin?
"Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

Answer: Sin is breaking God's Ten Commandments. And because God's law is perfect (Psalm 19:7), it covers every conceivable sin. It is impossible to commit a sin that is not condemned by at least one of God's Ten Commandments. The commandments encompass "the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) Nothing is left out.

Blessings follow those who keep His commandments.

3. Why did God give us the Ten Commandments?
"Happy is he who keeps the law." (Proverbs 29:18)
"Keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you." (Proverbs 3:1, 2)

Answer:
A. As a guide for a happy, abundant life.

God created us to enjoy happiness, peace, long life, fulfillment, satisfaction, and all the other great blessings our hearts desire. God's law is the roadmap that points out the right paths to follow in order to find this true and supreme happiness.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)
"I would not have known sin except through the law." (Romans 7:7)

B. To show me the difference between right and wrong.

God's law is like a mirror (James 1:23–25). It reveals the flaws in my life just as a mirror shows the dirt on my face. The only possible way for a person to know if they are sinning is to carefully examine their life in light of the mirror of God's law. Hope for this confused and chaotic generation is found in the Ten Commandments of God. They draw the line between right and wrong.

"And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes ... for our good always." (Deuteronomy 6:24)
"Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually. You reject all those who stray from Your statutes." (Psalm 119:117, 118)

C. To protect me from danger and disaster.

God's law is like a strong fortress in a wildlife park, protecting us from wild and destructive animals. It safeguards us against impurity, dishonesty, murder, idolatry, theft, and many other evils that destroy life, peace, and happiness. All good laws protect, and God's law is no exception.

Special Note: The eternal principles of God's law are written deep within the nature of every person by the Creator Himself. The writing may be dim and defaced, but it is still there. This means, without question, that you cannot find true peace unless you are willing to live in harmony with your inner nature—where God has written these principles. We were created to live in agreement with them. When we choose to ignore them, the inevitable result is tension, confusion, and disaster—just as neglecting the laws of safe driving leads to serious problems.

The law protects us from Satan just as a fortress protects us from a lion in the wildlife park.

4. Why is God's law so personally important to me?
"Speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." (James 2:12)

Answer: Because the Ten Commandments are the standard by which God examines people during the judgment in heaven. How do you measure up? It is a matter of life or death!

The cross is positive proof that the law cannot be changed.

5. Can God's law (the Ten Commandments) be changed or abolished?
"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)
"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." (Psalm 89:34)
"All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever." (Psalm 111:7, 8)

Answer: Absolutely not! The Bible is very clear on this matter. If the law could have been changed, God would have done so immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, rather than sending His Son to die for the sinner to pay the penalty of the broken law. But this was impossible because the commandments are not just rules or regulations that were enacted—they are revealed principles of God's holy character, which will always remain true as long as God exists.

Look at the chart below, which shows that God and His law share the same attributes. What does this mean? The Ten Commandments are God's character written down so that we can understand it. It is no more possible to change God's law than to remove God from heaven and change Him.

Jesus came to show us what the law (which is the pattern of a holy life) looked like when formed in human nature. God's character can never change—neither can His law, because it is His character expressed in human language.

	GOD IS	LAW IS
Good	Luke 18:19	1 Timothy 1:8
Holy	Isaiah 5:16	Romans 7:12
Perfect	Mathew 5:48	Psalms 19:7
Pure	1john3:2 , 3	Psalms 19:8
Only	Deutronomy 32:4	Romans 7:12
Truth	John3:33	Psalms 19:9
Spiritual	1 Corinthians 10:4	Romans 7:14
Justice	Jeremiah 23:6	Psalms 119:172
Faithful	1 Corinthians 1:9	Psalms119:86
Love	1 John 4:8	Romans13:10
Unchanging	James 1:17	Mathew 5:18
Forever	Genesis21:33	psalms 111:7 , 8

1. Is Jesus the law in human form? When He is in the heart, keeping the law becomes a delight.

6. Did Jesus abolish God's law when He was on earth?
"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law... I did not come to destroy but to fulfill... Till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17, 18)

Answer: No, absolutely not! Jesus specifically emphasized that He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill (or keep) it. Instead of removing the law, Jesus magnified it (Isaiah 42:21) as the perfect guide for righteous living. For example, Jesus taught that "you shall not murder" also condemns anger "without cause" (Matthew 5:21, 22) and hatred (1 John 3:15), and that lust is equivalent to adultery (Matthew 5:27, 28). He said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15)

The law is like the length of a chain. If even one link is broken, its entire purpose is nullified.

7. Will people who knowingly continue to break even one of God's commandments be saved?
"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)
"He will destroy the sinners." (Isaiah 13:9)
"Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10)

Answer:
No! They will be lost. The Ten Commandments are the guide we must follow to find our way to God and holy living. If I ignore even one commandment, I reject part of the divine structure or map. If one link in a chain is broken, the entire purpose is rendered useless. The Bible says that when we knowingly break any of God's commandments, we sin (James 4:17) because we reject His will for us. Only those who do God's will can enter the kingdom of heaven. Sinners will be lost.

Salvation from Jesus is as real as a gift received on a special holiday or birthday. It is free, specially prepared for us by Jesus!

8. Can anyone be saved by keeping the law?
"By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight." (Romans 3:20)
"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

Answer:
No! The answer is very simple. No one can be saved by keeping the law. Salvation comes only through grace, as a free gift from Jesus Christ, and we receive this gift by faith, not by works. The law only serves as a mirror to reveal sin in our lives. Cleansing and forgiveness from that sin come solely through Christ.

Our own standards are never reliable. I cannot know if I am a sinner unless I carefully examine myself against the perfect standard, the mirror of God's law.

9. Why, then, is the law absolutely essential for developing Christian character?
"Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
"By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

Answer:
Because the complete structure, or "whole duty," of the Christian life is contained in God's law. Like a six-year-old boy who makes his own ruler, measures himself, and tells his mother he is twelve feet tall, our own standards are never reliable. I cannot know if I am a sinner unless I carefully examine myself against the perfect standard, the mirror of God's law.

Millions of people who have cast out demons, prophesied, and done many wonderful works in Jesus' name will be lost (Matthew 7:21-23) because they

did not bother to examine their lives by His supreme standard of the law. As a result, they think they are righteous and saved when, in fact, they are sinners and lost. “Now by this we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.” (1 John 2:3)

When Jesus lives in the heart, a life of darkness and sin is transformed by His victorious living.

10. What enables a truly converted Christian to follow the example of God’s law?
“I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts.” (Hebrews 8:10)
“I can do all things through Christ.” (Philippians 4:13)
“God... sent His own Son... that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” (Romans 8:3, 4)

Answer:
Christ not only forgives repentant sinners but also restores in them the image of God. He brings them into harmony with His law through the power of His presence within them. “You shall not” becomes a promise that the Christian will not steal, lie, kill, etc., because Jesus lives within and reigns.

God could not change His law, but He made a blessed plan through Jesus to transform the sinner so that he could meet the law’s requirements.

A governor’s pardon forgives a prisoner, but it does not give him the freedom to break any law.

11. But isn’t a Christian who has faith and lives under grace freed from keeping the law?
“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin [break the law] because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” (Romans 6:14, 15)
“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” (Romans 3:31)

Answer:
No! Scripture teaches the exact opposite. Grace is like a governor’s pardon for a prisoner. It forgives, but it does not give him the freedom to break any law on the books. A forgiven person living under grace is doubly obligated to keep the law.

Anyone who refuses to obey God’s law, claiming to live under grace, is mistaken. He is living under shame.

12. Are the Ten Commandments of God confirmed again in the New Testament?
Answer: Yes, and very clearly so. Pay close attention to the following:

THE LAW OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	THE LAW OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
1. ‘’You shall worship the lord your God,and Him only shall you serve.’’Mathew 4;10	1. “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Exodus 20:3 .
2. “Little children ,keep yourselves from idols.1 john5;21.” Therefore, since we are Gods offspring,we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone -an image made by human design and skill’.Acts17:29 .	2. ‘’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;you shall not bow down tothem 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.’’.” Exodus 20:4-6 .
3. “So that the name of God and His teaching may not be blasphemed.” 1 Timothy 6:1 .	3.’’You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,for the Lord will not hold him guiltness who takes His name in vain.”Exodus 20:7 .
4. “For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way;And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.’-Hebrews 4;4 ‘’There remains therefore a rest [to keep the sabbath,aside]for the people of God.’’-Hebrews 4;9-10	4. “Remember the Sabbath day,to keep it holy.Six days you shall labour and do all your work,but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God .In it ,you shall do no work ;you,nor your son ,nor your daughter,nor your male servant,nor your female servant,nor your cattle,nor your stranger who is within your gates.For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth,the sea,and all that is in them,and rested the seventh day.Therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath /day and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11 .
5. “Honor your father and mother.” Mathew 19:19 .	5. Honor your father and your mother,so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you”.” Exodus 20:12 .

THE LAW OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	THE LAW OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
6. "You shall not murder." Romans 13:9 .	6. You shallnot murder." Exodus 20:13 .
7. "You shall not commit adultery." Mathew 19:18 .	7. "You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14 .
8. "You shall not steal." Romans 13:9 .	8. You shall not steal." exodus 20:15 .
9. "You shall not covet." Romans 13:9.	9. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." Exodus 20:16 .
1You shall not covet." romans 7:7 .	10. ''you shall not covet your neighbours house.You shall not covet your neighbours wife,or his male or female servant,his ox or donkey,or anythingthat belongs to your neighbour." Exodus 20:17 .

The Sacrifices of Ceremonies and Rituals Pointed Forward to the Sacrifice of Jesus.

13. Are the Law of God and the Law of Moses the Same?
Answer: No, they are not the same. Study the following details and compare them carefully.

Note: The Law of Moses was a temporary, ceremonial law of the Old Covenant. It governed the priesthood, sacrifices, rituals, meat and drink offerings, etc., all of which were a shadow of the cross. This law was added "until the Seed should come," and that Seed was Christ (Galatians 3:16, 19). The ceremonies and rituals of the Law of Moses pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ. When He died, this law came to an end, but the Ten Commandments (the Law of God) "stand forever and ever" (Psalm 111:8). That there are two laws is made very clear in Daniel 9:10, 11.

Special Note: Please remember that the Law of God has existed for at least as long as sin has existed. The Bible says, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression [or sin]" (Romans 4:15). Therefore, the Law of the Ten Commandments has existed from the beginning. Humanity broke that law (they sinned—1 John 3:4). Because of sin (or breaking God's law), the Law of Moses was given (or "added"—Galatians 3:16, 19) until Christ came and died. Two distinct laws are involved: the Law of God and the Law of Moses.

LAW OF MOSES	LAW OF GOD
Called the "Law of Moses" (Luke 2:22).	Called the "law of the Lord" (Isaiah 5:24).
Called "the law contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15).	Called "the royal law" (James 2:8).
Written by Moses in a book (2Chronicles 35:12).	Written by God on stone (Exodus 31:18). 32:16).
Placed beside the Ark of the covenant (Deutronomy 31:26).	Placed inside the Ark (Exodus 40:20).
Ended at the cross (ephesians 2:15).	Stands forever (Luke16:17).
Added because of sin (galatians 3:19).	Reveals sin (Romans 7:7). 3:20).
Against us,contrary to us (Collosians 2:14).	Not burdensome (1 john 5:3).
Judges no one (Colossians 2:14-16).	Judges all people (james2:10-12).
carnal (hebrews7:16).	Spritual (romans 7:14).
Made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7:19).	perfect (psalms 19:7).

The Dragon Was Angry with the Woman [the True Church].

14. How does the devil feel about people who follow God's Ten Commandments in their lives?
"The dragon [the devil] was enraged with the woman [the true church], and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God." – Revelation 12:17.
"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God." – Revelation 14:12.

Answer:
The devil hates people who keep God's law because the law is a standard for righteous living. If you choose to follow the guidelines outlined in God's law, you will immediately feel Satan's fierce anger directed at you. It is no surprise that Satan hates and fiercely opposes everyone who obeys God's law. However, it is shocking and astonishing to hear religious leaders deny the binding claims of the Ten Commandments while upholding human traditions. No wonder Jesus said, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? … And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." – Matthew 15:3, 9.
David also said, "It is time for You to act, O Lord, for they have regarded Your law as void." – Psalm 119:126.
Christians should awaken and restore God's law to its rightful, exalted position. It is foolish for this undisciplined generation to think that they can break the laws of the living God without facing consequences.

15. I believe a Christian must obey God's Ten Commandments, and I ask Jesus to help me bring my life into harmony with them.

Answer

Thought-Provoking Questions

1. Doesn't the Bible say that the law was (or is) faulty?

No. The Bible says that the people were at fault. God found "fault with them." – Hebrews 8:8. In Romans 8:3, the Bible says that the law "was weak through the flesh." The story is always the same: the law is perfect, but people are at fault or are weak. That is why God wants His Son to live within His people "so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us" – Romans 8:4, through Christ dwelling in us.

2. Galatians 3:13 says we are redeemed from the curse of the law. Can you explain this?

The curse of the law is death (Romans 6:23). Christ "tasted death for everyone" – Hebrews 2:9. In doing so, He redeemed all from the curse of the law (death) and, in its place, offers eternal life.

3. Do Colossians 2:14–17 and Ephesians 2:15 teach that God's law ended at the cross?

No, these verses refer to the law containing "ordinances"—the law of Moses, which included ceremonial laws governing sacrifices and the priesthood. All these ceremonies and rituals pointed forward to the cross and ended with Christ's death, as God intended. The law of Moses was added "till the Seed should come," and that Seed was Christ (Galatians 3:19, 16). God's moral law is not included here, because Paul described it as holy, just, and good years after the cross (Romans 7:7, 12).

4. The Bible says, "Love is the fulfillment of the law." – Romans 13:10. It also commands us in Matthew 22:37-40 to love God and our neighbors, concluding with, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Do these commandments replace the Ten Commandments?

No, the Ten Commandments hang on these two commandments just as ten fingers hang from two hands. They cannot be separated. Love for God makes keeping the first four commandments (which relate to God) a joy, and love for our neighbor makes keeping the last six (which relate to our

fellow human beings) a delight. Love fulfills the law by removing hostility and making obedience a pleasure (Psalm 40:8). When you truly love someone, it becomes a joy to honor their requests. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." – John 14:15.
It is impossible to love the Lord while refusing to obey His commandments because the Bible says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." – 1 John 5:3. "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." – 1 John 2:4.

5. Doesn't 2 Corinthians 3:7 teach that the law written on stone tablets "was to be done away with"?

No. The passage says that the "glory" of Moses' ministry of the law was to be done away with, not the law itself. Read the entire passage carefully (2 Corinthians 3:3–9). The lesson is not the removal or introduction of the law, but the change of its location—from "tablets of stone" to "tablets of the heart." Under Moses' ministry, the law was on stone. Under the Holy Spirit's ministry through Christ, the law is written on the heart (Hebrews 8:10). A law on a classroom bulletin board becomes effective only when it enters the student's heart. Christ's ministry of the law is superior because He places it in the Christian's heart. Then obedience becomes a joyous and fulfilling way of life because the Christian genuinely loves both God and others.

6. Romans 10:4 says that "Christ is the end of the law." Does this mean the law is abolished?

No. The word "end" in this verse means "goal" or "purpose," as it does in James 5:11. The meaning is clear: the goal or purpose of the law is to lead people to Christ, where they find righteousness.

7. Why do many people reject the binding claims of God's law?

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." – Romans 8:7–9.

8. Were the righteous people of the Old Testament saved by keeping the law?

No one has ever been saved by the law. All who have been saved in every age were saved by grace. This "grace … was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." – 2 Timothy 1:9. The law only reveals sin. Christ alone can save.

Noah “found grace” (Genesis 6:8), Moses found grace (Exodus 33:17), and the Israelites in the wilderness found grace (Jeremiah 31:2). All the Old Testament heroes listed in Hebrews 11 were saved by faith. They were saved by looking forward to the cross; we are saved by looking back at it. The law is vital because, like a mirror, it reveals the “dirt” in our lives. Without it, people are sinners but do not know it. However, the law cannot save—only Jesus can. This has always been true, even in Old Testament times (Acts 4:10, 12; 2 Timothy 1:9).

9. Why is conscience not a safe guide?

Because the Bible speaks of an evil conscience, a defiled conscience, and a seared conscience—all of which are unsafe. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” – Proverbs 14:12. God says, “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.” – Proverbs 28:26.

Questions Section

1. The Ten Commandments were written by (1)
_____ God.
_____ Moses.
_____ An unknown person.

2. According to the Bible, sin is (1)
_____ A character flaw.
_____ Breaking God’s law.
_____ Anything that seems wrong.

3. Check the statements that are true about God’s law: (4)
_____ It is a perfect guide for a happy life.
_____ Like a mirror, it reveals sin.
_____ It is burdensome and oppressive.
_____ It can protect me from evil.
_____ It has the same qualities as God.
_____ It was abolished in the New Testament.
_____ It is a curse.

4. The law of the Ten Commandments (1)
_____ Was only for Old Testament times.
_____ Was abolished by Jesus on the cross.
_____ Is completely unchangeable.

5. On the Day of Judgment, I will be saved if (1)
_____ I maintain a record of good deeds.
_____ I love the Lord, regardless of whether I obey the Ten Commandments.
_____ My personal loving relationship with Jesus leads me to obey all His commandments.

6. People are saved by (1)
_____ Keeping the law.
_____ Breaking the law.
_____ Jesus Christ alone.

7. Truly converted Christians (1)
_____ Keep God's law through Christ's power.
_____ Ignore the law because it was abolished.
_____ Consider obedience to the commandments as unnecessary.

8. A person living under grace (1)
_____ Can break the Ten Commandments without sinning.
_____ Is freed from keeping the law.
_____ Will joyfully keep God's commandments.

9. Love fulfills the law because (1)
_____ Love cancels the law.
_____ True love for God and others makes keeping the law a joy.
_____ Love is more important than obedience.

10. The law of Moses is (1)
_____ The same as God's law.
_____ The ceremonial and sacrificial law, which pointed forward to Christ and ended at the cross.
_____ Still binding today.

11. People who obey the Ten Commandments (1)
_____ Are all legalists.
_____ Will be fiercely opposed by Satan, who hates God and His law.
_____ Are saved by keeping the law.

12. Check the statements that are true about Christ and the law: (4)
_____ Jesus broke the law.
_____ Jesus is the perfect human example of law-keeping.
_____ Jesus abolished the law.
_____ Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."
_____ Jesus magnified the law and showed that it covers every sin.
_____ Jesus said the law cannot be changed.

The Lost Day of History

Lesson 7

Did you know there is a very important day that almost everyone has forgotten? It is surprising that so few people know about it because it is one of the most significant days in all human history! It is not only a day of the past but also of the present and the future. Moreover, what happened on this neglected day could have a profound impact on your life. Would you like to know more amazing facts about this lost day of history? Then read this Study Guide carefully.

When Jesus was on earth, He worshiped on the Sabbath day.

1. Which day did Jesus customarily worship on?
"So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read." (Luke 4:16)

Answer:
It was Jesus' custom to worship on the Sabbath day.

The seventh day of the week (Saturday) is the Sabbath.

2. But which day of the week is the Sabbath?
"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." (Exodus 20:10)
"Now when the Sabbath was past… very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb." (Mark 16:1-2)

Answer:
The Sabbath is not the first day of the week (Sunday), as many believe, but the seventh day (Saturday). Notice from the above Scriptures that the Sabbath comes just before the first day of the week.

God established the Sabbath during Creation.

3. Who made the Sabbath and when?
"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)
"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Genesis 2:2-3)

Answer:
God established the Sabbath during Creation when He created the world. He rested on the Sabbath day, blessed it, and sanctified it (set it apart for holy use).

God wrote the Sabbath commandment with His own finger.

4. What does God say about keeping the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments, which He wrote with His own finger?
"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it, you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11)
"And the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God." (Deuteronomy 9:10)

Answer:
In the fourth commandment of the Ten, God commands us to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as His holy day. God knew people would forget His Sabbath, so He began this commandment with the word "remember." He has never commanded anyone, anywhere, to keep any other weekly day as holy.

Jesus says it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for God's law to change.

5. But haven't the Ten Commandments been changed?
Jesus said, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17)
God says, "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." (Psalm 89:34)
Note that the Ten Commandments came directly from His lips (Exodus 20:1).

Answer:
No, absolutely not! It is impossible for any part of God's moral law to change. All Ten Commandments are still binding today.

Paul and the other apostles kept God's seventh-day Sabbath.

6. Did the apostles keep the Sabbath?
"Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths

reasoned with them from the Scriptures." (Acts 17:2)
"But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down." (Acts 13:13-14)
"And on the Sabbath day, we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made." (Acts 16:13)
"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:4)

Answer:
Yes, the book of Acts clearly shows that Paul and the early church kept the Sabbath.

The apostles taught Gentiles to keep the Sabbath.

7. Did Gentiles also worship on the Sabbath?
God commanded:
"Blessed is the man who… keeps from defiling the Sabbath." (Isaiah 56:2)
"Also, the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord… everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant—even them I will bring to My holy mountain." (Isaiah 56:6-7)

The apostles taught:
"When the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath… On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God." (Acts 13:42, 44)

Answer:
The apostles not only obeyed God's command to keep the Sabbath but also taught converted Gentiles to worship on the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath was not changed to Sunday at Christ's resurrection.

8. But wasn't the Sabbath changed to Sunday at Christ's death or resurrection?

Answer:
No, there is no hint that the Sabbath was changed at Christ's resurrection. On the contrary, the Bible teaches the opposite.

Everyone in God's eternal kingdom will keep the Sabbath.

9. Some people say the Sabbath will be observed in God's new earth. Is this correct?

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord. (Isaiah 66:22-23)

Answer: Yes, the Bible says that the redeemed of all ages will keep the Sabbath in God’s new earth.

The Lord’s Day is the Sabbath, not Sunday.

10. But isn’t Sunday the Lord’s Day?
“Call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord.” (Isaiah 58:13).
“For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” (Matthew 12:8).

Answer:
The Bible mentions the “Lord’s Day” in Revelation 1:10, indicating that the Lord has a special day. However, there is no scripture that refers to Sunday as the Lord’s Day. Instead, the Bible clearly identifies the Sabbath as the Lord’s Day. The only day ever blessed by the Lord or claimed as His holy day is the seventh-day Sabbath.

Jesus established baptism—not Sunday observance—in honor of His resurrection.

11. Shouldn’t I keep Sunday in honor of Christ’s resurrection?
“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6:3-6).

Answer:
No! It is no more appropriate to observe Sunday for Christ’s resurrection than it would be to observe Friday in honor of His crucifixion. Christ instituted baptism as a symbol of His death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible never suggests keeping Sunday for the resurrection (or for any other reason). We honor Christ by obeying Him (John 14:15)—not by following human traditions in place of His commandments.

Corrupt people had the audacity to change Sunday in place of God’s Sabbath law.

12. Well, if Sunday-keeping is not in the Bible, whose idea was it?
“He shall intend to change times and law.” (Daniel 7:25, NKJV).
“Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:6, 9).
“Her priests have violated My law.” (Ezekiel 22:26).

Answer:
Long ago, corrupted religious leaders declared that God’s holy day had been changed from the Sabbath to Sunday. God foretold that this would happen, and it did. This falsehood has been passed down through generations as gospel truth. Sunday observance is a human tradition that violates God’s law,which commands Sabbath-keeping. Only God can make a day holy. He blessed the Sabbath, and what God blesses, no one can “reverse” (Numbers 23:20).

Changing the Sabbath to Sunday is an insult to God because it attempts to alter His holy law.

13. But isn’t it dangerous to tamper with God’s law?
“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God.” (Deuteronomy 4:2).
“Every word of God is pure ... Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Answer:
God explicitly forbids anyone from changing His law by adding to or removing from it. Tampering with God’s holy law in any way is one of the most serious and dangerous things a person can do.

The Sabbath is a sign of God’s power to create and to redeem.

14. Why did God make the Sabbath?
A. A Sign of Creation.
“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8, 11).

B. A Sign of Redemption and Sanctification.
“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.” (Ezekiel 20:12).

Answer:
God gave the Sabbath as two important signs:
1. It is a sign that He created the world in six literal, 24-hour days.
2. It is a sign of His power to redeem and sanctify humanity.
Every Christian should cherish the Sabbath as a precious symbol of God's creation and redemption (Exodus 31:13, 17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). Ignoring the Sabbath is a serious offense against God. In Isaiah 58:13-14, God promises blessings to those who honor His Sabbath

Breaking any commandment of God's law is a sin
15. How important is Sabbath-keeping?
"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4).
"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23).
"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10).
"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2:21).
"He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Hebrews 5:9).

Answer:
It is a matter of life and death. Sabbath-keeping is part of the fourth commandment in God's law. Deliberately breaking any of the Ten Commandments is sin. Christians should joyfully follow Christ's example of Sabbath observance. Our only safety is in diligently studying the Bible, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), and ensuring every Christian practice we follow has solid biblical support.
God will pour out His wrath on religious leaders who deliberately ignore His Sabbath

16. How does God feel about religious leaders who ignore the Sabbath?
"Her priests have violated My law ... Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them." (Ezekiel 22:26, 31).

Answer:
By hiding their eyes from God's true Sabbath, religious leaders provoke God's anger. He promises judgment on these false shepherds. Millions have been misled on this vital issue, and God does not take it lightly. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for pretending to love God while nullifying one of the Ten Commandments through their traditions (Mark 7:7-13).
Everyone who enters heaven and eats from the tree of life will keep God's Sabbath.

17. Does Sabbath-keeping affect me personally?
“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15).
“So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12).
“To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17).
“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” (Revelation 22:14).

Answer:
Absolutely! The Sabbath is your Sabbath. God made it for you, and if you love Him, you will keep it because it is one of His commandments. Love without obedience is not true love (1 John 2:4). You must make a decision—no one else can do it for you. You will personally answer to God for your response to this crucial issue. God invites you to love and obey Him now.
18. I am ready to follow Jesus’ example of keeping the Sabbath.

Answer:
Thought Questions

1. But isn’t the Sabbath only for the Jews?
No. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man.” (Mark 2:27). It was not just for the Jews, but for humanity—all men and women everywhere. The Jewish nation did not even exist until 2,500 years after the Sabbath was made.

2. Doesn’t Acts 20:7-12 prove that the disciples kept Sunday as a holy day?
According to the Bible, each day begins at sunset and ends at the following sunset (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32), and the dark part of the day comes first. Therefore, the Sabbath begins Friday night at sunset and ends Saturday night at sunset. This meeting in Acts 20 occurred during the dark portion of Sunday, or what we now call Saturday night. The New English Bible begins Acts 20:7 this way: “On Saturday night in our gathering…”

It was a Saturday night meeting that continued until midnight. Paul was on a farewell journey and knew he would not see these people again before his death (verse 25). No wonder he preached for so long! (No regular weekly service lasted all night.) Paul was “ready to depart on the morrow.” “Breaking bread” had no special “holy day” significance because they broke bread every day (Acts 2:46). There is no indication in this passage that the first day was sacred or that these early Christians regarded it as such. Nor is there the slightest evidence that the Sabbath had been changed. Interestingly, this meeting is likely mentioned in Scripture only because of the miracle where Paul revived Eutychus, who had fallen to his death from a third-story window.

In Ezekiel 46:1, God refers to Sunday as one of the six “working days.”

3. Does 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 refer to Sunday School offerings?
No, there is no reference to a public meeting here. These funds were to be laid aside privately at home. There was a famine in Judea (Romans 15:26; Acts 11:26-30), and Paul was writing to ask the churches in Asia Minor to help their starving brethren. All these Christians kept the Sabbath, so Paul suggested that on Sunday morning (which was the time for settling accounts and paying bills), after the Sabbath had ended, they should set aside something for their needy brethren to be ready when he arrived. This was to be done privately or, as La Santa Biblia (a Spanish translation) says, “at home.” Also, note that there is no reference here to Sunday as a holy day. In fact, the Bible neither commands nor even suggests keeping Sunday.

4. But hasn’t time been lost and the days of the week changed since Christ’s time?
No! Encyclopedias and reliable reference books clearly show that our seventh day is the same one Jesus kept. It is a simple matter of historical and astronomical research.

5. Doesn’t John 20:19 record the disciples establishing Sunday worship to honor he resurrection?
On the contrary, at this time the disciples did not even believe the resurrection had occurred (Mark 16:14). They were gathered “for fear of the Jews” behind closed doors. When Jesus appeared among them, He rebuked them “because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.” There is no indication that they considered Sunday to be a holy day. The New Testament mentions the first day of the week only eight times, and none of these texts suggest it is sacred.

6. Doesn’t Colossians 2:14-17 abolish the seventh-day Sabbath?
Not at all. It refers only to sabbaths that were a “shadow of things to come” and not to the seventh-day Sabbath. There were seven annual holy days, or festivals, in ancient Israel, also called sabbaths. These were in addition to the “Sabbath of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:38), or the seventh-day Sabbath. All these annual sabbaths pointed forward to the cross and ended at the cross. God’s seventh-day Sabbath was established before sin entered the world and thus could not foreshadow deliverance from sin. This is why Colossians 2 distinguishes these shadowy sabbaths. The seven annual sabbaths that were abolished are listed in Leviticus 23.

7. Does Romans 14:5 teach that the day we observe is a matter of personal opinion?

Note that the entire chapter addresses judging one another (verses 4, 10, 13). The issue here is not the seventh-day Sabbath, which was part of the moral law but concerns annual ceremonial feast days. Jewish Christians were judging Gentile Christians for not observing these festivals. Paul simply says, "Do not judge one another. That ceremonial law is no longer binding.

Questions
1. Jesus kept (1)
___ Sunday as a holy day.
✓ The seventh-day Sabbath as holy.
___ Every other day as holy.
2. The Lord's Day is (1)
___ Sunday, the first day of the week.
✓ The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.
___ Any day we dedicate to the Lord.
3. The Sabbath was made (1)
___ For Jews only.
✓ By God at Creation for all men and women everywhere for all time.
___ For people living only in Old Testament times.
4. The change from Sabbath to Sunday was made by (1)
___ Christ.
___ The apostles.
✓ Corrupt men
5. God's law, which includes the Sabbath commandment (1)
___ Is no longer binding today.
✓ Can never change and is still binding today.
___ Ended with Christ's death.
6. In the New Testament church, Gentile converts and the apostles (1)
___ Observed Sunday as a holy day.
___ Were taught that any day could be holy if they were sincere.
✓ Kept the Sabbath
7. The Sabbath (1)
___ Ended at the cross.
___ Will end at Christ's second coming.
✓ Will be kept in God's new, eternal kingdom by the redeemed of all ages.
8. Since the Sabbath is part of God's law, breaking the Sabbath is (1)
___ Nothing to worry about since Christ's death.
✓ A serious sin because it tramples on sacred things.
___ Unimportant today
9. All who truly love and follow Jesus (1)
✓ Will keep the Sabbath, as Jesus did.
___ Will keep every other day holy.
___ Will observe Sunday as a holy day.

10. The Sabbath is (1)
___ Sunday, the first day of the week.
✓ Saturday, the seventh day of the week.
___ Any day we choose to dedicate to God.
11. Sunday observance (1)
✓ Is a human invention foretold in the Bible.
___ Is God's plan for today.
___ Was established at Christ's resurrection and confirmed at Pentecost.
12. Sabbath observance is (1)
✓ A twofold sign of God's creation and redemption.
___ Only important for Jews.
___ Just a symbol of legalism.

Final Redemption

Lesson 8
It's not a myth—one day, you can be free from the troubles, hunger, loneliness, crime, and chaos that plague the world today. Doesn't that sound wonderful? But it won't be some charismatic world leader who will deliver you… no, He is far greater than that!

Jesus is coming back soon, but there are many common misconceptions about how He will return. So, take a few moments to understand exactly what the Bible says about the second coming—so you won't be left behind!

Jesus taught that He will return to earth a second time

1. Will Jesus return to earth a second time? Can we be sure?
"Christ ... will appear a second time." (Hebrews 9:28)
"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." (John 14:3)

Answer:
Yes! In Matthew 26:64, Jesus testified under oath that He would return to earth again. Since the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35), this is a sure confirmation. Believe it as it is written. It is Christ's own personal guarantee.

Jesus said He would return to earth in the clouds.

2. In what manner will Jesus return the second time?
"As they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold,

two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:9-11)

Answer:
The Scriptures promise that Jesus will return to earth in the same manner He left—visibly, literally, physically, and personally. Matthew 24:30 says, “They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” He will come in the clouds, in bodily form (Luke 24:36-43, 50, 51), and His coming will be visible. The Bible is clear on these points.

Everyone on earth will see Jesus when He returns the second time.

3. Will Christ’s second coming be visible to everyone or just to a chosen group?
“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.” (Revelation 1:7)
“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:27)

Answer:
Every man, woman, and child living on earth will see Jesus when He returns the second time. His coming will be as bright and visible as lightning flashing across the sky. No one will be able to hide or miss it. Every living soul will face Christ. Jesus left no room for doubt or misunderstanding.

Note: The “secret rapture” theory, believed and taught by many today, is not found in the Bible. It is a human invention. Nor is the second coming a spiritual event that occurs in the heart at conversion. It does not happen when a person dies, nor is it a symbolic event represented by better world conditions. All these theories are of human origin. The second coming of Christ will be a literal, worldwide, visible, personal event where Christ appears in the clouds to bring judgment and reward to all people.

All the angels of heaven will accompany Jesus when He returns.

4. Who will come with Jesus at His second coming, and why?
“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.” (Matthew 25:31)

Answer:
All the angels of heaven will come with Jesus when He returns. As the cloud approaches the earth, Jesus will send His angels to gather the righteous for their journey to heaven (Matthew 24:31).

Jesus will take His people to heaven and restore all that Adam and Eve lost.

5. What is the purpose of Jesus' second coming to this earth?
"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work." (Revelation 22:12)
"I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3)
"And that He may send Jesus Christ … whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things." (Acts 3:20-21)

Answer:
Jesus is coming back to fulfill His promise to gather His people and take them to the beautiful homes He has prepared. He will restore to His people the joy and glory that Adam and Eve lost through sin. His second coming will end this age of sin and evil.

Young children who died will be reunited with their parents at Jesus' second coming.

6. What will happen to the righteous when Jesus comes again?
"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven … and the dead in Christ will rise first. 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." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
"We shall all be changed … and the dead will be raised incorruptible. For this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)
"We eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be conformed to His glorious body." (Philippians 3:20-21)

Answer:
The righteous dead will be raised from their graves with perfect, immortal bodies like Christ's. The living righteous will also be transformed and caught up with them in the clouds to meet Jesus. Together, they will be taken to heaven.

Note: Jesus will not touch the earth during His second coming. The righteous will meet Him in the air. Any reports claiming that Christ is on earth should be

ignored (Matthew 24:23-27). False Christs will appear and perform miracles, but the real Jesus will remain in the clouds.

The wicked will be slain when Jesus comes the second time.

7. What will happen to the wicked when Jesus returns?
"With the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked." (Isaiah 11:4)
"And the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end." (Jeremiah 25:33)

Answer:
The wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of Jesus' coming.
The earthquakes today are minor compared to the great earthquake at Jesus' return.

8. How will Christ's second coming affect the earth itself?
"There was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. … Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Revelation 16:18, 20)
"I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down." (Jeremiah 4:26)
"The Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste. … The earth is utterly emptied." (Isaiah 24:1, 3)

Answer:
A massive earthquake will devastate the earth during Jesus' return, leaving it in a state of total desolation.

Millions of Christians died during the Dark Ages—many were burned at the stake.

9. Does the Bible give any signs about the nearness of Christ's second coming?
Answer: Yes! Jesus said, "When you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors." (Matthew 24:33)

One sign was the destruction of Jerusalem:
"Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down. … Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." (Matthew 24:2, 16)
Fulfillment: Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman general Titus.

B. The Great Tribulation

Prophecy of Tribulation:
“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.” (Matthew 24:21)

Fulfillment:
This prophecy refers primarily to the long period of tribulation that occurred during the Dark Ages, fueled by the apostate church. It lasted for more than 1,000 years. More than 50 million Christians were killed for their faith during this terrible time of persecution. One historian states that the apostate church “has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind.”

C. The Sun Will Be Darkened

Prophecy:
“Immediately after the distress of those days ‘the sun will be darkened.’” (Matthew 24:29)

Fulfillment:
This was fulfilled on the extraordinary “Dark Day” of May 19, 1780. It was not a solar eclipse. Timothy Dwight said, “On May 19, 1780, there was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lit in many houses; birds fell silent and disappeared, and poultry retired to roost. … The general opinion prevailed that the Day of Judgment was at hand.” (Quoted in Historical Collections of Connecticut, compiled by John Warner Barber, 2nd edition, New Haven: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1836, p. 403).

D. The Moon Will Turn to Blood

Prophecy:
“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” (Joel 2:31)

Fulfillment:
The moon appeared red as blood on the night of the “Dark Day,” May 19, 1780. Milo Bostick, in Stone’s History of Massachusetts, says, “The moon, which was full, had the appearance of blood.”

E. The Stars Will Fall from Heaven

Prophecy:

“The stars will fall from the sky.” (Matthew 24:29)

Fulfillment:
A spectacular meteor shower occurred on the night of November 13, 1833. It was so bright that newspapers could be read outdoors. One writer described it as follows: “For nearly four hours the sky was literally ablaze.” People thought the end of the world had come. This event remains one of the most vivid signs pointing to Christ’s return. (Source: Peter A. Millman, “The Falling of the Stars,” The Telescope, May–June, 1940, p. 57).

F. Jesus Will Come in the Clouds

Prophecy:
“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30)

Fulfillment:
This is the next great event to come. Are you ready?
---

10. How can we know when we have reached the very last days of earth’s history? Does the Bible clearly describe the world and its people in the final generation?

Answer:
Yes, absolutely. Consider the following specific signs of the last days. You will be amazed. These are just a few of the many clear signs indicating that we are living in the final days of earth’s history

A. Economic Problems

“The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.”
“Be patient … because the Lord’s coming is near.” (James 5:4, 8)

The Bible predicts economic struggles in the last days. To see the fulfillment of this prophecy, just check today’s news

B. Wars and Civil Unrest

“When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things

must happen first." (Luke 21:9)

Wars and internal conflicts are affecting millions worldwide. Only the soon return of Jesus will bring an end to the pain and destruction of warfare
C. Widespread Anxiety, Fear, and Chaos

"On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity. … People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world." (Luke 21:25–26)

This sounds remarkably like today's headlines, reflecting the state of our world. This global anxiety should not surprise us—Christ predicted it. It should also convince us that His return is near
D. Increase in Knowledge

"In the time of the end, knowledge shall increase." (Daniel 12:4)

The Information Age makes this prophecy unmistakably clear. Even the most skeptical mind must acknowledge its fulfillment. Knowledge is exploding in every field. It is said that 80% of all the knowledge in human history has been produced in the past decade, and 90% of all scientists who have ever lived are alive today

E. Scoffers and Religious Skeptics Who Reject Biblical Truth

"In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires." (2 Peter 3:3)

"They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3–4)

It is not difficult to find scoffers today, fulfilling this prophecy. Even religious leaders deny clear biblical truths about Creation, the Flood, Christ's divinity, His second coming, and many other essential teachings. Psychology and human traditions have replaced Scripture in many religious circles.

A recent poll found that only 2% of U.S. seminary students preparing for ministry believe in the literal second coming of Christ.

F. The Decline of Morality; The Collapse of Spiritual Integrity

"In the last days... people will be lovers of themselves, ... without natural affection, ... without self-control, ... despisers of those who are good, ... having a form of godliness but denying its power." – 2 Timothy 3:1-5

America is in the midst of a major crisis. People from all walks of life acknowledge this. Suicide is becoming a popular solution to human problems. Divorce rates are soaring, with nearly one out of every two marriages ending in a courtroom. The current immoral generation, obsessed with sex and impurity, combined with the increasing number of churchgoers but the declining true spiritual condition, is a clear and undeniable fulfillment of God's Word. For a real shock, observe how many of the last-days sins listed in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 you can find reflected in any edition of your Sunday newspaper. Nothing short of the coming of the Lord will halt the tide of evil now sweeping across the world.

G. Lovers of Pleasure

"In the last days... people will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." – 2 Timothy 3:1-4

The world has gone mad for pleasure. Only a small percentage of the population in major cities attend church services regularly, but multitudes crowd entertainment venues. America spends billions every year on pleasure while giving only "peanuts" (by comparison) to God. Pleasure-crazed Americans waste billions of hours in front of television screens in direct fulfillment of 2 Timothy 3:4.

H. Increase in Lawlessness, Bloodshed, and Violence

"Because lawlessness will abound." – Matthew 24:12
"Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse." – 2 Timothy 3:13
"The land is full of bloodshed, and the city is full of violence." – Ezekiel 7:23

It is abundantly clear that this sign has been fulfilled. Crime and lawlessness are increasing at an alarming rate. Many people in large cities no longer answer their doors after dark. The wisest leaders of our time worry about the survival of civilization because crime is advancing and seems unstoppable.

I. Destructive Earthquakes, Storms, and Famine

"There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences." – Luke 21:11

Earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters are increasing at an unprecedented rate. One-third of the world's population is hungry, and thousands die daily from starvation. All these events further confirm that we

are living in the final hours of Earth's history.

J. A Special Message to the World in the Last Days

"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." – Matthew 24:14

A powerful, urgent, and final warning message about the second coming of Christ is now being delivered in more than 900 languages and dialects. Approximately 95% of the world's population can access this message. Before Jesus returns, everyone in the world will be warned about His soon coming. People will be lost only if they reject this warning message.

K. Turning to Spiritualism

"In the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits." – 1 Timothy 4:1
"They are spirits of demons." – Revelation 16:14

Today, people—including many world leaders—seek advice from psychics, mediums, and spiritualists. Spiritualism has even infiltrated churches, along with the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The Bible teaches that the dead are truly dead. We are indeed living in the last days.
---

11. How soon is the second coming of the Lord?

"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. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." – Matthew 24:32-34

Answer: The Bible is very specific and clear about this matter. Nearly all the signs have been fulfilled. While we cannot know the exact day or hour of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36), we can be sure that we are the generation that will see Jesus coming. God has promised to bring things to a swift conclusion (Romans 9:28). Christ is returning soon for His people. Are you ready?
---

12. Satan tells many lies about Christ's second coming and, through false wonders and miracles, will deceive millions. How can I be sure I will not be deceived?

“They are spirits of demons, performing signs.” – Revelation 16:14
“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” – Matthew 24:24
“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” – Isaiah 8:20

Answer: Satan has devised many false teachings about Christ’s second coming, deceiving millions into believing that Jesus has already come or that He will return in some unscriptural way. But Christ warned us about Satan’s schemes, saying, “Take heed that no one deceives you.” (Matthew 24:4). He revealed Satan’s plans and lies so that we would be prepared, reminding us, “See, I have told you beforehand.” (Matthew 24:25).

For example, Jesus specifically said He would not appear in the desert or come to secret chambers (verse 26). There is no need to be deceived if we study what God’s Word teaches about Christ’s second coming.

The ultimate test is this: What does the Bible say? Those who know the Bible’s teachings about the second coming will not be misled by Satan. Everyone else will be deceived.

Jibu: Ndiyo, na kwa uwazi kabisa hivyo. Angalia yafuatayo kwa makini sana.

13. How can I be ready when Jesus returns?

“The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” – John 6:37
“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.” – John 1:12
“I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.” – Hebrews 8:10
“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – 1 Corinthians 15:57

Answer: Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in.” (Revelation 3:20). Through the Holy Spirit and our conscience, Jesus knocks and asks to enter our hearts to transform our lives. If I surrender my life fully to Him, He will forgive all my past sins (Romans 3:25) and empower me to live a godly life (John 1:12).

It’s that simple. My part is to surrender my life to Christ and allow Him to live in me. His part is to work the great miracle within me, transforming my life and preparing me for His second coming. It is a free gift—I simply need

to accept it.
---

14. What serious warning does Christ give us?

“Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” – Matthew 24:44

Answer: The greatest danger is being so absorbed with the cares and pleasures of this life that we are unprepared when the Lord returns. Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready? Nothing else is more important.

15. I choose to be ready when Jesus returns.

Questions of Thought

1. Has the great tribulation come yet? It is true that a terrible tribulation will cover the earth just before Jesus returns to redeem His people. Daniel describes it as “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Daniel 12:1). However, in context, the “great tribulation” of Matthew 24:21 refers to a severe persecution of God’s people during the Dark Ages. Millions were killed for their faith during that time.

2. Since the Lord is coming “as a thief in the night,” how can anyone know anything about it? The answer is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4: “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 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. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.” Notice, the day of the Lord comes as a thief to those who are unprepared, but not to those called “brethren.”

3. When will Christ establish His kingdom on earth? After the thousand-year period of Revelation 20. This thousand years begin when Christ returns the second time, taking the righteous from the earth to live and reign with Him “for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4). At the end of the thousand years, the “holy city, new Jerusalem” (Revelation 21:2) comes down from heaven to the earth with all the saints (Zechariah 14:1, 4, 5), and the wicked who have died in all ages are resurrected to life (Revelation 20:5). They surround the holy city to capture it (Revelation 20:9), and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. This fire purifies the earth and destroys all remnants of sin and sinners (2 Peter 3:10). Finally, the fire goes out (Isaiah 47:14), leaving only ashes (Malachi 4:3). Then God creates a new earth (2

Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1) and gives it to the righteous, and "God... will dwell with them... and God Himself will be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21:3). Perfect, holy, and happy beings, restored to the perfect image of God, will finally make their home in a sinless, spotless world, as God originally intended. Only a fool would choose to miss this.

4. Why don't we hear more preaching and teaching today about the second coming of Christ? Satan is involved. He knows very well that the second coming is the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) of the Christian, and when it is understood, it changes the lives of men and women and leads them to take an active, personal, and earnest part in spreading the good news to others so that Christ's return may be hastened. This angers Satan, so he draws those with a "form of godliness" (2 Timothy 3:5) but denies "its power," mocking, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." (2 Peter 3:3, 4). Those who deny, ignore, or scoff at the second coming of Christ (as a real, soon-coming event) are fulfilling exactly the prophecy of the Bible—and doing Satan a great service.

5. But didn't Jesus speak about a secret rapture when He said in Luke 17:36, "One will be taken, and the other left"? No. There is no indication that this event is secret. Jesus was referring to the flood in Noah's time and the destruction of Sodom. (See Luke 17:26-37). He described how God saved Noah and Lot and destroyed the wicked. He specifically says that the flood and fire "destroyed them all." (Verses 27, 29). Clearly, in each case, a few were taken to safety, and the rest were destroyed. He then added, "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." (Verse 30). As an illustration, Jesus continued, "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left." (Verse 36). There is nothing secret about it. "Every eye will see Him." (Revelation 1:7). When He comes the second time, Christ will openly and publicly take the righteous to the skies (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17) and destroy the wicked (Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8). That is why Luke 17:37 speaks of the bodies of the wicked and mentions the eagles (or vultures) gathered around them. (See also Revelation 19:17, 18). The wicked who are left behind when Christ comes are left dead.

Questions for Review

1. At the second coming of Christ (1)
_____ Christ will arrive secretly and visit certain cities of the world.
_____ Christ will appear in the wilderness.
_____ Christ will remain in the clouds and call the righteous up to meet Him in the air.

2. When Jesus returns to this earth (1)
_____ Only the righteous will see Him.
_____ Every eye will see Him.
_____ People will not know until it is announced on TV.

3. What will happen to the righteous at the second coming of Christ? (2)
_____ The righteous dead will be resurrected, given immortality, caught up in the clouds, and taken to heaven.
_____ The righteous will be given immortality, caught up in the clouds, and taken to heaven.
_____ The righteous will remain here and convert the wicked.
_____ The righteous will be secretly taken away.

4. Based on biblical signs, the return of Christ is most likely to happen (1)
_____ Very soon!
_____ Several centuries from now.
_____ In the middle of the 21st century.

5. The wicked who are alive when Jesus returns will be (1)
_____ In hell, where they will burn forever.
_____ Killed at His second coming.
_____ Preserved and given another chance.

6. Look at the following statements that are true about the second coming of Christ: (4)
_____ He will come secretly.
_____ The second coming is an experience of conversion.
_____ He will come in the clouds.
_____ Christ comes for us at the time of our death.
_____ The wicked will not see Him.
_____ All angels will be with Him.
_____ He will not touch the earth.
_____ It is possible to know the exact day and hour of His return.
_____ Millions will be surprised and lost.

7. At the time of Christ's second coming (1)
_____ The whole world will be ready and waiting.
_____ There will be a worldwide earthquake.
_____ The wicked will be converted.

8. Mark the statements that are true signs of the last days of the world: (7)
_____ The world will be better and better.
_____ Conflict between capital and labor.

_____ A few earthquakes, storms, etc.
_____ Falling away from biblical truth.
_____ Low divorce rates.
_____ Success and ease.
_____ Moral decline.
_____ Decline in crime rates.
_____ Great famine.
_____ Increase in knowledge.
_____ Chaos and turmoil.

9. What heavenly signs are indicators of Christ's return? (2)
_____ Halley's Comet.
_____ The dark day of 1780.
_____ The falling stars of November 1833.
_____ The moon falling to the earth.

10. How do we know that Jesus is coming back soon? (1)
_____ The Bible provides signs and detailed descriptions of the last days.
_____ Because many people believe that Jesus is coming soon.
_____ Some prophets predict it.

11. Millions will be deceived about the manner and time of Christ's return because (1)
_____ God does not want everyone to be saved.
_____ They do not make large enough offerings.
_____ They do not read their Bibles to find out the truth about it.

12. I can be ready for Christ's return if (1)
_____ Jesus lives in me.
_____ I read the newspaper every day.
_____ I do what my pastor recommends.

Purity and Power!

Lesson 9

Have you grown tired of hurting your loved ones and hurting your conscience? Do you live in constant regret for your past mistakes? Have you ever wished you could wash yourself and be clean both inside and out? Then we have good news for you... you can! God has a plan that can completely wash away all your sins and transform your character—into foolishness? Certainly not! Christ says, “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism” (Romans 6:4). When you accept Christ, the old life dies, and the Lord promises to forget all our sins! Not only that, He can help you overcome every sinful habit in your life. Did you know that the cross is mentioned 28 times in the Bible, but baptism is mentioned 97 times? It must be very significant, and no wonder, because it symbolizes new life and the old sorrowful, sinful life that has been buried and forgotten forever. Read the amazing truth from the Bible about this amazing subject... you will never be the same!

This verse makes it clear that baptism is essential for salvation.

1. Is baptism really important?
“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)
Answer: Yes, indeed! How could any language or words make it clearer?

Circumstances made it impossible for the thief on the cross to be baptized.

2. But the thief on the cross wasn’t baptized, so why should I be baptized?
“For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.” (Psalm 103:14)
Answer: He also did not return what he had stolen, as the Lord specifically directs in Ezekiel 33:15. God holds us accountable for what we can do, but He also recognizes the limitations of “dust.” He wouldn’t require something physically impossible.
If the thief had been able to come down from the cross, he could have been baptized. This is the only example in the Bible of an exception to this principle. God wanted to make sure no one could excuse themselves from baptism.

There is only one Biblical way of baptism, not 14.

3. There are many teachings referred to as baptism. Is there anything among them that is acceptable, as long as someone is sincere and diligent about it?
“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Ephesians 4:5
Answer: No! There is only one true baptism. All other baptisms are counterfeit.

Remember: Satan's "choice" plan for baptism says, "Choose your option. The method of baptism doesn't matter. It is the spirit that counts." But the Bible says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5. It also says, "I urge you to obey the voice of the Lord." Jeremiah 38:20.

Jesus was baptized by immersion.

4. How was Jesus baptized?
"Jesus ... was baptized by John in the Jordan. As He came up out of the water, He saw the heavens open." Mark 1:9, 10
Answer: By immersion! Note that after the act, He "came up out of the water." Jesus was baptized "in the Jordan," not on the riverbank, as many believe. John always found places to baptize where "there was much water" (John 3:23), so there was enough depth. The Bible commands us to follow Jesus' example (1 Peter 2:21). Any baptism other than immersion breaks this command. The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." It means "to dip, immerse, or submerge." There are eight different Greek words in the New Testament used for the application of liquids, but among these—meanings such as sprinkling, pouring, or immersing—only one (baptizo) means "to immerse," and it is the one used to describe baptism.

Philip baptized the Ethiopian by immersion.

5. But did the disciples or apostles change the method of baptism?
"And both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away." Acts 8:38, 39
Answer: No! Please note that Philip, a leader in the early church, baptized the Ethiopian eunuch by immersion, just as John had baptized Jesus. The apostle Paul warned that anyone teaching contrary to what Jesus taught should be "accursed." Galatians 1:8. No one—even if they are devout—has the authority to change God's words and commandments.

All forms of baptism except immersion come from people, not from Scripture.

6. Since Jesus and the disciples baptized by immersion, who started these other baptisms called baptism that exist today?
"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9
Answer: Apostate men introduced other forms of baptism in direct opposition to the Word of God. Jesus says, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" "Thus you have made the commandment

of God of no effect by your tradition." Matthew 15:3, 6. Worship that follows the teachings of men is "vain." Consider this! The sacred practice of baptism has been altered and rendered insignificant during the perilous journey of truth over many centuries. It is no wonder that the Bible urges us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Jude 3.

There are three simple things a person must do before baptism.

7. What must a person do to prepare for baptism?
Answer:
A. Learn God's requirements. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19, 20.
B. Believe in the truth of God's Word. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Mark 16:16.
C. Repent and forsake their sins and experience conversion. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19.

When I am baptized, I am confirming my faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

8. What is the meaning of baptism?
"We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." Romans 6:4-6
Answer: It represents the believer following Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The symbol is complete and full of deep meaning. In baptism, the eyes are closed, the hands are folded, and the breath is held, as if in death. Then, the person is buried in the water and resurrected from the water grave to a new life in Christ. When they are lifted from the water, their eyes open, and they begin to breathe again and join with friends, a perfect representation of the resurrection. The major difference between Christianity and every other religion is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In these three acts, everything that God desires to do for us is made possible. To keep these three essential acts alive in the minds of Christians until the end of time, the Lord instituted baptism by immersion as a reminder. There is no symbol of death, burial, and resurrection in other forms of baptism. Only immersion fulfills the meaning of Romans 6:4-6.

Death to sin. The old life buried in the water. A new person raised to life in Christ.

New Christians are like infants learning to walk. Sometimes they slip and fall.

9. But a person should not be baptized until they are sure they will not slip or fall, right?
“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what one does not have.” 2 Corinthians 8:12
Answer: This is like saying a child should not try to walk until they are sure they won’t slip or fall. A Christian is a “newborn” in Christ. This is why the experience of conversion is called “being born again.” The old sinful ways are no longer present in God’s child. The person’s past sin is forgiven and forgotten by God at conversion. And baptism symbolizes the burial of those old lives of sin. We begin our Christian life as infants, not as adults, and God judges us on our attitude and direction in life, not on small slips and falls we may experience as new Christians.

Baptism is a glorious event because it symbolizes the burial of the old life of sin and the beginning of a new life in Christ.

10. Why is baptism a necessity for a repentant sinner?
“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16
Answer: Baptism is a public testimony that the repentant sinner has been forgiven and cleansed by Jesus (1 John 1:9), and that their old life of sin and rebellion is behind them. There is no charge of guilt against someone after they are baptized.

Men and women today are stumbling and struggling under heavy burdens of guilt and sin. This pollution and burden is so bad for human nature that people will go to great lengths to experience a feeling of forgiveness and cleansing. Many are pushed to the bed of a psychiatrist, where humans try to help other humans. But true help is found in coming to Christ, who says to all who come to Him, “I will be clean.” Matthew 8:3. Not only does He cleanse, but He crucifies the old nature of sin within you. Being buried in the waters of baptism symbolizes the burial of the corrupt body of the old sinful life. This command is of great importance because it publicly represents the extraordinary terms ever offered to people.

Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch the same day he accepted Christ as his Savior.

11. How long does it take to prepare for baptism?
Answer: That depends on the person. Some grasp things more quickly than others. But in many cases, preparations can be made in a short time. Here are some Biblical examples:

A. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) was baptized the same day he heard the truth.
B. The Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:23-34) were baptized the very night they heard the truth.
C. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-18) was baptized three days after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus.
D. Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48) was baptized the same day he heard the truth.

In conversion, God:

1. Forgives and forgets the past.

2. Miraculously transforms us into new spiritual beings.

3. Adopts us as His sons and daughters.

Indeed, no truly converted person would want to delay baptism, which publicly acknowledges all these miracles that God performs.

God is pleased with those who are baptized by immersion. Is He pleased with your baptism?
12. How does God feel about the baptism of a repentant sinner?
Answer: He said at the baptism of His Son, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17. Therefore, today, God is very pleased when someone is baptized by immersion according to His command. Those who love the Lord will always strive to please Him (1 John 3:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:1). Is God pleased with your baptism?

Baptism is a formal entry into the church of God. Being baptized without joining God’s church is unbiblical.

13. Can a person receive true baptism without being a member of God’s church?
Answer: No! God makes this clear. Consider the following steps:

A. All are called into one body. “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body.” Colossians 3:15.

B. The church is the body. “And He is the head of the body, the church.” Colossians 1:18.
C. We enter that body through baptism. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” 1 Corinthians 12:13.
D. The redeemed people of God are added to the church. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:47.

If Jesus is speaking to you about baptism, do not delay.
Baptism is a public display of your desire to follow God completely.

14. Consider four things that baptism does not do:
Answer:
First
Baptism itself does not change the heart of a person; it is a sign of changes that have already taken place. A person can be baptized without faith, without repentance, and without a new heart. They may even be immersed to follow the example of Jesus, but they would come out still sinful, wet rather than dry, without faith, without repentance, and without a new heart. Baptism cannot make a person new. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that changes the heart in repentance. A person must be born of the Spirit as well as born of water.

Second
Baptism is not necessary to make a person feel good. It does not have to change their emotions. Some people are disappointed because they don’t feel any different after being baptized. Salvation is not about feelings, but about faith and obedience.

Third
Baptism does not remove temptation. The devil does not leave a person alone just because they are baptized. But Jesus is the helper of every believer. He says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5. No temptation will come without a way to escape. This is the promise of the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Fourth
Baptism does not guarantee salvation. It is not a magical act. Salvation only comes as a free gift from Jesus Christ when a person goes through the process of being born again. Baptism is a sign of true repentance, and unless repentance precedes baptism, the act is meaningless.

15. Jesus asks you to be baptized by immersion as a sign that your sins have been washed away. Would you like to arrange for this holy command soon?

Answer:

Thought Questions

1. Is it appropriate to be baptized more than once?
Yes, Acts 19:1-5 shows that the Bible supports re-baptism in certain cases.

2. Should infants be baptized?
No! No one should be baptized unless they (1) know the truth of God, (2) believe it, (3) have repented, and (4) have been converted. No child can meet these criteria. No one has the right to baptize an infant. In fact, doing so is a direct disregard of God's commandments about baptism. Corrupted men in the church in past years ordered that infants who were not baptized were lost, but this is not true scripturally. It is blasphemous to accuse God of being an unjust tyrant who would condemn innocent infants to destruction just because negligent parents failed to have them baptized. Teachings like these are terribly sad. It is bad enough to sprinkle infants and call it baptism. It is even worse to hold the unbiblical belief that infants are eternally lost because their negligent parents failed to fulfill their duty.

3. Is baptism just a matter of personal opinion?
Yes, but not your opinion or mine. It is Christ's opinion that matters. Christ says baptism is essential to Him. "No one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." John 3:5. Rejecting baptism is rejecting God's direct counsel (Luke 7:29, 30).

4. How old should someone be to be eligible for baptism?
Old enough to understand the difference between right and wrong, and to make a conscious decision to surrender to Christ and follow Him. Many children are ready for baptism at the age of 9 or 10, some at 7 or 8, and others at 12 or 13. There is no specific age mentioned in the Bible, because children have different levels of experience and understanding. Some are ready for baptism earlier than others.

5. Can baptism alone save you?
No! But refusing to be baptized can cause someone to be lost, because it means disobedience. Salvation is for "those who obey Him." Hebrews 5:9.

6. Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit not necessary?
No! The Bible shows in Acts 10:44-48 that baptism by water is necessary, even when the baptism of the Holy Spirit has already occurred.

7. Should we be baptized only in the name of Jesus?

In Matthew 28:19, we are told to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These are the words of Jesus, and we hold them as sacred. In the book of Acts, we find new believers being baptized in the name of Jesus. Acknowledging Jesus as the Christ and Messiah was important for the people of that time; therefore, it was important for them to be baptized in His name. We believe it is equally important today. When we combine the testimony of Matthew and the book of Acts, we baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Following this approach prevents elevating one Scripture over another.

8. Is there one sin you are not willing to surrender? Should you be baptized? No! It is clear that you are not ready to be buried in the waters of baptism because your old sinful life has not yet died. It would be a criminal act for a burial official to bury someone who has not died, and it is wrong for a minister to baptize someone whose old sinful life has not died.

9. Can you explain Galatians 3:27?
Here, God compares baptism to marriage. A person who is baptized publicly acknowledges that they have taken on the name of Christ (Christian), just as a bride publicly takes on the name of her husband during the wedding. In baptism, as in marriage, several principles always apply:
A. It must never be entered into unless true love governs it.
B. It must never be entered into unless the candidate has decided to remain faithful in difficult and trying circumstances.
C. It must be entered into with full understanding.
D. It must not be delayed unnecessarily.

Quiz Questions

1. The Bible tells us that there is one Lord, one faith, and (1)
_____ baptism 15.
_____ Baptism 5.
_____ 12 baptism.
_____ One baptism.

2. Did Jesus teach the importance of baptism? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

3. Jesus was baptized by (1)
_____ Pouring.
_____ Sprinkling.
_____ Immersion.

4. The word “baptize” means (1)
_____ To be happy.
_____ To sprinkle.
_____ To pour.
_____ To immerse or dip.

5. Most false baptisms today were introduced to us by (1)
_____ Christ.
_____ Apostles.
_____ Deceived men.

6. Mark the things a person must do to prepare for baptism: (4)
_____ Read the entire Bible five times.
_____ Believe the truth.
_____ Experience transformation.
_____ Pray for 10 days straight.
_____ Spend 40 days fasting.
_____ Learn God’s requirements.
_____ Repent and leave sin.

7. Baptism is a sign of (1)
_____ The creation of the world.
_____ The Bible.
_____ Heaven.
_____ Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.
_____ Angels.

8. A newly baptized Christian is (1)
_____ A spiritual child.
_____ A spiritual adult.

9. Baptism, when accompanied by prayer, sincerity, and understanding (1)
_____ Publicly acknowledges repentance.
_____ Means nothing more than swimming.
_____ Guarantees that a person will never be tempted again.

10. Is infant baptism scriptural? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

11. Some children are ready for baptism earlier than others. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

12. Is it always necessary for a person to take weeks or months to prepare for baptism? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

13. Can a person be baptized properly without being a member of the church? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

Do the Dead Really Die?

Lesson 10

Death can be one of the most misunderstood things today. For many, it is shrouded in mystery and evokes terrifying feelings of fear, uncertainty, and even hopelessness. Some believe that their loved ones who have died haven't truly died, but are still living with them or in other places! Others are confused about the relationship between the body, the spirit, and the soul. But does it matter what you believe? Yes... absolutely! Because what you believe about the dead will have major consequences on what happens to you at the end of life. There's no room for guessing, so this Study Guide will give you exactly what God says about this subject. Get ready for some real eye-opening truths!

Adam was created by God in the beginning.

1. How did we get here in the first place?
"Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7
Answer: God made us from the dust in the beginning.

2. What happens when a person dies?
"And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." Ecclesiastes 12:7
Answer: The body returns to dust, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it. The spirit of everyone who dies—whether righteous or wicked—returns to God when they die.
There is nothing strange about the spirit returning to God at death. It is the breath of life.

3. What is the "spirit" that returns to God at death?
"As the body without the spirit [breath, see note] is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." James 2:26
"The spirit of God [the breath He gave me, see note] is in my nostrils." Job 27:3
Answer: The spirit that returns to God at death is the breath of life. There is no place in the whole Bible where the "spirit" has life, wisdom, or emotions after a person dies. It is the "breath of life" and nothing more.

4. What is a "soul"?
"Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul." Genesis

2:7
Answer: A soul is a living being. A soul is always a combination of two things: the body and the breath. A soul cannot exist unless the body and the breath are united. The Word of God teaches that we are souls.

5. Do souls die?
“The soul who sins is the one who will die.” Ezekiel 18:20
“Every living soul died in the sea.” Revelation 16:3
Answer: According to God’s Word, souls die! We are souls, and souls die. A human being dies (Job 4:17). Only God cannot die (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). The idea of an immortal and indestructible soul contradicts the Bible, which teaches that souls can die.

6. Do righteous people go to heaven when they die?
“Do not marvel at this, for the time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out.” John 5:28, 29
“David... is dead and buried, and his tomb is here to this day.” “For David did not ascend to heaven.” Acts 2:29, 34
“I wait for my change; I will go to the grave to the end.” Job 17:13
Answer: No, people do not go to heaven or hell when they die. They go to their graves to await the resurrection.

7. How much does a person know or understand after death?
“The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten. Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.” “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.” Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10
“The dead do not praise the Lord.” Psalm 115:17
Answer: God says that the dead know absolutely nothing!

8. But do the dead not communicate with the living, and do they not know what the living are doing?
“So man lies down and does not rise till the heavens are no more; they will not awake or be roused from their sleep. His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he perceives it not.” Job 14:12, 21
“Never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:6
Answer: No, the dead cannot communicate with the living, nor do they know what the living are doing. They are dead. Their thoughts are gone (Psalm 146:4).

Jesus calls death “sleep.” It is a state of total unconsciousness.

9. Jesus referred to the state of the dead as “sleep” in John 11:11-14. How long will they sleep?
“Just as a man lies down, and does not rise again; until the heavens are no more, they will not awake.” Job 14:12.
“The Day of the Lord will come... in which the heavens will pass away.” 2 Peter 3:10.
Answer: The dead will sleep until the great Day of the Lord at the end of the world. In death, humans are completely unconscious, without activity or any kind of knowledge.

The righteous will be resurrected and given immortality at the second coming of Jesus.

10. What happens to the righteous dead at the second coming of Christ?
“Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.” Revelation 22:12. “The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ will rise first... and thus we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. “We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... for the dead will be raised incorruptible... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.
Answer: They will be rewarded. They will be resurrected, given imperishable bodies, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There would be no purpose for the resurrection if people went to heaven immediately when they died.

The first lie of Satan to Eve was, “You shall not surely die”—a statement completely contrary to all of Scripture.

11. What was Satan’s first lie?
“The serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’” Genesis 3:4. “The great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.” Revelation 12:9.
Answer: Satan told Eve that sin would not bring death. “You will not surely die,” he said.
Those who believe the dead are alive are easily targets for Satan’s deception.

12. Why did Satan deceive Eve about death? Is this lesson more important than many think?
Answer: It is one of the pillars of Satan’s kingdom. He has performed powerful miracles throughout history through people claiming to receive their power from the spirits of the dead. (Examples: Egyptian magicians, Exodus 7:11, the Woman of Endor, 1 Samuel 28:3-25, Daniel’s magicians, Daniel 2:2, a certain girl, Acts 16:16-18.)

Strong Warning
At the end, Satan will again use sorcery as he did in Daniel's day to deceive the world (Revelation 18:23). Sorcery is an unusual practice that claims to receive power and wisdom from the spirits of the dead.

Pretending to be the Followers of Jesus
Pretending to be loved ones who have died, holy priests who are now dead, biblical prophets, or even apostles or followers of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13), Satan and his angels will deceive billions of people. Those who believe that the dead are alive in any form will certainly be deceived.

All miracles do not come from God, for demons also perform miracles.

13. Is it true that demons perform miracles?
"These are spirits of demons, performing signs." Revelation 16:14. "For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." Matthew 24:24.
Answer: Yes, indeed! Demons perform very convincing miracles (Revelation 13:13, 14). Satan and his angels will appear as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and, even more shockingly, as Christ Himself (Matthew 24:23, 24). The entire world will perceive that Christ and His angels are leading in a worldwide spiritual awakening. The emphasis will seem very spiritual and very miraculous, so much so that only God's elect will not be deceived.
The elect will not be deceived because they utterly reject everything contrary to Scripture.

14. Why will God's people not be deceived?
"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so." Acts 17:11. "To the law and to the testimony: If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.
Answer: God's people will know from their diligent study of His word that the dead are dead, not alive. The spirits of the dead do not exist. Therefore, God's people will reject all miracle workers and teachers who claim to receive special "light" or perform miracles by communicating with the spirits of the dead. God's people will also reject all false and dangerous teachings claiming that the dead are alive in any form.

In the days of Moses, those who claimed to communicate with the dead were to be stoned to death.

15. What did God command to be done to those who taught that the dead were alive in the days of Moses?
"'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has a familiar spirit, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones.'" Leviticus 20:27.
Answer: God commanded that witches and others who had "familiar spirits" (who claimed to communicate with the dead) be stoned to death. This shows how God views the false teaching that the dead are alive.

No one in God's new kingdom will die forever. Death will cease when Satan is destroyed.

16. Will the righteous who are resurrected in the resurrection ever die again?
"Those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Luke 20:35, 36. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:4.
Answer: No! Death, sorrow, crying, and pain will never enter the new kingdom of God.

Reincarnation is rapidly gaining belief today. Are these teachings biblical?
"The living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.
Answer: Nearly half of the world's population believes in reincarnation, the teaching that the soul never dies but is reborn in another form in each successive generation. However, these teachings are contrary to Scripture.
The Bible says:
After death, a person returns to the dust (Psalm 104:29), knows nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5), has no mental faculties (Psalm 146:4), has no relationship with anything on earth (Ecclesiastes 9:10; 6), does not live on (2 Kings 20:1), waits in the grave (Job 17:13), and does not continue (Job 14:1, 2).

Satan's Invention
We learned in questions 11 and 12 that Satan invented the teaching that the dead are alive. Reincarnation, mediumship, communication with spirits, spirit worship, and the "immortal soul" are all inventions of Satan, with one goal: to convince people that when you die, you don't truly die. When people believe that the dead are alive, "the spirits of demons, performing signs" (Revelation 16:14), pretending to be the spirits of the dead, will deceive and mislead nearly 100% of the time (Matthew 24:24).
Those who insist on Scripture for every teaching will not be deceived by Satan.

18. I am thankful for the Bible, which tells us the truth on this sensitive subject of death.
Answer:

Thought Questions

1. Did the thief on the cross go to paradise with Christ the day he died?
No. In fact, on Sunday morning, Jesus told Mary, “I have not yet ascended to My Father.” John 20:17. This shows that Christ did not go to heaven when He died. Also, remember that the punctuation marks in the Bible were added by humans, and the comma in Luke 23:43 should be placed after the word “today” rather than before it. Therefore, the verse should read, “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in paradise,” or “I tell you today—at a time when it seems that I cannot save anyone, when I am being crucified as a criminal—I give you assurance today that you will be with Me in paradise.” The Kingdom of Christ will be established at His second coming (Matthew 25:31), and all the righteous from all ages will enter at that time (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17), not at death.

2. Does the Bible speak of an “immortal” or “immortal soul”?
No, the immortal soul is not mentioned in the Bible. The term “immortality” is found only once in the Bible, and it refers to God (1 Timothy 1:17).

3. When a person dies, the body returns to the dust, and the spirit (or breath) returns to God. But where does the spirit go?
It goes nowhere. Rather, it ceases to exist. Two things must be joined together to make a soul: the body and the breath. When the breath departs, the soul ceases to exist because it is a combination of both elements. When you turn off a light, where does the light go? It goes nowhere. It ceases to exist. Two things must come together to create light: the bulb and electricity. Without a combination, light is impossible. So it is with the soul; unless the body and breath are joined, there can be no soul. There is no such thing as a disembodied soul.

4. Does the word “soul” have any other meaning besides a living being?
Yes, it can also mean (1) life itself or (2) the mind, or intellect. No matter the meaning, the soul is still a combination of two things (body and breath), and it ceases to exist at death.

5. Can you explain John 11:26, which says, “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”?
This does not refer to the first death, which everyone experiences (Hebrews 9:27), but to the second death, which only the wicked experience and from

which there is no resurrection (Revelation 2:11; 21:8).

6. Matthew 10:28 says, “And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.” Doesn’t this prove that the soul doesn’t die?
No, it proves the opposite. The second half of that very verse proves that the soul dies. It says, “But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The word “soul” here means life and refers to eternal life, which is a gift (Romans 6:23) that will be given to the righteous on the last day (John 6:54). No one can take away the eternal life that God gives. (Also see Luke 12:4, 5.)

7. Does 1 Peter 4:6 say that the gospel was preached to the dead?
No, it says the gospel “was preached” to those who were “dead.” They are dead now, but the gospel “was preached” to them while they were still alive.

8. How about the souls crying out under the altar in Revelation 6:9, 10? Does this show that souls do not die?
No. This cry was symbolic, just like Abel’s blood cry (Genesis 4:10). The term “soul” here refers to people (or living beings) who were killed for their faith. Certainly, no one believes that dead souls literally lie under the altar, nor do people believe that the righteous ask God to punish their enemies. Instead, the righteous pray for mercy for their enemies, as Christ did on the cross (Luke 23:34).

9. Does the Bible say that Christ went to preach to the lost spirits in hell between His crucifixion and resurrection?
No, the Scripture being referred to is 1 Peter 3:18-20. The preaching was done “by the Spirit” (verse 18) in the days of Noah—to the people who were living at that time (verses 19, 20). “Spirits in prison” refers to people whose lives were in bondage to Satan. (See Psalm 142:7; Isaiah 42:6, 7; 61:1; and Luke 4:18.)

Questions and Answers

1. The Bible speaks about death as (1)
_____ Sleep.
_____ A change of life form.
_____ An unexplainable mystery.

2. The “soul” that returns to God at death is (1)
_____ The true inner self of a person.
_____ The spirit.
_____ The breath of life.

3. When a person dies, they go (1)
_____ To heaven or hell.
_____ To the grave.
_____ To purgatory.

4. The soul is (1)
_____ The spiritual essence of a person.
_____ An unending part of a person.
_____ A living being.

5. Does the soul die? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

6. When are the righteous rewarded? (1)
_____ In this life.
_____ At death.
_____ At the second coming of Christ.

7. Why does Satan try to deceive people by telling them that the dead are not dead? (1)
_____ So they will believe his miracles and be deceived and lost.
_____ Because he feels sorry for them.
_____ Because he is cruel and wicked.

8. People who “communicate” with the dead are speaking to (1)
_____ Immortal spirits.
_____ Holy angels.
_____ Evil spirits imitating the deceased.

9. In Moses’ days, God commanded that those who taught that the dead are alive should be (1)
_____ Made priests.
_____ Honored for their wisdom.
_____ Put to death.

10. How can a person be sure they are safe and right with God? (1)
_____ Ask God for a special sign from heaven.
_____ Do what the preacher or minister says to do.
_____ Study the Bible with prayer and care and follow it.

11. When a person dies (1)
_____ Their soul or spirit remains alive.

_____ They are able to watch the living and communicate with them.
_____ They are truly dead—body dies, spirit ceases to exist, and no communication with the living is possible.

12. Are miracles proof that something is from God? (1)
_____ Yes. Only God can perform miracles.
_____ No. The devil also performs great miracles.

Does Satan Lead to Hell?

Lesson 11
Does God really place Satan on His list of punishment – is he the chief warden of hell who assigns punishments to the lost? Nearly the entire world holds non-Biblical views about hell, and it is your responsibility to know what the Bible says about hell. Don't be deceived, for what you believe about hell certainly affects what you believe about God's character! Take a moment to discover the important facts you need to know today!
The wicked will not be punished until after the judgment.

1. How many lost souls are being punished in hell today?
"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." 2 Peter 2:9
Answer: There is not a single soul in the fires of hell today. The Bible says that God reserves or restrains the wicked until the day of judgment when they will be punished.
Sinners will be thrown into the fire of hell at the end of the world—not when they die.

2. When will the wicked be thrown into the fires of torment?
"So shall it be at the end of the world: the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." Matthew 13:40-42. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48
Answer: The wicked will be thrown into the fires of hell on the great day of judgment at the end of the world—not when they die. God will not punish a person with fire until their case has been heard and decided in court at the end of the world. Nor would God burn a murderer who died 5,000 years ago 5,000 years longer than the one who dies today and deserves the same punishment for the same crime.
All the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, are in their graves awaiting the resurrection.

3. Where are the wicked (those who have died) now?
“The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. “The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction.” “Yet he shall be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.” Job 21:30, 32
Answer: The Bible is clear. Both the righteous and the wicked who have died are in their graves “asleep” until the day of resurrection.
Jesus died to save us from our sins. Those who do not accept His gift of salvation will receive death.

4. What is the final result of sin?
“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. “Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” James 1:15. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
Answer: The wages (or penalty) for sin is death, not eternal life in the fire of torment. The wicked “perish,” or receive “death.” The righteous receive “eternal life.”

5. What will the wicked experience in the fire of torment?
“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8
Answer: The wicked die the second death in the fires of hell. If the wicked were to live forever in torment in hell, they would be immortal. But that is impossible, because the Bible says that God “alone has immortality.” 1 Timothy 6:16. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, an angel was placed to guard the tree of life so that sinners could not eat of it and “live forever.” Genesis 3:22-24. The teaching that sinners cannot die in hell came from Satan and is completely false. God prevented this when sin entered this world by guarding the tree of life.

Clear Bible Teaching – The Wicked are Annihilated
The Bible says the wicked will receive “death” (Romans 6:23), will be “destroyed” (Job 21:30), “perish” (Psalm 37:20), will be “consumed” (Malachi 4:1), “will be destroyed together” (Psalm 37:38), “will be cut off” (Psalm 37:9), “will be slain” (Malachi 4:3), “will be wiped out” (Psalm 62:3). God “will destroy them” (Psalm 145:20), and “the fire will consume them” (Psalm 21:9).
Remember, all these references clearly indicate that the wicked die and are

destroyed. They do not live forever in suffering.

At the end of the world, fire will fall from heaven upon the wicked and consume them.

6. When and how will the fire of torment be kindled?
"So shall it be at the end of the world: the Son of man… will cast them into a furnace of fire." Matthew 13:40-42. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:9. "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth." Proverbs 11:31
Answer: At the end of the world, God Himself will kindle the fire of hell. When the holy city comes down from God out of heaven (Revelation 21:2), the wicked will attempt to capture it. At that time, God will send fire from heaven to the earth, and it will consume the wicked. This fire is the hell of the Bible.
Hell will be a worldwide fire. It will be 25,000 miles in diameter—so hot that everything on earth will be "consumed."

7. How great and how hot will the fire of torment be?
"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10
Answer: The fire of hell will be as great as the earth itself because it will be the earth burning with fire. This fire will be so hot that it will melt the earth and burn up "all the works that are in it." The heavens will explode and "pass away with a great noise."

Jesus will insist on justice for the wicked. Their level of punishment will be proportional to their deeds, as He has promised.

8. How long will the wicked suffer in hell?
"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. "And then shall he reward every man according to his works." Matthew 16:27. "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Luke 12:47, 48
Answer: The Bible does not specify how long the wicked will be punished before receiving death in the fire. However, God clearly states that all will be punished according to their deeds. This means that some will receive a greater punishment than others, based on their works.

God will create a new world that will no longer contain the evils of the old world.

9. Will the fire ever go out?
“Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame.” Isaiah 47:14. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth… And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:1, 4
Answer: Yes, indeed, the Bible specifically teaches that the fire of torment will go out and that it will not remain “a burning flame, nor a fire to sit before it.” The Bible also teaches that in God’s new kingdom, “all the former things” will be gone. Hell, as one of the old things, is included, so we have God’s promise that it will be wiped away.

Is God a Tormentor?
If God were to torment His enemies in a terrifying chamber forever and ever, He would be more cruel and heartless than humans have ever been in the worst atrocities of war. Eternal torment in hell would be hell for God too, who loves even the worst sinners.
The fire will burn until only ashes remain. Even bones will completely disappear.

10. What will remain after the fire is extinguished?

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly, will be stubble; and the day which is coming shall burn them up,” says the Lord of hosts, “that will leave them neither root nor branch.” “But you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.” Malachi 4:1, 3.

Answer: Look, the verse does not say the wicked will burn like asbestos, as many believe today, but like stubble, which will be burned up. The little word “up” means complete. Nothing but ashes will remain when the fire is extinguished. In Psalm 37:10, 20, the Bible says the wicked will ascend in smoke and be utterly destroyed. Fire from heaven will strike the wicked and utterly consume both body and soul.
11. Will the wicked enter hell with a bodily form and be destroyed body and soul?

“It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands,

to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched." Mark 9:43. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28. "The soul who sins shall die." Ezekiel 18:20.

Answer: Yes. Real, living people will enter hell with a bodily form and be destroyed both in soul and body. Fire from God from heaven will fall upon real people and utterly remove them. Satan will be completely destroyed by fire.

12. Will Satan be the overseer of the tormenting fire?

"And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Revelation 20:10. "I will bring you to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all who see you. ... You shall be no more." Ezekiel 28:18, 19.

Answer: Absolutely not! Satan will be thrown into the fire, and it will turn him into ashes.

13. Does the word "hell" as used in the Bible always refer to a place of burning fire or punishment?
Answer: No, the word "hell" is used 54 times in the Bible, and in only 12 instances does it refer to "a place of burning fire."

*IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
31 times from "Sheol," which means "the grave."

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
10 times from "Hades," which means "the grave."
12 times from "Gehenna," which means "a place of burning fire."
1 time from "Tartarus," which means "a place of darkness."
54 TIMES IN TOTAL.*suppose to be a table form

Note: The Greek word "Gehenna" (mentioned above) is a translation of the Hebrew "Ge-Hinnom," which means "Valley of Hinnom." This valley, located just south and west of Jerusalem, was a place where dead animals, garbage, and other refuse were thrown. The fire burned continually, as it does in modern-day landfill sites. The Bible uses "Gehenna" or "Valley of Hinnom" as a symbol of the fire that will destroy the lost at the end of time. The fire of Gehenna did not cease; otherwise, it would still be burning south-west of Jerusalem today. Likewise, the fire of hell will not cease. Destroying sin, sinners, and Satan is the only way to make the world safe for eternity.

14. What is God's purpose in the tormenting fire?

"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41. "And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15. "For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more." Psalm 37:10, 20.

Answer: God's purpose is that hell will destroy Satan, all sin, and sinners, and make the earth safe for eternity. One sinner, if left on this planet, would be a dangerous virus threatening the world forever. It is God's plan to separate sin and remove it forever.

Eternal Hell Would Sustain Sin
An eternal hell of torment would perpetuate sin and make its eradication impossible. An eternal tormenting hell is not part of God's great plan at all. That terrifying theory is a slander against the holy name of the loving God. Satan delights in seeing our loving Creator portrayed as an extremely cruel ruler, and only he benefits from such teachings.

Eternal Hell Theory Created by Man
The theory of "eternal hell of torment" did not come from the Bible, but from depraved people who (perhaps unintentionally) were led by Satan. And, fortunately, no one will be in heaven because they were afraid of hell. People are saved because they love and obey Christ. Jesus will be deeply grieved when He destroys those He died to save.

15. Is the work of destroying sinners foreign to the nature of God?

"As I live," says the Lord God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 33:11. "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." Luke 9:56. "For the Lord will rise up... to do His work, His awesome work, and to bring to pass His act, His unusual act." Isaiah 28:21.

Answer: Yes, God's work has always been to save rather than to destroy. The work of destroying the wicked in the tormenting fire is so foreign to God's nature that the Bible calls it "His unusual act." God's great heart will ache at the destruction of the wicked. Oh, how He works tirelessly to save every soul! But if a person rejects His love and clings to sin, God will have no choice but to destroy the sinner for their sin when He removes the terrifying and evil growth called "sin" from the world in the final fire.

After the destruction of the wicked, God will create a new world for His people, where they will live forever in peace, joy, and love. Sin will never rise again.

16. What are God's plans after the hellfire for the world and His people?

"He will make an end of it; affliction will not rise up a second time." Nahum 1:9. "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." Isaiah 65:17. "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. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:3, 4.

Answer: After the hellfire is extinguished, God will create a new world and restore it for His people, along with all the beauty and glory of Eden before sin entered. The horrifying things of sin and the past will be forgotten. Pain, death, sorrow, wailing, tears, disease, desires, grief, and all sin will be banished forever.

Sin Will Not Rise Again
God promises that sin will not occur again. His people will be filled with perfect peace, love, joy, and contentment. Their lives of complete happiness will be more glorious and exciting than words can describe. The real tragedy of hell is missing heaven. A person who fails to enter this beautiful kingdom has made the most tragic choice in life.

17. I am grateful to learn that God does not punish the wicked forever in a burning hell.

Answer: Thoughts Questions

1. Doesn't the Bible talk about "eternal torment"?
No, the words "eternal torment" do not appear in the Bible.

2. Then why does the Bible say that the wicked will be destroyed by unquenchable fire?
Unquenchable fire is a fire that cannot be extinguished, but one that goes out when everything has turned to ashes. Jeremiah 17:27 says Jerusalem will be destroyed by unquenchable fire, and in 2 Chronicles 36:19-21 the Bible says this fire burned the city "to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah," leaving it desolate. But we know this fire went out because

Jerusalem does not burn today.

3. Does Matthew 25:46 not say the wicked will receive “eternal punishment”? Notice the word is punishment, not punishing. Punishment would be ongoing, while punishment is a one-time action. The punishment for the wicked is death, and this death is eternal.

4. Can you explain Matthew 10:28: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul”?
The word “soul” has three meanings in the Bible: (1) a living being—Genesis 2:7, (2) mind—Psalm 139:14, and (3) life—1 Samuel 18:1, which refers here to eternal life that God promises to all who reach His kingdom. No one can take this away. The last part of Matthew 10:28 says both the soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

5. Does Matthew 25:41 talk about the “eternal fire” for the wicked?
Yes, according to the Bible, it does. We must let the Bible speak for itself. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by everlasting or eternal fire (Jude 7), and that fire turned them “to ashes” as a warning to “those who would live ungodly afterward.” 2 Peter 2:6. These cities are not burning today. The fire went out after everything was consumed. Likewise, the eternal fire will go out after making the wicked ashes (Malachi 4:3). The effects of the fire are eternal, but not the burning itself.

6. Does the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 teach eternal hellfire of torment?
No, actually! It is just an example used to emphasize a point. Many things make it clear that this is a parable. Some are as follows:

A. Abraham’s bosom is not in heaven (Hebrews 11:8-10, 16).
B. Those in hell cannot communicate with those in heaven (Isaiah 65:17).
C. The dead are in their graves (Job 17:13; John 5:28, 29). The rich man had a physical form with eyes, a tongue, etc., but we know the body does not go to hell when one dies. It is very clear that the body stays in the grave, as the Bible says.
D. Human beings are confirmed in the second coming of Christ, not at death (Revelation 22:11, 12).
E. The lost are punished in hell at the end of the world, not when they die (Matthew 13:40-42). The point of the parable is found in Luke 16:31. Parables should not be taken literally. If we took them literally, we would have to believe that trees talk! (See this example in Judges 9:8-15.)
7. But doesn’t the Bible speak of the wicked being tormented “forever”?
The word “forever,” as used in the Bible, means a period of time, either

limited or unlimited. It has been used 56 times in the Bible to refer to things that have already ended. (To check this in a concordance, search the word "forever.") It is like the word "long," which means something different when talking about humans, trees, or mountains. In Jonah 2:6, "forever" means "three days and nights." (See also Jonah 1:17.) In Deuteronomy 23:3, it means "ten generations." For humans, it means "as long as one lives" or "until death." (See 1 Samuel 1:22, 28; Exodus 21:6; Psalm 48:14.) Therefore, the wicked will burn in fire for as long as they live, or until death. This fire punishment for sin will vary depending on the level of sin for each person, but after the punishment, the fire will go out. The doctrine of eternal torment has caused more people to slip into madness than any other invention of Satan. It is a scandal against the loving character of the merciful, gracious Father, and has caused great harm to the Christian cause.

Question and Answer

1. The wicked are thrown into the fire (1)
_____ When they die.
_____ At the end of the world.
_____ For Satan.

2. The reward the wicked will receive in the hellfire is (1)
_____ Death.
_____ Eternal torment.
_____ Tormented by Satan, who is the ruler.

3. The hellfire (1)
_____ The whole world will burn with fire from God.
_____ It is burning now.
_____ It burns in eternal ages without end.

4. The wicked who have died are in (1)
_____ Purgatory.
_____ Hellfire.
_____ Their graves.

5. The number of people in hell today is (1)
_____ Zero.
_____ In the millions.
_____ Indeterminate.

6. The hellfire (1)
_____ Only destroys the body of the wicked.

_____ Torments the soul of the wicked forever.
_____ Destroys the wicked—soul and body—turning them to ashes, then goes out.

7. The eternal torment hell (1)
_____ Is an important part of God's master plan.
_____ Is a doctrine of Satan and a scandal against the holy name of God's love, who hates to see people suffer.
_____ Gives Satan work forever.

8. "Hell" in the Bible (1)
_____ Always refers to a place of burning fire.
_____ Has several meanings, one of which is the grave.
_____ Refers to Satan's torture chambers beneath the earth.

9. The purpose of hell is (1)
_____ To punish and torment God's enemies.
_____ To scare people into being good.
_____ To completely remove sin and evil from the world and make the righteous safe forever.

10. The destruction of people in hell (1)
_____ Will bring joy to the great God of heaven.
_____ Is called a 'strange act' of God, because it is so foreign to His love plan to save people.
_____ Will be the work of Satan, in cooperation with God's plan.

11. After the hellfire goes out (1)
_____ God will cast Satan into the farthest reaches of space.
_____ God will create a perfect new earth, where sin will never rise again, and give it to His people.
_____ The righteous will live in fear of sin rising again.

12. The story of the rich man and Lazarus (1)
_____ Is a parable and should not be taken literally.
_____ Is biblical proof of the doctrine of eternal torment.
_____ Proves that souls in hell can talk to souls in heaven.

13. The word "forever" as used in the Bible to refer to human life (1)
_____ Means 'unending time'.
_____ Is miraculous and incomprehensible.
_____ Usually means 'a person's life' or 'until death'.

1,000 Years of Peace

Lesson 12

You can be sure that it is coming—the amazing millennium that will begin after the return of Christ. And Satan does not want you to know about his 1,000-year imprisonment because it reveals his true character. In fact, Satan has fabricated a false message about the millennium to deceive you! It's a fascinating and significant study that will completely shake everything you've ever known! Now, you can learn the amazing truths from the Bible about the coming 1,000-year reign.

1. What event marks the beginning of this 1,000-year period?
"Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." Revelation 20:4, NEB, last part of the verse.
Answer: The resurrection begins the 1,000-year period.

The 1,000 years begin with the resurrection of the righteous.

2. What is this resurrection called? Who will be involved?
"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." Revelation 20:5, 6.
Answer: It is called the first resurrection. The righteous—"blessed and holy" from all ages—will be resurrected in it.
The 1,000 years end with the resurrection of the wicked.

3. The Bible speaks of two resurrections. When is the second resurrection, and who will be resurrected in it?
"The rest of the dead [the wicked] did not live again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28, 29.
Answer: The second resurrection takes place at the end of the 1,000 years. The wicked will be resurrected in this resurrection. It is called the resurrection of damnation.

Note: The resurrection of the righteous starts the 1,000 years. The resurrection of the wicked ends the 1,000 years.
A destructive earthquake and hailstorm will strike the world during Christ's second coming. At that time, the righteous from all ages will rise to meet Jesus in the air.

4. What other significant events take place as the 1,000 years begin?
“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.” Revelation 1:7. “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. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.
“There was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth... Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent [estimated by scholars to weigh from 58 to 100 pounds].” Revelation 16:18, 20, 21. (See also Jeremiah 4:23-26; Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19, 20; Isaiah 2:21.)
Answer: Other major events at the beginning of the 1,000 years include: a destructive earthquake and the most devastating hailstorm in history hitting the world; Jesus returning in the clouds for His people; and all the saints being caught up in the air to meet Jesus.
The wicked alive will be slain by the brightness of Christ’s second coming.

5. What happens to the wicked—alive and dead—at the second coming of Jesus?
“He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.” Isaiah 11:4.
“When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8.
“Let the wicked perish at the presence of God.” Psalm 68:2.
“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” Revelation 20:5.
Answer: The wicked alive will be slain by the presence of Christ at His second coming. When an angel appeared at Jesus’ tomb, the entire group of Roman guards fell as if they were dead (Matthew 28:2, 4). The brightness of all the angels, God the Father, and God the Son will cause the wicked to die as if struck by lightning. The wicked who are already dead will remain in their graves until the end of the 1,000 years.
The righteous will be with Jesus in heaven during the 1,000 years.

6. Many believe that those who are lost will have an opportunity to repent during the 1,000 years. What does the Bible say about this?
“Those slain by the Lord on that day shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented or gathered, nor buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.” Jeremiah 25:33.
“I looked, and behold, there was no man.” Jeremiah 4:25.

Answer: It is impossible for anyone to repent during the 1,000 years because there will be no one alive on earth. All the righteous will be in heaven. All the wicked will be dead on the earth. Revelation 22:11, 12 makes it clear that everyone's case is sealed before Jesus returns. Those waiting to receive Christ until the 1,000 years begin will have waited for a very long time.
The earth, in its broken, darkened state, will be a "bottomless pit" where Satan will be forced to remain during the 1,000 years.

7. The Bible says that Satan will be bound in the abyss during the 1,000 years. What is this abyss?
"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit... He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit..." Revelation 20:1-3.
Answer: The term "bottomless pit" in the original Greek is "abussos," or abyss. This same word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Genesis 1:2 in reference to the earth's creation, but it is translated "deep" there. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep." How fascinating!

The words "deep," "bottomless pit," and "abyss" here refer to the same thing—the earth in its completely dark, chaotic state before God ordered it. Jeremiah, in describing the earth during the 1,000 years, used nearly the same phrases as in Genesis 1:2: "without form and void," "no light," "no man," "darkness." Jeremiah 4:23, NW 25, 28. Thus, the broken, darkened, lifeless earth will be called the bottomless pit, or abyss, during the 1,000 years as it was before creation was completed. Isaiah 24:22 also speaks of Satan and his angels during the 1,000 years as "gathered in the pit" and "bound in prison."
The earth, in its broken, darkened state, will be a "bottomless pit" where Satan will be forced to remain during the 1,000 years.

8. What chain binds Satan? Why is he bound?
"An angel... having... a great chain in his hand... laid hold of Satan, and bound him for a thousand years... and cast him into the abyss..." Revelation 20:1-3.
Answer: This chain is symbolic, a chain of circumstance. A spiritual being cannot be bound by a literal chain. Satan is "bound" because he has no people to deceive. All the wicked are dead, and all the righteous are in heaven. The Lord confines Satan to this earth so he cannot roam the world looking for someone to deceive. Forcing Satan to stay on this earth, alone with his demons, for 1,000 years without anyone to deceive will be the worst chain ever made.

RECAP OF EVENTS THAT HAPPEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1,000 YEARS:

A destructive earthquake and hailstorm (Revelation 16:18-21, Revelation 6:14-17).

The second coming of Jesus for His saints (Matthew 24:30, 31).

The righteous dead are resurrected (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

The righteous are granted immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-55).

Bodies transformed to be like Jesus' (1 John 3:2, Philippians 3:21).

All the righteous are caught up in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

The wicked alive are slain by the breath of the Lord's mouth (Isaiah 11:4).

The wicked in their graves remain dead until the end of the 1,000 years (Revelation 20:5).

Jesus takes the righteous to heaven (John 13:33, 36; John 14:1-3).

Satan is bound (Revelation 20:1-3).

9. Revelation 20:4 says there will be judgment in heaven during the 1,000 years. For what purpose? Who will participate? "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them... and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." Revelation 20:4. "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?... Do you not know that we will judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3. Answer: The righteous from all times (and possibly even good angels) will participate in judgment during the 1,000 years. Cases of all the lost, including Satan and his angels, will be reviewed. This judgment will clarify details about the lost for everyone who is saved. In the end, all will see that people are excluded from heaven only if they did not want to live like Jesus or be with Him. EXAMINE EVENTS AND CONDITIONS DURING THE 1,000 YEARS: The earth will be in a state of destruction with great hailstones and earthquakes (Revelation 16:18-21, 6:14-17). The earth will be in complete darkness / a bottomless pit (Jeremiah 4:23, 28). Satan and his angels will be forced to stay on earth / bound (Revelation 20:1-3). The righteous in heaven will participate in judgment (Revelation 20:4). All the wicked will be dead (Jeremiah 4:25, Isaiah 11:4). During the 1,000 years, every soul that has ever lived on earth will be in one of two places: (1) on earth, dead and lost, or (2) in heaven, participating in judgment. The Lord invites you to be in heaven.

Please accept His invitation. The holy city, along with all of God's people, will descend to earth at the end of the 1,000 years.

10. At the end of the 1,000 years, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, will descend from heaven to earth. Who will come with it? Where will it settle? "Then I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.'" Revelation 21:2, 3. "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming... And His feet will stand on that day on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two... Then the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You." Zechariah 14:1, 4, 5, 10. Answer: The New Jerusalem will settle where the Mount of Olives stands now. That mountain will be flattened, creating a vast plain, and the city will settle on it. All the righteous from all times (Zechariah 14:5), the heavenly angels (Matthew 25:31), along with God the Father (Revelation 21:2, 3) and God the Son (Matthew 25:31) will return to earth with the holy city in the special third coming of Jesus. The second coming will be for His saints, the third coming will be with His saints. The Three Comings of Jesus:

11. The first coming, in Bethlehem in a manger.

12. The second coming, in the clouds at the beginning of the 1,000 years to take His people to heaven.

13. The third coming, with the holy city and all the righteous at the end of the 1,000 years.

14. What will happen to the wicked who have died at this time? How will this affect Satan? "But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished." "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison, and will go out to deceive the nations." Revelation 20:5, 7, 8. Answer: At the end of the 1,000 years (when Jesus comes the third time), the wicked will be resurrected. Satan, being released from his prison, will have a world full of people (all the nations of the earth) to deceive. After the holy city descends, the wicked from all generations—along with Satan as their leader—will attempt to take the city.

15. What will Satan do at that time? "Satan will go out to deceive the nations... of the earth,... to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city." Revelation 20:7-9. Answer: Satan, true to his nature, will immediately begin to lie to the people left on earth—the wicked from all times. He may claim that the city really belongs

to him, that he was unjustly removed from the heavenly kingdom, that God is power-hungry and cruel, and that God is preparing to destroy everyone from the face of the earth with an inescapable fire. He will convince them that, united, there is no place for God. With the whole world against one city, victory will seem certain. Then the nations will unite and prepare their armies to surround the New Jerusalem. When the wicked of all ages surround the holy city, God will destroy them with fire falling from heaven.

16. What will stop Satan's plan to seize or destroy the city? "Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Revelation 20:9, 10; 21:8. "The wicked... shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on that day that I do this," says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 4:3. Answer: Fire will suddenly fall from heaven (not from hell, as many believe) upon the wicked, and they will be turned to ashes, including Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41). This fire that destroys sin and sinners is called the second death. There is no resurrection from this death. It is final. Notice that Satan will not be controlling the fire, as is commonly believed. He will be in it, and it will render him nonexistent.

17. When the wicked are consumed by the fire and extinguished, what glorious and exciting event will follow? "Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah 65:17. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." 2 Peter 3:13. "And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'" Revelation 21:5. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3. Answer: God will create a new heavens and a new earth, and the New Jerusalem will be the capital of the renewed world. Sin and its evil will be gone forever. The people of God will finally receive the promised kingdom. "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:10. It is truly amazing to describe! So wonderful to miss out on! So close to us being certain! God has a place prepared for you (John 14:1-3). Plan to live in it. Jesus is waiting for your approval. EXAMINE EVENTS AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS: The third coming of Jesus with His saints (Zechariah 14:5). The holy city settles on the Mount of Olives, which becomes a great plain (Zechariah 14:4, 10). The Father, angels, and all the righteous come with Jesus (Revelation 21:1-3, Matthew 25:31, Zechariah 14:5). The wicked dead are resurrected with Satan being released (Revelation 20:5, 7). Satan deceives the whole world (Revelation 20:8). The wicked surround the holy city (Revelation 20:9). The wicked are destroyed by fire (Revelation 20:9). A new heavens and new earth are created (Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1). The people of God rejoice in eternity with Christ in the new world (Revelation 21:2-4).

***1,000 years of Revelation 20 events in 1,000 years. 2. All the wicked have died in the world. 3. Satan is bound on earth.
4. Just judge for right in heaven. The first resurrection _____ At the beginning of 1,000 second resurrection _____ in close than 1,000 years 1. The destructive earthquake and hail. 1. The coming of Jesus the third time with the saints. 2. The coming of Jesus the second time for the saints. 2. The holy city descends to the Mount of Olives, which becomes a great plain. 3. The dead with the right resurrected. 3. Father, angels, righteous come and Jesus. 4. The righteous is given immortality. 4. The wicked dead are raised by Satan opened. 5. The bodies given right as that of Jesus. 5. Satan deceives all nations. They surround the holy city. 6. The righteous all raptured over the clouds. 6. The wicked destroyed by fire. 7. The wicked living killed by the presence of the Lord. 7. New heavens and land were created. 8. The wicked are already in their graves still dead. 8. God's people enjoy eternity with Jesus. 9. Jesus takes the righteous in heaven. 10. Satan is bound.#@@this is a table

1,000 YEARS OF REVELATION 20

EVENTS IN 1000YEARS

1

The broken world, desolation, and darkness.
All the wicked have died on earth.
Satan is bound here on earth.
Judgment in righteousness in heaven.

THE FIRST RESSURRECTION _____		**THE SECOND RESSURECTION** _____ **"IN THE NEAR FUTURE OF 1,000 YEARS"**
BEGINNING OF THE 1,000 YEARS 1. A destructive earthquake and hailstorm. 2. The second coming of Jesus for the saints. 3. The righteous dead are resurrected. 4. The righteous are granted immortality. 5. Bodies are transformed to be like that of Jesus. 6. All the righteous are taken up into the heavens. 7. The living wicked are destroyed by the presence of the Lord. 8. The wicked who are already in their graves remain dead. 9. Jesus takes the righteous to heaven. 10. Satan is bound.		1.The third coming of Jesus along with the saints. 2.The holy city descends on the Mount of Olives, which becomes a great plain. 3.The Father, angels, and the righteous come together with Jesus. 4.The wicked dead are resurrected, and Satan is released. 5.Satan deceives all the nations. They surround the holy city. 6.The wicked are destroyed by fire. 7.A new heaven and earth are created. 8.God's people rejoice in eternity with Jesus.

15. Can we know how long it will take for Jesus to return for His saints?
"So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors." Matthew 24:33. "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." Luke 21:28. "For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness." Romans 9:28. "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." 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Answer: Jesus said that when the signs of His coming are rapidly being fulfilled, as they are today, we should rejoice and know that His coming is near—even at the door. The apostle Paul said we can know that the end is near when there is a great movement of peace in the world. Ultimately, the Bible says God will shorten the work (Romans 9:28). So without a doubt, we are living in a time of anticipation. The Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly—in an hour that no one knows except God alone (Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7). Our only security is being ready.

16. Indeed, I am planning to live in a wonderful house built in the tradition that Jesus is preparing for me in heaven.
Answer:

Thought Questions

1. How long will it be from the time the holy city descends until the wicked are destroyed by fire from heaven?
The Bible says it will be a "little while," or a short time (Revelation 20:3). Sufficient time will be needed for Satan to deceive people to follow his plan and prepare weapons for war. The full length of time is not revealed in the Scriptures.

2. What kind of bodies will people have in God's new kingdom?
The Bible says the redeemed will have bodies like Jesus' (Philippians 3:21). Jesus had a real body of flesh and bones after His resurrection (Luke 24:36-43). The saved will not be spirits. They will be real people, just as Adam and Eve were.

3. Does the Bible say how the lost will behave at Jesus' second coming?
Yes. The Bible says they will cry to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Revelation 6:16, 17. (See also verses 14 and 15.) On the other hand, the righteous will say, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and

He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9.

4. When the holy city descends, will the wicked be able to see the righteous inside the city?
Most likely, they will. The Bible says the city will be clear as glass (Revelation 21:11, 18). The righteous will be able to see the wicked (Psalm 37:34), and the wicked will be able to see the righteous (Luke 13:28). This may imply that certain tragic events will take place on the city's walls, with the saved family inside and the lost outside. The grief and trauma caused by this are too much for human language to explain.

5. The Bible says God will wipe away all tears from His people's eyes, and there will be no more death, sorrow, or pain. When will this happen?
From Revelation 21:1-4 and Isaiah 65:17, it seems this will happen after sin and sinners are destroyed. During the final judgment and destruction by fire, God's people will have many reasons for great sorrow.
As they realize that their relatives and friends are lost, and those they loved are destroyed by fire, grief will surely bring tears and sorrow to God's people. But after the fire is extinguished, the Lord will wipe away their tears. Then He will create a new heaven and a new earth for His people, which will bring them joy and fulfillment beyond measure. And sorrow, mourning, crying, and pain will be gone forever.

6. What will be the effect of the destruction of the wicked angels and people on God the Father and His Son?
Surely, they will be comforted and rejoice greatly that the terrible cancer of sin has been removed forever and that the world is safe. They too will have deep sorrow, grieving over the truth that many of those they loved, and for whom Jesus died, chose to cling to sin and reject salvation. Satan himself, once their personal, cheerful friend, and many people in the fire were their beloved children. It will be like the pain of seeing one of your lost children killed. Sin has been a heavy burden on the Father and the Son since its inception. The Father and Son's purpose has been to love people and gently draw them to salvation. Their emotions are expressed in Hosea 11:8, NASB: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim?"
The New American Standard Bible, (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

7. What kind of body does Jesus have?
He has a body of flesh and bones. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples (Luke 24:36-43) and showed that He was not a spirit or a ghost by saying that He was flesh and bones, letting them feel His body, and eating

fish and honey.

Jesus Ascends
Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and as He was speaking to them, He was taken up into heaven (Luke 24:49-51). The angel who appeared to the disciples when Jesus ascended explained that “this same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11.

This Same Jesus Will Return
The angel’s emphasis was that this same Jesus (of flesh and bones) will come again. He will be real, not a spirit, and the resurrected and changed saints will have bodies like His (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2). The heavenly bodies of the saints will also be incorruptible and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:51-55).

Questions for Reflection

1. Mark the events that will occur at the beginning of the 1,000 years of Revelation chapter 20:
_____ The second coming of Jesus.
_____ Earthquake and hailstorm.
_____ The righteous dead are resurrected.
_____ Satan is bound.
_____ The wicked alive are slain.
_____ The righteous are granted immortality.
_____ The holy city descends.
_____ The righteous are taken to heaven.
_____ The wicked remain dead in the graves.
_____ Bodies given immortality like Jesus.
_____ The righteous are caught up in the air.
_____ Jesus enters the new Jerusalem in victory.

2. Everyone who is alive on earth will see Jesus at His second coming. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

3. The righteous will have bodies like spirits in heaven. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

4. Which of the following are true about the 1,000-year period? (2)
_____ Many sinners will be converted.
_____ Satan and his angels will be forced to stay on earth.

_____ Satan will be bound by the fact that there is no television to watch.
_____ There will be brightness and sunshine on earth for the entire 1,000 years.
_____ Satan will resurrect the wicked dead to unite them with him.
_____ The righteous will be in heaven, participating in judgment.

5. Which of the following are true about events at the end of the 1,000 years? (4)
_____ Christ will come for the fifth time.
_____ The holy city will land in Washington, DC.
_____ Angels and God the Father will come with Jesus.
_____ The wicked will be resurrected.
_____ Jesus will come with His saints.
_____ God will decide not to raise the wicked after all.
_____ The wicked will be destroyed by angry evil angels.
_____ God will create a new heaven and a new earth.
_____ God will banish Satan to the outer parts of the world.
_____ The devil will destroy the holy city with a powerful new missile.

6. The chain that binds Satan will be (3)
_____ A symbolic chain—state of mind.
_____ Force him to remain on earth.
_____ Made of new, very strong metal.
_____ Breakable by Satan within 24 hours.
_____ Prevent him from tempting God's people, who will be safe in heaven.

7. Which statements are true about the bottomless pit? (2)
_____ It is a large hole in the earth.
_____ It means a pit.
_____ It refers to the earth—dark, formless, and void.
_____ It is another name for hell.

8. Which are true about the first, second, and third comings of Jesus? (3)
_____ The first coming was in Bethlehem as a baby.
_____ The first coming took place in the days of Noah.
_____ The second coming took place in the days of Martin Luther.
_____ The second coming will occur at the beginning of the 1,000 years.
_____ The third coming will take place at the end of the 1,000 years.
_____ The third coming will occur after the new earth is created.

9. The death of the wicked in the lake of fire is the second death. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

God's Health Plan for Free

Lesson 13

Proper medical care is invaluable – but wouldn't it be better if we no longer needed doctors? Did you know that there is a proven way to take many doctors out of business? Take care of your body! Scientists have issued serious warnings about cholesterol, tobacco, stress, obesity, and alcohol. Why risk your health? Hospitals and mental health institutions are filled with people who have ignored these warnings – do you really want to join them? God cares deeply about how you treat your body, and He has provided a free health plan with instructions to follow... the Bible! For the surprising truth about how you can enjoy vibrant health and long life, check out this study guide – but be sure to read it all before jumping to conclusions!

1. Are health principles part of the true religion of the Bible?
"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." 3 John 2.
Answer: Yes. In fact, the Bible considers health to be one of the highest priorities. The mind, the spiritual nature, and the body are all interconnected and interdependent. What affects one impacts the others. If our bodies are misused, our minds and spiritual nature cannot be what God intended them to be.

2. Why did God give health laws to His people?
"And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes... for our good always, that He might preserve us alive." Deuteronomy 6:24. "So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you." Exodus 23:25.
Answer: God gave health laws because He knows what is best for the human body. Just as car manufacturers put an "owner's manual" in the glove compartment of each new car because they know what is best for their product, God, who created our bodies, also has an "owner's manual." It's called the Holy Bible. Ignoring God's "operating instructions" leads to disease, corrupted thoughts, and wasted lives, just like misusing a car (contrary to the manufacturer's advice) causes major problems. Following God's laws brings "health restoration" (Psalm 67:2) and more abundant life (John 10:10). These health laws act as a barrier or fence against Satan's diseases. God tells us these laws to avoid the traps of Satan.

God's health laws say much about what we eat and drink.

3. Do God's health laws have anything to do with eating and drinking?
"Eat what is good." Isaiah 55:2. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or

whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31.
Answer: Yes, Christians even eat and drink differently, all to the glory of God, only using "what is good." If God says something is not to be eaten, there must be a good reason. He is not a harsh dictator, but a loving Father. All of His counsel is for our benefit. The Bible promises this: "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11. So if God is withholding something, it's because it is not good.

Note: No one can eat their way into heaven. Eating even angel's food will not give people the right to enter paradise. Only accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can do that. However, disregarding God's health laws can cause someone to lose their way by destroying their judgment and leading them to sin.

God commanded plant-based food for Adam and Eve.

4. What did God give people to eat when He created them and provided a complete meal for them?
"And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed... and every tree whose fruit yields seed... to you it shall be for food.'" Genesis 1:29; 2:16.
Answer: The food God provided for people in the beginning was fruit, grains, and nuts. Vegetables were added a little later (Genesis 3:18).

5. What specifically does God mention as unclean and forbidden?
Answer: In Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, God clearly outlines the following groups as unclean. Read both chapters thoroughly.

A. All animals that do not have cloven hooves and chew the cud (Deuteronomy 14:6).

B. All creatures in the sea that do not have fins and scales. Most fish are clean (Deuteronomy 14:9).

C. All birds of prey, scavengers, and fish-eating birds (Leviticus 11:13-20).

D. Many "creeping things" (or animals without a backbone) are also unclean (Leviticus 11:21-47).

Note: These chapters make it clear that many animals, birds, and sea creatures that people typically eat are clean. However, there are some notable exceptions. According to God's laws, the following animals are unclean and should not be eaten: pigs, squirrels, rabbits, camels, eels, lobsters, clams,

crabs, shrimp, oysters, frogs, and many others.

6. But I like pork. Will God destroy me if I eat it?
“For behold, the Lord will come with fire... and with His sword He will judge all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many. Those who sanctify and purify themselves... eating pork, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, says the Lord.” Isaiah 66:15-17.
Answer: This may be shocking, but it is true and must be told. The Bible clearly says that all those who eat “pork,” “mice,” and other unclean things that are “abominations” will be destroyed by fire when the Lord comes. When God says not to eat something, we should obey in every way. Just as eating the forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve, who were sinless, brought sin and death into the world, can anyone say it doesn’t matter when God clearly shows that it does? God says humans will be destroyed because “they chose what I did not like.” Isaiah 66:4.

Noah’s sacrifice of a clean animal (Genesis 8:20) shows that he understood the difference between clean and unclean.

7. But didn’t this law of clean and unclean animals start at Sinai? Wasn’t it only for the Jews, and didn’t it end at the cross?
“And the Lord said to Noah... of every clean animal you shall take seven... and of animals that are unclean, two by two.” Genesis 7:1, 2.
Answer: No! The Bible has sufficient evidence that clean and unclean animals existed from the very beginning of creation. Noah lived long before any Jews existed, but he knew about clean and unclean animals because he brought clean animals into the ark by “sevens” and unclean ones by “twos.” Revelation 18:2 refers to some birds being unclean just before the second coming of Christ.

The death of Christ did not change these health laws, as the Bible states that those who break them will be destroyed when Jesus returns (Isaiah 66:15-17). The Jewish stomach and digestive system are no different from those of the Gentiles. These health laws apply to all people at all times.

The use of intoxicants is clearly condemned in Scripture.

8. Does the Bible prohibit the use of intoxicants?
“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whoever is deceived by it is not wise.” Proverbs 20:1. “Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.” Proverbs 23:31-32. “Neither fornicators... nor drunkards... will inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

Answer: Yes, the Bible clearly prohibits the use of intoxicants.

9. Does the Bible prohibit the use of tobacco?
Answer: Yes, the Bible gives six reasons why tobacco use is displeasing to God:

A. Tobacco use harms health and pollutes the body.
"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

B. Nicotine is a drug that enslaves people.
Romans 6:16 says we become slaves to whatever (or whoever) we yield ourselves to. Tobacco users are slaves to nicotine. Jesus says, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve." Matthew 4:10.

C. The habit of tobacco is unclean.
"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." 2 Corinthians 6:17. It's absurd to think of Christ using tobacco in any form, right?

D. Tobacco use wastes money.
"Why do you spend money for what is not bread?" Isaiah 55:2. We are stewards of God's resources, and "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2.

E. Tobacco use never brings anyone closer to Christ.
"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11. Tobacco use is a lust of the flesh.

F. Tobacco use shortens life.
Recent scientific results confirm the fact that tobacco use often shortens life by a third. This breaks God's commandment against murder (Exodus 20:13). While it is slow murder, it is still murder. One of the best ways to delay your funeral is to quit using tobacco.

10. What are some simple but very important health laws found in the Bible?
Answer: Here are 11 health laws from the Bible:

A. Eat your food regularly, and do not use animal fats or blood.
"Blessed are you when you eat, for you shall be satisfied." Ecclesiastes 10:17. "It shall be a perpetual ordinance... that you shall not eat fat or blood." Leviticus 3:17.

Note: Recent scientific studies have confirmed the truth that most heart attacks are caused by high cholesterol levels in the blood, and the use of "fats" is significantly linked to this high level. It seems the Lord knows what He is talking about, doesn't it?

B. Do not overeat.
"Put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite." Proverbs 23:2. In Luke 21:34, Christ warns specifically against "overeating" in the last days. Overeating is responsible for many degenerative diseases.

C. Do not harbor jealousy or hold grudges.
These evils destroy bodily processes. The Bible says that envy brings "rottenness to the bones." Proverbs 14:30. Christ even commands us to remove any grudge that others might hold against us (Matthew 5:23, 24).

D. Maintain a cheerful and happy disposition.
"A merry heart does good, like medicine." Proverbs 17:22. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. Many diseases people suffer from are the result of mental depression. A cheerful, happy attitude brings health and extends life.

E. Have full faith in the Lord.
"The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction." Proverbs 19:23. Trusting the Lord strengthens health and life. "My son, give attention to my words... For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh." Proverbs 4:20-22. Thus, health comes from obeying God's commandments and trusting Him fully.

F. Balance work and exercise with sleep and rest.
"Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall do no work." Exodus 20:9, 10. "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet." Ecclesiastes 5:12. "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread." Genesis 3:19. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows." Psalms 127:2. "For what has man for all his labor and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun?... his heart is not at rest at night. This also is vanity." Ecclesiastes 2:22, 23.

G. Keep your body clean.
"Be clean." Isaiah 52:11.

H. Have moderation in all things.
"Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things." 1 Corinthians

9:25. “Let your gentleness be known to all men.” Philippians 4:5. A Christian will avoid anything harmful and will be moderate in the use of all good things. Habits that harm health break the commandment “You shall not kill.” They kill gradually. They destroy life step by step.

I. Avoid all harmful stimulants.
Here is a surprise for some. Medical science has confirmed that tea, coffee, and soft drinks containing the drug caffeine and other harmful ingredients all damage the human body. None of these are of any nutritional value except for the sugar or cream added, and many of us already consume too much sugar. Stimulants give a dangerous, artificial excitement to the body, like trying to carry a ton in a wheelbarrow. The popularity of these drinks is not because of taste or advertising but because of the caffeine they contain. Many Americans are sick because of their addiction to coffee, tea, and caffeinated soft drinks. But the real tragedy is that men and women seeking peace and strength use tea and coffee as cheap substitutes for prayer and Bible study. This pleases Satan and ruins human lives.

J. Make mealtime a joyful time.
“Let everyone eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God.” Ecclesiastes 3:13. Unpleasant events during mealtime hinder digestion. Avoid them.

K. Help those in need.
“Undo the heavy burdens... feed the hungry... bring the poor who are cast out to your house... when you see the naked, cover them... and your health shall spring forth speedily.” Isaiah 58:6-8. This is very clear: when we help the poor and needy, we improve our own health.
Neglecting God’s health laws is a sure way to end up in surgery.

11. What is the serious reminder given to those who neglect God’s laws?
“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Galatians 6:7.

Answer: The answer is simple and often missed. Those who break God’s laws concerning the care of their bodies will reap broken bodies and destroyed lives, just as someone who misuses their car will face major car troubles. Those who continue to break God’s health laws will eventually be destroyed by the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17). God’s health laws are not arbitrary. They are natural laws, set laws of the world, just like the law of gravity. Ignoring these laws always brings some bad results. The Bible says, “A curse without a cause shall not come.” Proverbs 26:2. Trouble comes when we ignore the health laws. In His mercy, God tells us what these laws are to avoid disasters

from breaking them.
Parents who use drugs often pass on weakness to their children.

12. What is the frightening and sobering truth about health related to our children and grandchildren?
“You shall not eat, that it may go well with you and your children after you.” Deuteronomy 12:25. “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.” Exodus 20:5.

Answer: God makes it clear that children and grandchildren (to the fourth generation) pay for the folly of parents who neglect God’s health laws.
Children and grandchildren inherit weakened, disease-ridden bodies when parents disregard God’s laws in their lives. Is this what you want for your beloved children and grandchildren?
Outdoor exercise will help prepare us for heaven.

13. What does the word of God reveal as the most frightening and sorrowful thing?
“There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles.” Revelation 21:27. “But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads, says the Lord God.” Ezekiel 11:21.

Answer: Nothing defiled or unclean will be allowed into the kingdom of God. All impure habits defile a person. The use of unclean food defiles a person (Daniel 1:8). It is terrifying but true. Choosing “their own ways” and those that God “does not delight in” will cost people their eternal salvation (Isaiah 66:3, 4, 15-17).
True, living Christians will want to bring their lives into harmony with God’s health laws.

14. What should every sincere Christian strive to do immediately?
“And let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” 2 Corinthians 7:1. “Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3. “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14:15.

Answer: Faithful Christians will bring their lives into harmony with God’s principles immediately, because they love Him. They know His laws greatly increase their joy and protect them from the diseases of Satan (Acts 10:38). God’s counsel and laws are always for our benefit, just as parents’ counsel and laws are most beneficial for their children. And once we know better,

God holds us accountable. “To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.
Bad habits that bind us can be quickly broken by Jesus.

15. But I am worried because some of my bad habits are so tightly bound. What can I do?
“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13.

Answer: Take all these habits to Christ and lay them at His feet. He will gladly give you a new heart and the power you need to break any bad habit and become a son or daughter of God (Ezekiel 11:18, 19). It is exciting and uplifting to know that “with God all things are possible.” Mark 10:27. And Jesus says, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” John 6:37. Jesus is ready to break the chains that bind us. He desires to set us free, and He will, if only we allow Him. Our worries, bad habits, nervous tensions, and fears will disappear when we obey His command. He says, “These things I have spoken to you... that your joy may be full.” John 15:11. Satan argues that freedom is found in disobedience, but this is a lie (John 8:44).
Heaven will have no sickness or the sick. Its inhabitants will all follow God’s laws of life.

16. What exciting promises are given about God’s new kingdom?
“And the inhabitant will not say, ‘I am sick.’” Isaiah 33:24. “There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain shall be no more.” Revelation 21:4. “They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31.
Answer: Citizens of God’s new kingdom will obey His health laws, and there will be no sickness or the sick. They will be blessed with eternal strength and youth and will live with God in great joy and happiness forever.

17. Since healthful living is part of Bible religion, it is my plan to follow God’s health principles.
Answer:

Questions on Thought:

1. 1 Timothy 4:4 says, “For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected.” Can you explain this?
This scripture (verse 3) refers to the “meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving” by His people. These meats, as we have already discovered, are the clean animals listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

Verse 4 clarifies that all of God's creatures are good and not to be rejected, provided they are among those created to be "received with thanksgiving" (clean animals). Verse 5 explains why these animals (or foods) are acceptable: they are "sanctified" by the Word of God, which says they are clean, and by "prayer" of blessing, which is offered before meals. However, remember that God will destroy people who try to "purify" themselves by eating unclean foods (Isaiah 66:17).

2. Matthew 15:11 says, "Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man, but that which comes out." Can you explain this?
The teaching in Matthew 15:1-20 concerns eating without first washing hands (verse 2). The issue is not eating but washing. The scribes taught that eating any food without washing in a specific manner would defile the eater. Jesus said that ritual washing was meaningless. In verse 19, He listed certain evils—murder, adultery, theft, etc. He concluded, "These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (verse 20).

3. But didn't Jesus declare all animals clean in Peter's vision, as recorded in Acts 10?
No! In fact, the subject of this vision is not animals, but people. God gave Peter this vision to show him that people from other nations were not unclean, as the Jews had believed. God had instructed Cornelius, a Gentile, to send men to visit Peter. But Peter would have refused to see them unless God had given him this vision, because Jewish law prohibited receiving Gentiles (verse 28). But when the men arrived, Peter welcomed them, explaining that ordinarily he would not do so, but "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (verse 28). In the next chapter (Acts 11), church members rebuked Peter for speaking with these Gentiles. So, Peter explained the entire story of his vision and its meaning. Acts 11:18 says, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

4. Why did God create pigs if not to eat?
He created them for the same purpose as scavengers—as cleaners of waste. And pigs serve this purpose well.

5. Romans 14:3, 14, 20 says, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not...There is nothing unclean of itself...All things indeed are pure." Can you explain this?
Verses 3 to 6 discuss the disagreement between those who eat certain foods and those who do not. This passage does not say that it is right or wrong to eat, but rather advises not to judge others. Instead, let God be the judge (verses 4, 10-12). Verses 14 and 20 refer to foods that were first offered to

idols (and thus were considered defiled ceremonially)—not clean meats and unclean animals from Leviticus 11. (See 1 Corinthians 8:1, 4, 10, 13). The argument here is that no food is "unclean" or "defiled" just because it was offered to idols, as idols are "nothing in the world" (1 Corinthians 8:4). But if a person's conscience is troubled by eating such food, they should avoid it. Even if it only offends a brother, they should still refrain.

6. Are the health laws about eating and drinking important for me personally? If I love the Lord, isn't that enough?
It's a matter of life and death because these laws involve obedience. "He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Love for Christ is involved here because He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). When we truly love the Lord, we will obey Him joyfully without excuses or evasion. This is a major test.

Questions of thought

1. Following God's health principles for the human body is (1)
_____ Important for children, but not as important for adults.
_____ An essential part of true Biblical religion.
_____ Not related to anyone's religion.

2. God's health laws were given (1)
_____ By a loving God who created us and knows what is best for our happiness.
_____ Only to the Jews and do not apply today.
_____ To show that He is in charge and can rule over us.

3. A true Christian will (1)
_____ Eat and drink whatever they desire.
_____ Love the Lord and ignore His health laws because they were abolished at the cross.
_____ Eat and drink only things that strengthen the body, mind, and character and bring honor to God.

4. The first diet of humans (1)
_____ Included fruits, grains, and nuts.
_____ Included alcohol and meats.
_____ Included anything and everything that Adam and Eve wanted.

5. God lists these creatures as unclean: (7)
_____ Ox.
_____ Pig.
_____ Chicken.
_____ Hare.
_____ Camel.
_____ Raven.
_____ Catfish.
_____ Trout.
_____ Shrimp.
_____ Clam.
_____ Lobster.
_____ Goat.

6. Alcoholic beverages are (1)
_____ Fine for a Christian if used in moderation.
_____ Not right for a person to use if they think it is wrong.
_____ Not to be used by a Christian.

7. The use of tobacco is (1)
_____ A personal matter for everyone and has no relation to their religion.
_____ A sin, and a Christian should never use it in any form.
_____ Beneficial for a Christian.

8. Look at the health laws listed below, which are God's health laws: (9)
_____ Do not eat in excess.
_____ Smoke after each meal.
_____ Be happy and cheerful.
_____ Drink alcohol before meals.
_____ Keep your body clean.
_____ Eat pig meat excessively.
_____ Drink coffee and tea in excess.
_____ Be moderate in all things.
_____ Eat food at regular intervals.
_____ Do not hold grudges.
_____ Balance work, exercise, and sleep.
_____ Trust the Lord fully.
_____ Do not eat fat or blood of animals.

9. An important truth about God's health laws is that (1)
_____ Children and grandchildren often have weak bodies and minds because their parents neglect God's health laws.
_____ These laws were only for the Jews and do not apply today.

_____ If we truly love Christ, His health laws are not important.

10. The best way to overcome sinful habits is (1)
_____ "Cutting down."
_____ Surrendering completely to Christ, who gives us the power to do all things.
_____ Hoping they will disappear.

11. God's health laws are (1)
_____ Like traffic rules: They are best for us, and we get into serious trouble when we ignore them.
_____ Part of the law of Moses that was abolished at the cross.
_____ A good idea, but do not affect a person's relationship with God.

12. A faithful Christian (1)
_____ Will spend much time praying and ignore God's health laws.
_____ Will immediately change any behavior they see contradicting God's principles, because when we love Christ, we will joyfully keep His commandments.
_____ Will feel free to **use tobacco.**

Is Obedience Valid?

Lesson 14

People may feel they can avoid breaking traffic laws or cheating on their taxes, but God and His laws work in a much different way. God sees everything we do, hears everything we say, and cares deeply about how we act. Although the Lord offers forgiveness for our sins, there are still consequences for breaking God's laws. Surprisingly, some Christians say that any attempt to obey God's laws is equivalent to keeping the law. But Jesus said that if you truly love God, you will do what He asks of you. So, is obedience valid? Take time to carefully read this guide... your eternal outcomes are at stake!

God knows you and cares about you personally.

1. Does God truly see and care about me personally?
"You are the God who sees me." Genesis 16:13.
"O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you understand my thought from afar. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether." Psalm 139:1-4.

“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Luke 12:7.

Answer: Yes, God knows each one of us (everyone in the world) better than we know ourselves. He is personally interested in every human being and carefully observes everything we do. There is no word, thought, or action that is hidden from Him.

Seek God’s will in the Bible. It is your only safety.

2. Can I be saved in His kingdom without obeying His Word as found in the Holy Bible?
“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Matthew 7:21.
“If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17.
“And having been made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Hebrews 5:9.

Answer: No! The Scriptures are very clear on this matter. Salvation and entry into the kingdom of heaven are for those who obey the commands of the Lord. God does not promise eternal life to those who merely confess faith, are members of the church, or are baptized, but to those who do His will as revealed in the Scriptures. Certainly, this obedience is possible only through Christ (Acts 4:12).
There is only one way to heaven. The Bible is the map that shows us the way.

3. Why does God require obedience? Why must it be done?
“Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:14.
“But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death.” Proverbs 8:36.
“The Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive.” Deuteronomy 6:24.

Answer: Because there is only one narrow way that leads to the fear of God, and thus to His kingdom. All other paths do not lead to the same place. The Bible is the map and the complete guidebook with instructions, warnings, and information on how to reach that kingdom safely. Ignoring any part of it leads us away from God and His kingdom. God’s world is a world of law and order. Natural, moral, and spiritual laws are involved. Breaking any of these laws always has lasting consequences.
If the Bible had not been given, people would eventually (through trial and error) discover that the main principles of the Bible are true and real. These

principles are written into our nervous systems, glands, and minds. Ignoring them leads to broken nerves, disease, and a lack of happiness in all forms. Therefore, the words of the Bible are not just advice we can choose to accept or ignore without consequence. The Bible outlines these consequences and explains how to avoid them. A person cannot live however they like and still be like God, just as a builder cannot ignore the blueprints of a house without encountering problems. This is why God asks everyone to follow the plan of the Holy Scriptures. There is no other way to be like Him and thus fit for a place in His kingdom. And there is no other way to find true happiness.
Sin can only be safely destroyed by God after all people understand and confess that He is righteous, loving, and merciful.

4. Why does God allow disobedience to continue? Why does He not destroy sin and sinners now?
“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’” Jude 14, 15.
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” Romans 14:11.

Answer: God allows disobedience and sin to continue until all people everywhere are fully convinced of God’s righteousness, love, and mercy. Eventually, all will recognize that God, in requiring obedience, is not trying to impose His will upon us but is trying to prevent us from hurting ourselves and destroying ourselves. The problem of sin will not be solved until even the sinners with contempt and hardness of heart are convinced of God’s love and confess that He is righteous. It may take a great or even worse disaster to convince others, but the terrible consequences of sinful lives will eventually persuade all that God is righteous and true.
Only then, and only then, can sin and disobedience be safely ended by the Lord.
All who choose not to follow Christ, knowing the truth, will eventually be destroyed by the sin they love.

5. Will God really destroy the disobedient?
“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” 2 Peter 2:4.
“The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.” Psalm 145:20.
“...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on

those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

Answer: There is no question about it. The rebellious, including Satan and his fallen angels, will be destroyed. This being true, it is certainly the right time to stop being confused about what is right and wrong. It is better for people to stop allowing their foolish thoughts and pride to lead them and to focus on God's great book. And better to do it now — there is not much time left! God promises that if I seek His Word in truth and follow it sincerely, I will not end up in error.

6. I want to obey all of God's laws. How can I be sure I will not neglect one?
"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find." Matthew 7:7.
"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.
"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority." John 7:17.
"Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you." John 12:35.
"As soon as they hear of me, they will obey me." Psalm 18:44.

Answer: God leaves no room for doubt. He promises to keep me from error and guide me safely into all truth if I: (1) pray diligently for guidance, (2) study God's Word sincerely, and (3) follow the truth as soon as it is revealed to me.
Playing the fool in spiritual matters brings disaster and destruction.

7. Does God hold me guilty for failing to obey a truth in the Bible that I have never had the chance to learn?
"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see,' therefore your sin remains." John 9:41.
"To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." James 4:17.
"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you." Hosea 4:6.
"Seek, and you will find." Matthew 7:7.

Answer: If I have not had the opportunity to learn a certain truth from the Bible, God does not hold me guilty. But the Bible teaches that I am responsible to God for all the light (knowledge of righteousness) I have and all that I can obtain! Many people who reject or ignore reading, seeking, learning, and listening will be destroyed by God because "they have rejected knowledge." Playing the fool in these very important matters is dangerous. It is my responsibility to diligently seek the truth.

Only two out of the thousands of Israelites who left Egypt fully followed God and were able to enter the promised land of Canaan.

8. But doesn't God not care much about obedience to every little thing and detail?
"Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb... and Joshua." Numbers 32:11, 12.
"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.
"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." John 15:14.

Answer: Indeed, He is specific. God's people in the Old Testament learned this the hard way. Those who left Egypt for the promised land of Canaan numbered 603,550. Of this group, only two (Caleb and Joshua) followed the Lord fully, and they alone entered Canaan. The other 603,548 died in the wilderness. Jesus says we must live by "every word" of the Bible. Not one word is too many or too few. All of them are important. Unless I follow the light as soon as it is revealed, it eventually turns into darkness.

9. When I discover new truth, I wait until all obstacles are removed before embracing it. This is better, right?
"Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you." John 12:35. "I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments." Psalm 119:60. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:33. "As soon as they hear of me, they obey." Psalm 18:44.

Answer: No, once you understand the truth of the Bible, it is not better to wait. In fact, delaying is a very dangerous trap of the devil. It may seem harmless to wait, but the Bible teaches that if one does not take immediate action upon the light, it quickly turns into darkness. Obedience obstacles are not removed when we stand still and wait; rather, they usually grow larger. Man tells God, "Clear the way, and I will move forward." But God's way is the complete opposite. He says, "Move forward, and I will clear the way."
Satan invented the lie that obedience is impossible.

10. But isn't complete obedience impossible for humans?
"With God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13. "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ." 2 Corinthians 2:14. "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." John

15:5. “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.” Isaiah 1:19.

Answer: None of us can obey on our own power, but through Christ, we can and must. Satan, to make God’s commandments seem foolish, invented the lie that obedience is impossible.

11. What will happen to a person who deliberately and knowingly continues in disobedience?
“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” Hebrews 10:26, 27. “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.” John 12:35.

Answer: The Bible leaves no room for doubt. The answer is astonishing and alarming, but it is true. When one knowingly rejects the light and continues in disobedience, that light eventually fades, leaving them in great darkness. The one who rejects the truth will receive “strong delusion” to believe that a lie is the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:11). When this happens, they are lost from that moment.

12. I thought love was more important than obedience. Isn’t that right?
“Jesus answered and said, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words.’” John 14:23, 24. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:3.

Answer: No, not at all! In fact, the Bible teaches that true love for God cannot exist without obedience. Nor can one be truly obedient without love. No child will obey their parents fully unless they love them, and they will not love them if they do not obey. True love and obedience are like Siamese twins. When separated, they die.

13. But I always thought true freedom in Christ freed me from obedience. Isn’t that right?
“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.” John 8:31, 32, 34. “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” Romans 6:17, 18. “So shall I keep Your law continually,

forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts." Psalm 119:44, 45.

Answer: No. True freedom comes only through obedience. It means freedom "from sin" (Romans 6:18), or disobedience, which is breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). Citizens who obey the law are free. Rebels are caught and lose their freedom. Freedom without obedience is like the false freedom of a balloon floating in the air or a car without a driver. It leads to confusion and chaos. True Christian freedom means freedom from disobedience. Disobedience always harms a person and leads to the cruel bondage of Satan.

14. When I believe that God requires something, must I obey even if I don't understand why He requires it?
"I implore you, obey the voice of the Lord... so it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live." Jeremiah 38:20. "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool." Proverbs 28:26. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Psalm 118:8. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9. "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord?" Romans 11:33, 34. "I will lead the blind by a way they did not know." Isaiah 42:16. "You will show me the path of life." Psalm 16:11.

Answer: Certainly! We must praise God for having the wisdom to require certain things that we may not fully understand. Good children obey their parents even when the reasons for their commands are not clear. Correct faith and trust in God will make us believe that He knows what is best for us and will never lead us down a wrong path. It is foolish for us, in our ignorance, to question God's guidance, even when we do not fully understand His reasons.

15. Who is really responsible for disobedience, and why?
"Whoever commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning." "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God." 1 John 3:8, 10. "So the devil, who deceives the whole world..." Revelation 12:9.

Answer: The devil is involved. He knows that disobedience is sin, and that sin brings misery, separation from God, and ultimately destruction. With intense hatred, he works hard to lead everyone into rebellion. You are involved. You must face the truth and make a decision. Disobedience leads to being lost, or accepting Christ, obeying Him, and being saved. Your choice regarding obedience is a choice about Christ. You cannot separate Him from the truth, for He says, "I am... the truth." John 14:6. "Choose for yourselves this day

whom you will serve." Joshua 24:15.

16. What is the glorious promise about the greatest miracle that the Bible gives to God's children?
"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6.

Answer: Praise God! He promises that just as He performed the miracle of bringing us to be born again, He will continue to perform the miracles necessary in our lives (when we follow Him joyfully) until we are safely in His kingdom.

17. It brings me joy to know that Jesus not only gives the new birth to those who accept and follow Him, but also continues to perform the necessary miracles in their lives until they are safely in His kingdom. I want to start obeying in love and follow Jesus completely from this moment on.
Answer:

Thought Questions

1. Is there anyone who will be lost but truly believes they are saved? Yes! Matthew 7:21-23 clearly shows that many who prophesy, cast out demons, and perform many wonders in Jesus' name will be lost but will think they are saved. Jesus said they are lost because they did not do "the will of My Father who is in heaven" (verse 21). Those who refuse to obey God will end up believing a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12) and thus think they are saved when, in fact, they are lost.

2. Since there is only one right way, what will happen to people who are sincere and truly believe they are right when they are wrong? Jesus says He will call them to His way of truth, and His true sheep will hear and follow (John 10:16, 27).

3. Is faithfulness and zeal enough? No! We must also be right. The Apostle Paul was faithful and zealous when he persecuted Christians before his conversion, but he was also wrong (Acts 22:3, 4; 26:9-11).

4. Is it scientifically impossible for God to see everyone at the same time? It was the same with Noah's Flood (there was no rain before it began—Genesis 2:5, 6), but it happened anyway. Using "scientific" reasons to disobey is a favorite excuse of those referred to in Romans 1:22, who "professing to be wise, they became fools."

5. What will happen to people who have not received the light? The Bible says that everyone has received some light. “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9). Everyone will be judged based on how they follow the light available to them. Even pagans have some light and follow the law, according to Romans 2:14, 15.

6. I have asked God for a sign if He wants me to obey. Is this safe? No! Jesus said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign” (Matthew 12:39). All teachings should be examined by the Bible, and if they align with the Word of God, they should be accepted and followed (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 2:15). People who will not accept the clear teachings of the Bible would not be convinced by a sign either. As Jesus said, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” (Luke 16:31).

7. Hebrews 10:26, 27 seems to indicate that if someone sins deliberately after knowing better, they are lost. Is this correct? No! Anyone can confess such a sin and be forgiven. The Bible does not refer to one act or sin, but to continuing in stubborn sin and refusing to submit to Christ after knowing better. Such an act grieves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and hardens a person’s heart until they “have past feeling” (Ephesians 4:19) and are lost. The Bible says, “Keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me” (Psalm 19:13).

8. Must a person be educated to understand the Bible? No! Even simple people can understand if they are surrendered to the Lord (Psalm 19:7; 119:130; Matthew 11:25).

Questions of thought

1. People will be saved who (1) _____ Cast out demons in Jesus’ name. _____ Always love Christ. _____ Accept and obey the Lord.

2. Which three things listed here will ensure I receive the full truth? (3) _____ Ask my psychiatrist. _____ Pray for light. _____ Do what my minister says. _____ Make generous donations at church. _____ Punish myself. _____ Get a better education. _____ Ask God for a sign. _____ Learn the Bible. _____ Follow the truth I now understand.

3. God holds me accountable for (1) _____ Doing what my pastor recommends. _____ Following the steps of my parents. _____ The light I have and can have.

4. When I discover new truth, I must (1) _____ Ignore it. _____ Wait until I feel compelled to accept it. _____ Accept it and obey it immediately.

5. Complete obedience to the Lord's commandments is (1) _____ Impossible under any circumstances. _____ Legal and of Satan. _____ Possible only through Christ.

6. Willful disobedience (1) _____ Leads to eternal darkness and destruction. _____ Is acceptable for diligent church workers. _____ Is overlooked by God when I am stubborn.

7. True love for the Lord (1) _____ Is better than obedience. _____ Makes obedience not a burden. _____ Makes me obey joyfully.

8. True Christian freedom means (1) _____ The right to do as I please in everything. _____ The right not to obey God. _____ Freedom from rebellion and slavery to Satan.

9. When a truth is clear but I don't understand why God requires me to obey it, I should (1) _____ Wait until the reason is clear. _____ Reject the truth. _____ Accept it and obey God's Word.

10. Who is truly responsible for disobedience in every case? (1) _____ The government. _____ My parents, who taught me wrongly. _____ The Devil.

11. Why is obedience required? (1) _____ Because God is greater than I am, and I fear Him. _____ To prevent God from being angry. _____ Because I love God and want to follow His commandments with a Christian character.

12. Why doesn't God destroy the disobedient right now? (1) _____ He is afraid. _____ He enjoys watching evil continue. _____ He is waiting until everyone is absolutely sure about His love and righteousness.

Who is the Antichrist?

Scripture: Daniel 7:7-8, Daniel 7:24-25, Revelation 13:18
Lesson 15

Who or what is the Antichrist? An evil alliance, or an evil person? Some say his appearance is still in the future. Others say he appeared long ago in ancient Rome. But the Bible shows that he is alive today! Biblical prophecy teaches that this power of the Antichrist will play a crucial role in the final events of world history. Do you know who he is? Are you sure? You need to be, for you cannot understand the events of the end times until you understand this evil power. Be ready for one of the most fascinating Study Guides yet!

This Study Guide, based on Daniel chapter 7, clearly identifies the Antichrist. But it is only an introduction. The following lessons will reveal more details about some of his activities that will have a global impact. What you discover today may shock or sadden you, but please remember that the prophecy of Daniel 7 comes from Jesus, who loves you. Pray for God's guidance as you enter this urgent study. Be sure to read Daniel 7 before reading this guide.

In prophecy, God uses animals to symbolize nations.

1. As the chapter begins, Daniel sees four beasts rising from the sea. In prophecy, what does a beast represent? What does the sea represent?
"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth." Daniel 7:23.
"The waters… are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15.

Answer: Beasts represent kingdoms or nations. Waters represent a great multitude of people or large numbers of people.

The lion beast in Daniel 7 represents the Babylonian kingdom.

2. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four world empires (verses 17, 18). Babylon, the first empire (Daniel 2:38, 39), is represented as a lion in Daniel 7:4. (See also Jeremiah 4:7; 50:17, 43, 44, where Babylon is compared to a lion elsewhere.) What do "eagle's wings" mean? What do the "four winds" in verse 2 represent?
"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee… as swift as the eagle flieth." Deuteronomy 28:49.
"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, an evil shall go forth from nation to nation… and those slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth." Jeremiah 25:32, 33.

Answer: The eagle's wings represent swiftness. (See also Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1:6-9.) The winds represent strife, violence, and destruction. (See also Revelation 7:1-3.)

The bear with three ribs in its mouth represents the Medo-Persian empire.

3. Which kingdom does the bear represent (Daniel 7:5)? What do the three ribs in its mouth represent?

Answer: Read Daniel 8. Notice that the beasts in chapter 8 are similar to those in chapter 7. Daniel 8:20 specifically mentions the Medes and Persians as the kingdom preceding the male goat, or Greece, in verse 21. It is the second world empire, a power similar to the bear in Daniel 7. This kingdom was made up of two people groups.
The Medes came first (represented in Daniel 7:5 by the bear rising on one side), but the Persians eventually became more powerful (represented in Daniel 8:3 by the second horn of the ram, which grew "higher," or longer). The three ribs represent the three major kingdoms conquered by the Medes and Persians:
Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.

The leopard beast in Daniel 7 represents the Greek empire.

4. Greece, the third kingdom (Daniel 8:21), is represented by a leopard with four wings and four heads (Daniel 7:6). What do the four heads represent? What do the four wings represent?

Answer: The four heads represent the four kingdoms into which Alexander the Great's empire was divided after his death. The four generals who led those areas were: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The four wings (instead of two like the lion) represent amazing speed, which was true of Alexander's conquests (Jeremiah 4:11-13).

The Roman world empire is symbolized by the terrifying beast in Daniel 7.

5. The Roman Empire, the fourth world empire, is represented by a dreadful beast with iron teeth and ten horns (Daniel 7:7). What do the horns represent?
Answer: The ten horns represent ten kings or kingdoms into which pagan Rome eventually divided (Daniel 7:24). (These ten kingdoms correspond to the ten toes of the image described in Daniel 2:41-44.) The barbarian tribes that were roaming and invading the Roman empire eventually settled in the empire's land, establishing their nations.

Seven of these tribes grew into the modern countries of Western Europe, while three were uprooted and destroyed. The next section will discuss those kingdoms that were uprooted.
Visigoths - Spain
Anglo-Saxons - England
Franks - France
Alamanni - Germany
Burgundians - Switzerland
Lombards - Italy
Suevi - Portugal
Heruli - Ostrogoths
Roots - Rooted Destructive

The little horn of Daniel 7:8 represents the Antichrist.

6. What follows in Daniel 7's prophecy?
"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Daniel 7:8.

Answer: The power of the "little horn" appears next. We must identify it carefully because God spends more time explaining it than the four other kingdoms combined. Why? Because its biblical characteristics identify it as the Antichrist in both prophecy and history. There must be no mistake in making this identification.

The Bible says the Antichrist would persecute God's people.

7. Are there clear identifying points?
Answer: Yes, God gives us nine characteristics of the Antichrist in Daniel 7 to be sure of his identity. And while some may find this truth bitter, we must be honest enough to accept it as His revealed will. Now, let's discover the nine things Jesus is:
A. The "little horn" or kingdom "arising among them," the ten horns of Western Europe (Daniel 7:8). So, it would be a small kingdom somewhere in Western Europe.
B. It would have a great leader who could speak for it (Daniel 7:8).
C. It would uproot or pluck up three kingdoms (Daniel 7:8).
D. It would be "diverse" or different from the other ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:24).
E. It would make war and "wear out" or persecute the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25).

F. It would arise in the pagan Roman empire, the fourth world empire (Daniel 7:7, 8).
G. God's people (the saints) "would be given into his hand for a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).
H. It would speak "great words against" or blaspheme God (Daniel 7:25). In Revelation 13:5, the Bible says this same power speaks "great and blasphemous things."
I. It would "think to change times and laws…" Daniel 7:25.

Forget not all the matters of identification; these come directly from the Bible. They are not the opinions of some humans or rumors. Historians can quickly tell you which power is being described. These points may fit only one power, the Papacy. But to be certain, let us carefully examine all nine points, one by one. There must be no room left for doubt.

The Papacy clearly fits all nine identification marks. 8. Does the Papacy fit these things? Answer: Yes, it fits each point perfectly. See items A to H below.

A. "It came up among the ten kingdoms of Western Europe." The geographical area of Papal authority was in Rome, Italy, the heart of Western Europe.

B. It would have a man at its head who would speak for it. The Papacy meets this identification mark because there is one great man (the pope) who speaks on its behalf.

C. It would uproot or destroy three kingdoms. The monarchs of Western Europe were largely Catholic and supported the Papacy in its growth and power. However, three Arian kingdoms, namely the Vandals, Heruli, and Ostrogoths, did not support the Papacy. Thus, the Catholic monarchs decided that they must be subdued or destroyed. This is how Dr. Mervyn Maxwell, a theologian and historian, described the outcome in the book God Cares, page 129:

"The Catholic king Zeno (474-491) made an agreement with the Ostrogoths in 487, which led to the extermination of the Arian Herul kingdom in 493. And Catholic Emperor Justinian (527-565) destroyed the Arian Vandals in 534 and largely broke the power of the Arian Ostrogoths in 538. Thus, the three horns of Daniel—the Heruls, Vandals, and Ostrogoths—were uprooted by their roots." It is not hard to recognize that the Papacy fits this stage.

D. It would be "different" or distinct from the other kingdoms. The Papacy clearly fits this description as well. It arose as a religious power and was completely different from the worldly nature of the other ten kingdoms.

E. It would make war with the saints and persecute them. That the church persecuted is a well-known fact. The Papacy openly admits to having done so. There is much evidence to support this. Even conservative historians claim that the church may have destroyed at least 50 million people due to religious beliefs. We will quote here from two sources:

1. “That the Roman Church has shed more innocent blood than any other institution which has ever existed among mankind is not questioned by any Protestant who has a sufficient knowledge of history.”

The History of the Inquisition of Spain, by D. Ivan Antonio Llorente, gives the following figures from the Spanish Inquisition alone:

31,912 people were condemned and perished by burning.

241,450 people were condemned to severe punishment.

F. It would arise in the fourth kingdom of iron—the pagan Roman empire. We quote two authorities on this matter:

1. “The Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptized... the capital of the former Roman Empire became the capital of the Christian Empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus continued in that of the pope.”

2. “Anything Roman that the pagans and Arians left... [was brought] under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the leading figure after the disappearance of the emperor. The Roman Church thus quietly pushed itself into the place of the Roman World Empire, which was its true continuation.”

Therefore, once again, this thing fits the Papacy.

G. The people of God (the saints) “would be handed over to it” for “a time, times, and half a time.” Daniel 7:25.

Several things need clarification regarding this matter:

1. “Time” is a year, “times” are two years, and “half a time” is half a year. The Amplified Bible translates it as: “three and a half years.”

2. This time period is mentioned seven times (Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5) in the books of Daniel and Revelation: three times as “time, times, and half a time,” twice as 42 months, and twice as 1,260 days. According to the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, all these periods

represent the same amount of time:

3 ½ years = 42 months = 1,260 days.

3. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6, Numbers 14:34).

4. Thus, the little horn (Antichrist) was to have power over the saints for 1,260 prophetic days, or 1,260 literal years.

5. The Papacy's reign began in 538 AD, the final year when the last of the three Arian kingdoms opposing it was uprooted. Its reign continued until 1798, when Napoleon's general, Berthier, took the pope prisoner with the hope of destroying Pope Pius VI and the political, worldly power of the Papacy. This time period is the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of 1,260 years. That blow was a deadly wound to the Papacy, but the wound began to heal and continues to heal today.

6. This period of suffering is also referred to in Matthew 24:21 as the worst time of persecution that the people of God would face. Verse 22 tells us it was so painful that no one would have been saved if God had not shortened it. But God shortened it. That persecution ended long before the pope was taken prisoner in 1798. It is clear to see that this, too, aligns with the Papacy.

H. It would speak "great words of blasphemy" against the Most High [God]. Blasphemy has two meanings in Scripture:

1. Claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21).

2. Claiming to be God (John 10:33).

Does this point fit the Papacy? Yes!

Let us first look at the evidence of claiming to forgive sins: "Does the priest really forgive sins, or does he merely declare them forgiven? Christ."

The Papacy undermines Jesus by introducing the practice of confessing to a worldly priest, thus superseding Jesus, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1, 8:1, 2) and the only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

Next, consider the evidence of claiming to be God: "We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of Almighty God."

Here is another: "The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but

he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh."

It is clear that this, too, fits the Papacy.

I. It would think to "change times and laws." In the next Study Guide, we will deal with the "times" of this point. It is a major topic and requires separate consideration. But what about changing "laws"? The Amplified Bible translates "laws" as "commandments." The reference is to changing God's law. Certainly, no one can truly change it, but has the Papacy tried to do so? The answer is "yes."

In its catechisms, the Papacy has removed the second commandment against idolatry and shortened the fourth commandment from 94 words to eight, splitting the tenth commandment into two separate commands. (Check this for yourself. Compare the Ten Commandments in any Catholic catechism with God's list in Exodus 20:3-17).

There is no doubt that the authority of the little horn in Daniel 7 (the Antichrist) is the Papacy. No other institution fits these nine points. Unfortunately, this is not new teaching. Every Reformist, without exception, spoke of the Papacy as the Antichrist.

Words of Concern and Distress

To avoid others thinking that we are attacking fellow Christians by recognizing this authority with little horns, please remember that this prophecy targets a certain system and not individual people. There are faithful, God-fearing Christians in all churches, including the Catholic faith. Daniel 7 is a message of judgment and correction directed at a major religious institution that aligned itself with paganism, much like many other churches that arose after it.

The Prophecy Unveils Errors of All Faiths Another prophecy reveals the errors in Protestant and Jewish beliefs. God has true people in all religions. His true people (regardless of their faith) will always humbly accept correction from the Lord and will not close their ears and hearts against Him for self-preservation. We should be deeply grateful that the Word of God speaks truthfully and impartially on every subject.

1. WEH Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Vol. 2, p. 40.

2. Alexander Clarence Flick, The Rise of the Medieval Church, p. 148, 149.

3. Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? (New York: Putnam, 2nd ed., revised, 1901), p. 269, 270.

4. The Amplified Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962.

5. Joseph Deharbe, SJ, Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924), p. 279.

6. Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter "The Reunion of Christendom" (June 20, 1894), trans. in the Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII (New York: Benziger, 1903), p. 304.

7. Catholic National, July 1895.

8. R. Allen Anderson, Unfolding the Revelation, p. 137. An angel told Daniel that this prophecy would be sealed until 1798, the last time.

9. Did Daniel not say to seal his book until "the time of the end"? (Daniel 12:4) When would the prophecy of Daniel be revealed for us to understand? Answer: In Daniel 12:4, the prophet was told to seal parts of the book until "the time of the end." In verse 6, an angel's voice asked, "How long until the end of these wonders?" Verse 7 says, "It will be for a time, times, and half a time." The angel assured Daniel that the part of the book concerning the prophecy of the last days would be opened after the end of the 1260-year period of papal rule, which, as we learned earlier in this Study Guide, ended in 1798. Thus, the time of the end began in 1798. Indeed, the book of Daniel holds important messages from heaven for us today. We must understand them. All religious teachings must be compared to the Scriptures to know their accuracy.

10. Many Christians today are greatly misled about the Antichrist. Believing lies about the Antichrist can easily deceive someone and lead them astray. What should one do when new Bible teachings emerge? "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11. Answer: When a new Bible doctrine is found, the only safe way is to carefully compare it with the Scriptures to see if it aligns with the Word of God.

11. I am willing to follow wherever Jesus leads, even if it may be painful? Final Remarks Many important prophecies from the books of Daniel and Revelation will be revealed in the True Amazing Things Study Guides. God has given

these prophecies for:

A. Revealing the final events of the world.

B. Identifying participants in the final stage of the battle between Jesus and Satan.

C. Clearly exposing Satan's wicked plans to ensnare and destroy us all.

D. Showing the safety and love of God's judgment, which will confirm His saints!

E. Exalting Jesus, His salvation, love, power, mercy, and righteousness.

Key Participants Will Appear Frequently The key participants in the final battle between Jesus and Satan will appear frequently in this prophecy. These include: Satan, Jesus, America, the papacy, Protestantism, and communicating with spirits. Jesus repeats and expands His messages from the prophets to ensure that His warnings of love and protection come with clarity and certainty. Answer:

Thought Questions

1. I've always thought the Antichrist was a person rather than an organization. Am I wrong? The Antichrist is an organization—the papacy. The words "eyes of man" in Daniel 7:8, however, point to a leader. Revelation 13:18 speaks of a man with a certain number involved. In Daniel chapter 8, Greece is represented by a goat, and its leader, Alexander the Great, is symbolized by a horn. So it is with the Antichrist. The organization is the papacy. The reigning pope is its representative. Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7 does not say that popes are evil or that Catholics are not Christians. There are many warm-hearted and loving Catholic Christians. However, the system is called the Antichrist because it has taken authority from Jesus and attempted to change His law.

2. Do you think it's wise or Christian to adopt laws enforcing Christianity? No. The Bible is clear that everyone should have the freedom to choose the direction they want to follow in matters of conscience (Joshua 24:15)—even if they choose to deny God and not believe in Him. God allowed Adam and Eve to choose disobedience even though it hurt Him. Forced worship is unacceptable to God. Forced worship is Satan's way. God's way is the influence of love. History shows that whenever the church adopted laws to enforce its beliefs, persecution and the killing of others occurred. This is a lesson we can learn

from the history of the Middle Ages and the little horn.

3. Maybe I don't understand, but my idea has always been that the Antichrist would be an evil being who openly opposes God. Isn't this the wrong idea? Normally we take the word "anti" to mean "against." But in "Antichrist," it means "in place of" or "instead of." The Antichrist is guilty of taking God's authority. It claims:

A. Its priests can forgive sins, which only God can do (Luke 5:21).

B. Changing God's law by omitting the second commandment (worshiping images) and splitting the tenth into two parts. God's law cannot be changed (Matthew 5:18).

C. The pope claims to be God on earth.

Satan's Original Plan Satan's original plan (in heaven) was to take God's position and authority. His goal was to expel God and rule in His place. (See Lesson Guide 2.) When Satan was cast out of heaven, his goal did not change, but it grew stronger. For centuries, he has strived (using various human organizations) to despise God and take His place.

The Antichrist Appears Spiritual Satan aims to take God's place in these last days by deceiving people into following the Antichrist, who appears spiritual and holy. The main purpose of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation is to reveal Satan's traps and strategies and to lead people to anchor themselves in Jesus and His Word for safety.

The Antichrist Will Deceive Many Many will follow the Antichrist (Revelation 13:3), thinking they are following Christ. Only the elect will be safe (Matthew 24:23, 24). They will be safe because they test every spiritual teaching and leader against the Scriptures (Isaiah 8:20). Religious deception is everywhere today. We cannot be too careful.

4. Doesn't the Bible say in 1 John 2:18-22 that there are many antichrists? Yes, there have been many antichrists in history who have worked against God's kingdom. However, there is only one entity that fulfills all the specific characteristics prophesied for the Antichrist. In Daniel chapters 7 and 8 and Revelation chapter 13, you will find at least 10 identifying characteristics of the Antichrist. These 10 signs of recognition can only be fulfilled in one entity, the papacy.

5. In the prophecy, does the symbol of the “beast” refer to “beastly” traits? Not at all. God uses the symbol of a beast to represent a ruler, nation, government, or kingdom. It is His way of representing a government in prophecy. We do this ourselves to some extent: We symbolize Russia as a bear, America as an eagle, etc. The symbol of the “beast” is not a derogatory or dishonorable term. It is similar to “beast” or “creature.” Even Christ is symbolized as the Lamb by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and the apostle John (Revelation 5:6, 9, 12, 13). The term “beast” is used by God to give us a message about nations and rulers, both good and evil.

Questions of thoughts

1. Which four world empires are represented by animal symbols in Daniel chapter 7? (4)

_____ Sweden.

_____ Egypt.

_____ Greece.

_____ China.

_____ Mede-Persia.

_____ Japan.

_____ Babylon.

_____ Iraq.

_____ Rome.

2. In Bible prophecy, the beast represents (1)

_____ Computer.

_____ Kingdom or nation.

_____ Creature or guest.

3. The 10 horns on the great beast represent (1)

_____ Ten years.

_____ Ten specific cities.

_____ Angels.

_____ Wealth.

_____ Kingdoms into which Pagan Rome was eventually divided.

4. How many tribes or nations were “uprooted” by the authority of the little horn? (1)

_____ Eight.

_____ One.

_____ Six.

_____ Three.

5. The authority of the little horn, or Antichrist, represents (1)

_____ One of the generals of Babylon.

_____ An evil ruler from ancient Pagan Rome.

_____ A wicked power that will arise after the second coming of Jesus.

_____ Unbelief in God.

_____ The Papacy.

6. Look at the true statements about the power of the little horn (Antichrist) from the list below: (3)

_____ It came from Egypt.

_____ It will oppress God's people.

_____ It arose immediately after the fall of Babylon.

_____ It speaks great words against God.

_____ It attempted to change God's law.

7. In prophecy, "time, times, and half a time" is a symbol of (1)

_____ Three and a half actual days.

_____ 42 years.

_____ 1,260 actual years.

8. When did the "time of the end" begin? (1)

_____ 31 B.C.

_____ 1991 B.C.

_____ 588 B.C.

_____ 1798 A.D.

9. The Antichrist is an organization, not a person. (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

10. The Antichrist is present today. (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

11. Does God accept the enforcement of true worship by law? (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

12. The capture of General Berthier by the Pope only harmed the Papacy. Its mortal wound began healing and continues to heal today. (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

13. Which item from the list below is important for the spiritual safety of God's people in the last days? (1)

_____ Learn to preach.

_____ Pray often in public.

_____ Test every religious teaching by the Bible.

Message of the Angel from Heaven

Lesson 16

Angels are real! Sometimes they are referred to as cherubim or seraphim, these powerful spirits who serve appear throughout the entire history of the Bible. They are often seen protecting and guiding God's people, and at times punishing evil—but one of their most important missions is to reveal and explain prophecy. Do you know that God has spoken something special through His angels to people who are deeply troubled in our busy world? In Revelation 14, God reveals some of the frightening last-day messages, symbolized by three angels flying. These messages are so significant that when they are fulfilled, Jesus will return! This guide will provide you with a summary to open your eyes, and the following eight points will present astonishing details. Hold onto your seat... God's personal message to you is about to be revealed!

The Book of Revelation reveals Jesus in a unique way.
1. Why do we study Revelation? Isn't it sealed?
Answer: There are six important reasons to read Revelation:
A. It has never been sealed (Revelation 22:10). The long-standing dispute between Christ and Satan, along with Satan's schemes and deceptive plans for the last days, is revealed in Revelation. Satan cannot easily deceive people who know in advance his false deceptions, so he hopes that people will believe that Revelation has been sealed.

B. The name itself "Revelation" means "to reveal," "to open," or "to disclose," the complete opposite of being sealed. It has always been open.

C. Revelation is a book specifically about Jesus. It begins with "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It even gives a picture of His word upon it in Revelation 1:13-16. No other book of the Bible reveals Jesus and His last-day instructions and plans for His work and people like Revelation does.

D. Revelation is essentially written for the people of today, just before the return of Jesus (Revelation 1:1-3, 3:11, 22:6, 7, 12, 20).

E. A special blessing is pronounced upon those who read Revelation and obey its counsel (Revelation 1:3, 22:7).

F. Revelation describes the people of God in the last days and the church in an amazingly clear way. It makes the Bible come alive as you see last-day events depicted in Revelation unfolding. It also accurately explains what God's church must be preaching in the last days (Revelation 14:6-14). This learning guide will provide a summary of those sermons so that you can recognize them when you hear them.

Remember: Before continuing further, please open your Bible and read Revelation 14:6-14.

God uses angels to signal His final message with three components.

2. God commanded His church to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). How does He signify this holy task in Revelation?
"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).
Answer: The word "angel" literally means "messenger," so it is fitting that God uses three angels to signify the preaching of His gospel message with three signs for the last days. God uses the symbol of angels to remind us that

supernatural forces will accompany the message.
God's final message of hope must be delivered to every person on earth.

3. What two important things does Revelation 14:6 reveal about God's last-day message?
"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, to preach to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

Answer: The two important things are: (1) it is the "everlasting gospel," and (2) it must be preached to every person on earth. The messages of the three angels emphasize the gospel, which makes it clear that people are saved by faith in—and accepting—Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12, Mark 10:26, 27). Since there is no other way of salvation, it is evil to claim there is another way.

False Products of Satan
Satan's counterfeit times, especially two, are very relevant: (1) salvation by works, and (2) salvation in sin. These two falsehoods are exposed and revealed in the messages of the three angels. Many, unknowingly, have accepted one of these two errors and are trying to build their salvation upon them—something that is absolutely impossible. It must also be emphasized that no one preaches the gospel of Jesus for the last time without including the message of the three angels.
Those who fear God will find pure joy in serving Him.

4. What four things does the first angel's message address?
"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" (Revelation 14:7).
Answer:
A. Fear God. This means that we should revere God and look to Him with love, loyalty, and respect—eager to carry out His command. This keeps us from evil. "By the fear of the Lord one departs from evil" (Proverbs 16:6). Solomon, a wise man, also said, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

B. Give God glory. We fulfill this command when we obey Him, praise Him, and thank Him for His goodness toward us. One of the major sins of the last days is ingratitude (2 Timothy 3:1, 2).

C. The hour of His judgment has come. This signifies that everyone is accountable to God, and it is a clear statement that judgment is here. Several translations say "has come" rather than "has come."

D. Worship the Creator. This command rejects all forms of idolatry—including self-worship—and completely denies evolution, which denies that God is the Creator and Redeemer. (Many books and radio talk shows today emphasize self-esteem, which leads to self-worship. Christian self-esteem is in Christ, who makes His children sons and daughters of the King of heaven.) The gospel includes the creation and redemption of the world by the Lord God of heaven. Worshiping the Creator involves worshiping Him on the day He set aside as a reminder of creation (the seventh-day Sabbath). That references in Revelation 14:7 are Sabbath-related is made clear by the fact that the words "who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea" were directly taken from the Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:11) and used here.
Our true roots are found only in God, who created us in His image in the beginning. Those who do not worship God as the Creator, even if they worship anything else, may not realize their true roots.

God's people must come out of Babylon.

5. What strong words does the second angel say about Babylon? What does the angel in Revelation 18 command God's people to do?
"And another angel followed, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city" (Revelation 14:8). "And I saw another angel coming down from heaven... And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen... And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people..." (Revelation 18:1-4).
Answer: The second angel solemnly says, "Babylon is fallen," and a voice from heaven urges all of God's people to leave Babylon immediately. Unless you know what Babylon is, you could easily end up there. Think about it. Could you be in Babylon right now?

Those who worship the beast and receive its mark will be destroyed by God.

6. What does the third angel's message warn about?
"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on the forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Revelation 14:9, 10).
Answer: The third angel's message warns people against worshiping the beast and its image and receiving the mark of the beast on their foreheads or hands. The first angel commands true worship. The third angel outlines the shocking consequences related to false worship. Do you truly know who the beast is? And what his mark is? If you don't clearly know who the beast is and what his mark is, you could end up worshiping him unknowingly.

God's saints in the last days will find their greatest joy in pleasing Him.

7. What four descriptions does God give in Revelation 14:12 of His people who accept and follow the three angels' messages?
"Here is the patience of the saints, here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).
Answer:
A. They are patient, enduring, and faithful until the end, a great command for a generation that says "do it now." God's people reveal themselves through their patient and loving conduct.

B. They are holy or sanctified because they are fully on God's side.

C. They keep the commandments of God. These people of God joyfully obey His Ten Commandments and all the other commands He has given them. Their primary purpose is to please Him, whom they love (1 John 3:22).

D. They have the faith of Jesus. This can also be interpreted as "faith in Jesus." In any case, God's people fully follow Jesus and trust Him completely.

Whenever they hear the message of Jesus for the last days, He will return to the earth to take His people with Him to heaven.

8. What happens immediately after the message of the three angels is delivered to all people?

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat one like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown." Revelation 14:14.
Answer: Immediately after the message of the three angels is preached to everyone, Jesus will return in the clouds (His second coming) to take His people home to heaven. The period of the 1,000 years of darkness described in Revelation 20 will begin at His coming.

9. In 2 Peter 1:12, the apostle speaks about the "present truth." What does he mean?

Answer: The present truth is a part of the everlasting gospel that has a specific urgency for a certain time. Examples include:

A. Noah's Flood Message (Genesis 6 and 7; 2 Peter 2:5). Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He preached the love of God while warning about the coming flood that would destroy the world. The Flood message was the "present truth" for that time. His urgent cry was, "Enter the ark." It was so important

that neglecting to preach it would have been immoral.

B. Jonah's message to Nineveh (Jonah 3:4). Jonah's "present truth" was that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days. Jonah also pointed to the Savior, and the city repented. However, ignoring the 40-day warning would have been unfaithful and unforgivable. It was the present truth for that time.

C. John the Baptist's message (Matthew 3:1-3; Luke 1:17). John's "present truth" was that Jesus, the Messiah, was about to come. His task was to present the gospel and prepare the people for the first coming of Jesus. Ignoring that aspect of the gospel in his day would have been unacceptable.

D. The Three Angels' Message (Revelation 14:6-14). The "present truth" of God today is found in the messages of the three angels. Of course, salvation through Jesus Christ alone is the essence of these messages. However, the "present truth" of these three angels is also given to prepare people for the second coming of Jesus and to open their eyes to Satan's deceptive, intense, and persuasive counterfeit. If people do not understand these messages, Satan will seize them and destroy them. Jesus knew we needed these special messages, and out of loving kindness, He gave them. They should not be neglected. Please earnestly pray as you carefully study these in the next Eight Study Guides.

Some of your discoveries may be startling, but they will all be satisfying. Your heart will be deeply moved. You will feel Jesus speaking to you! After all, they are His messages.

10. Who does the Bible say will come to deliver the "present truth" message before the great day of the Lord?

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Malachi 4:5.
Answer: The prophet Elijah. There is something significant about Elijah and his message, as we will see in a few subsequent questions. End-time messages of God are also referred to as the "Elijah" message. They call for a decision.

11. What did Elijah do that caught the Lord's attention?

Note: Please open your Bible and carefully read 1 Kings 18:17-40 before answering this question.
Answer: Elijah urged the people to decide whom they would serve (verse 21). The nation was about to worship idols. The people had turned away from the true God and His commandments. There was one prophet of God, Elijah, and

450 pagan prophets of Baal (verse 22). Elijah suggested that he and the idol worshipers build altars and put wood and a bull on them. Then he proposed that they pray to their respective gods to reveal themselves by igniting their altars. The pagan god did not respond, but the true God of Elijah sent fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice.

The Message Demands a Decision
Elijah's message came at a time of great spiritual crisis and national apostasy. It came with power from heaven that stopped the "business as usual" and stirred the nation's emotions. Then Elijah insisted that the people decide whom they would serve: God or Baal. Moved and fully persuaded, the people chose God (verse 39).
John the Baptist preached the "Elijah" message of his day. Those who preach Revelation 14:6-14 today carry the "Elijah" message of our time.

12. The Elijah message has two applications. It applies to the "present truth" message to prepare people for the first coming of Jesus and the "present truth" message to prepare people for the second coming of Jesus. Who did Jesus say preached the Elijah message to prepare people for His first coming?

"There has not risen one greater than John the Baptist... And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah [Elijah] who is to come." Matthew 11:11, 14.

Answer: Jesus referred to the preaching of John the Baptist to prepare people for His first coming as "Elijah," or the Elijah message. John's message, like in the days of Elijah, presented clear truth and emphasized a specific decision. The Bible says about John the Baptist, "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17).

13. How do we know that the prophecy has a second application for our time just before the second coming?

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Malachi 4:5. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord." Joel 2:31.

Answer: Please note that two events will occur before the coming of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" mentioned in Joel 2:31. One, the coming of Elijah. Two, the great heavenly signs. These help us pinpoint both events. The dark day occurred on May 19, 1780. On the same night, the moon appeared as blood. Matthew 24:29 includes one more sign, the falling of the stars, which took place on November 13, 1833. Because of this, we know the

end times began. The Elijah message must have started sometime around or after 1833, before the coming of the great day of the Lord.

The Second Elijah Message After the Heavenly Signs
It is evident that the "Elijah" message of John does not refer to the "Elijah" message of today because the major heavenly signs of God occurred more than 1,700 years after John preached his message. The "Elijah" message of Joel 2:31 was to begin after those heavenly signs in 1833 and must prepare people for the second coming of Jesus. The "present truth" message of Revelation 14:6-14 fits perfectly. It began around 1844 and is preparing people worldwide for the second coming of Jesus (verse 14), which will take place after the three-part message reaches every person on earth.

The Message Demands a Decision
Elijah emphasized that evil must be confronted directly and that everyone must decide whom they would serve. So it is with God's three-part message for us today. A decision must be made. God's three-part message reveals Satan and his plans. It clearly reveals God's love and His desires. God is calling people today to return to true worship, to worship Him alone. To serve and worship anyone or anything else in this crucial time is to be unfaithful and will lead to eternal death. God reached hearts miraculously in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18:37, 39) and in the days of John the Baptist. He will do the same in these last days as people respond to the three angels' message (Revelation 18:1).
God's final "Elijah" message will bring families together in rejoicing, love, and happiness.

14. What other wonderful blessing will the preaching of Elijah (or the three angels' message) bring?
"Elijah... will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Malachi 4:5, 6.
Answer: Praise God! The Elijah message, or the three angels' message, will bring family members together in a loving, close, joyful, and heavenly relationship. What a blessed promise!

The Three Angels' Messages Focus on Jesus.

15. The word "gospel" means "good news." Does the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 bring good news?

Answer: Yes, indeed! Let's review the good news we find in this summary of the three angels' messages:

A. Everyone will have the opportunity to hear and understand the end-time gospel. No one will be left out.

B. Satan's evil, powerful plans to capture and destroy people will be exposed to us, so we don't have to fall into his traps.

C. Extraordinary heavenly powers will accompany the spreading of God's message in these last days.

D. God's people will be patient. He calls them "saints."

E. God's people will have faith in Jesus.

F. God's people, in love, will obey His commandments.

G. God loves us so much that He sent a very special message to prepare us for the second coming of Jesus.

H. God's end-time message will bring families together in love and unity.

I. The main emphasis of the three angels' messages is that salvation has been provided for everyone through Jesus Christ alone. He offers His righteousness to cover our past lives and gives us His righteousness through miracles every day so we can grow in grace and be like Him truly. With Him, we cannot fail. Without Him, we cannot succeed.

Extra Note:
Some key points of the three angels' messages to be discussed in the upcoming guides are:

A. The hour of God's judgment has come!
B. Come out of fallen Babylon.
C. Do not receive the mark of the beast.

16:15
Many more good things will be revealed as you study these lessons prayerfully in the next Eight Study Guides. You will be amazed and delighted by some things, and shocked and saddened by others. Some points may be very difficult to accept. But because Jesus sent a special message from heaven to help and guide each one of us personally in these last days, surely there is nothing more important than hearing, fully understanding, and following it.

16. I am encouraged and thankful that Jesus has a special three-part message to guide and help His people in these last days of the world.

Answer:

Thought Questions

1. Will everyone on Earth be reached by the three angels' message before Jesus returns? Since billions of people are living now, how is this possible? Yes, it will happen because God promised it (Mark 16:15). Paul says the gospel went "to every creature under heaven" in his days (Colossians 1:23). Jonah, by God's grace, reached the entire city of Nineveh in 40 days (Jonah 3:4-10). The Bible says God will finish the work and cut it short (Romans 9:28). Count on it. It will happen very quickly and in our days.

2. Did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus during the transfiguration (Matthew 17:3), or was it just a vision? That event was real. The Greek word "horama," translated as "vision" in verse 9, literally means "that which was seen." Moses was resurrected from the dead and taken to heaven (Jude 1:9), and Elijah was later taken up without seeing death (2 Kings 2:1, 11, 12). These two individuals, who had suffered greatly from the assaults of Satan and the rebellion of God's people, understood what Jesus was going through. They came to encourage Him and to remind all those who would be translated into His kingdom without seeing death (like Elijah) and resurrected from the grave to enter His kingdom (like Moses) because of His sacrifice for our sins.

3. Why did John say he was not Elijah (John 1:19-21) when Jesus said he was (Matthew 11:10-14)? The answer is found in Luke 1:13-17. The angel who announced the birth of John said, "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John... He will be great in the sight of the Lord... He will 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." Verses 13-17. When Jesus referred to John as Elijah, He was referring to his life, spirit, power, and work being like that of Elijah. The same is true of the Elijah message in the last days. The focus is on the message, not the individual. Therefore, John was not Elijah literally, but was presenting Elijah's message. ("Elijah" is the Greek form of "Elias.")

4. Is it possible for someone to preach the full truth of Jesus' last-day message today without including the three angels' messages? No! The three angels' messages must be included. In the book of Revelation, Jesus Himself reveals or refers to His last-day message (Revelation 1:1) and clearly says that His

people must continue to follow what He has revealed in the book (Revelation 1:3, 22:7). Therefore, faithful ministers of the last days must preach His messages from the book of Revelation. This, of course, includes preaching His specific threefold message from Revelation 14:6-14. Notice that Jesus calls these "the everlasting gospel" in verse 6. He also says they must be sent to every person on Earth before He returns for His people. Here are three weighty thoughts: A. No one preaches the "everlasting gospel" of Jesus unless it includes the three angels' messages. B. No one has the right to call their message the everlasting gospel unless they include the three angels' messages. C. The three angels' messages prepare people for the second coming of Jesus (Revelation 14:12-14). Unless you hear, understand, and accept these three messages of Jesus for the last days, you may not be ready for His second coming.

Special Messages for the Last Days Jesus, who knows what we need, gave us three special messages for the last days. We must understand and follow them. The following eight study guidelines will make these messages clear to you.

5. Luke 1:17 says that the message of Elijah would be to turn "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." What does this mean? "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17. The righteous have the wisdom to place their salvation upon faith in the Savior. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12. John's message was to make this clear to all. Faith that is based on anyone or anything other than Jesus Christ can never save people from sin and lead to transformed lives. People must hear and understand this central truth. This truth is also the very heart of God's Elijah message for today.

Questions of thoughts

1. The three angels of Revelation 14: (1) _____ are real and should proclaim loudly to be heard. _____ Represent God's last-day message that moves swiftly and powerfully. _____ Are a depiction of someone's thoughts.

2. Which of the following describe the truth about Revelation? (3) _____ The book is sealed. _____ The name means "to reveal" or "to disclose." _____ It describes what message God's people will preach in the last days. _____ It contains the words of Jesus. _____ God pronounces a curse on those who read it.

3. The message of the three angels must go to everyone before Jesus returns. (1) _____ Yes. _____ No.

4. The message of the first angel emphasizes the following: (3) _____ It is the everlasting gospel being preached. _____ It is hard to understand. _____ Reformation is a good Christian theory. _____ Judgment is happening now. _____ We should honor and trust God sincerely. _____ Everyone should worship whatever they want.

5. The message of the second angel says Babylon has fallen, and the angel of Revelation 18 urges God's people in Babylon to come out. (1) _____ Yes. _____ No.

6. The message of the third angel urges all of God's people to receive the mark of the beast. (1) _____ Yes. _____ No.

7. What does Revelation 14:12 say about God's people? (2) _____ They are patient. _____ They are holy. _____ They do not believe in the Ten Commandments. _____ They have very little faith.

8. What happens after the gospel reaches everyone? (1) _____ All nations convert. _____ God rebuilds New York and London. _____ The second coming of Jesus happens.

9. Which of the following messages is "the present truth" for today? (1) _____ Jonah's message to Nineveh. _____ Noah's message before the Flood. _____ The three angels' message of Revelation 14:6-14.

10. Which of the following are true about the three angels' messages? (6) _____ These messages are being preached now. _____ These messages emphasize salvation through Jesus Christ alone. _____ They may also be called "the Elijah message." _____ Elijah will appear personally to help deliver them. _____ They emphasize Christian values of reformation. _____ Many people will never hear about them. _____ They will bring families together in a close, loving relationship. _____ Extraordinary power will accompany them. _____ They help prepare people for the second coming of Jesus.

11. John the Baptist was called Elijah of his day because: (1) _____ He loved to call fire from heaven. _____ The high priest preferred that name. _____ His preaching, in the spirit and power of Elijah, prepared people for the first coming of Jesus.

12. The word "gospel" means "good news." (1) _____ Yes. _____ No.

God Designed the Plans

Lesson 17

We all know that 4,000 years ago, at the peak of Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. But many people do not know that at the same time, the Lord gave Moses the blueprints for one of the most amazing structures ever built—the sanctuary. It must have been important because the Israelites could not enter the Promised Land until it was completed. This unique, portable sanctuary represented the dwelling of God among His people, and its services depicted the three phases of the salvation plan for the nation of former slaves set free. A careful study of the secrets of the sanctuary will illuminate your understanding of how Jesus saves the lost and leads the church. The sanctuary is also the key to understanding several prophecies. This fascinating study guide allows you to explore the sanctuary and uncover its hidden meanings. Exciting discoveries await you!

God Himself Gave Moses the Plans for the Sanctuary.

1. What did God ask Moses to build? “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8 Answer: The Lord asked Moses to build a sanctuary, a special building that would serve as the dwelling place of the great God of heaven.

A Brief Description of the Sanctuary The sanctuary was an elegant, tent-like structure (15’ x 45’) with a base made of 18-inch boards. It was where God’s extraordinary presence dwelled, and special services were conducted.

The walls were made of upright acacia wood boards, set in silver sockets and covered with gold (Exodus 26:15-19, 29). The roof consisted of four layers of coverings: linen, goat hair, rams’ skins dyed red, and porpoise skins (Exodus 26:1, 6-14). It had two rooms: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. A thick curtain separated the two rooms. The courtyard, the area surrounding the sanctuary, measured 75’ x 150’ (Exodus 27:18). It was enclosed by a linen fence supported by 60 copper pillars (Exodus 27:9-16).

2. What did God expect His people to learn from the sanctuary? “O God, Your way is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?” Psalm 77:13 Answer: God’s way, or the plan of salvation, is revealed in the earthly sanctuary. The Bible teaches that everything in the sanctuary or connected to its services was a symbol of something Jesus would do to save us. This means we cannot fully understand the salvation plan until we comprehend the symbols associated with the sanctuary. Therefore, the importance of this

Study Guide cannot be overstated.

The Sanctuary and Its Services Were to Represent God's Salvation Plan.

3. Where did Moses receive the blueprints for the sanctuary? What was the building a copy of? "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord erected, and not man." "Who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle…" Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5 Answer: The designs for the sanctuary and its complete construction details were given to Moses by God. It was a copy of the true heavenly sanctuary, a model of the one in heaven.

4. What furnishings were in the courtyard? Answer: A. The altar of burnt offerings, where animals were sacrificed, was in the courtyard, just inside its entrance (Exodus 27:1-8). This altar symbolized the cross of Christ. The animal represented Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice (John 1:29).

B. The laver, located between the altar and the entrance to the Holy Place, was a large bronze basin used for washing. Here, priests washed their hands and feet before offering sacrifices or entering the sanctuary (Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8).

The water symbolized cleansing from sin, or the new birth (Titus 3:5).

5. What furnishings were in the Holy Place? Answer: A. The table of showbread (Exodus 25:23-30) symbolized Jesus, the bread of life (John 6:51).

B. The golden lampstand with seven branches (Exodus 25:31-40) symbolized Jesus, the light of the world (John 9:5). The oil represented the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-6; Revelation 4:5).

C. The altar of incense (Exodus 30:7, 8) symbolized the prayers of God's people (Revelation 5:8).

The mercy seat symbolized God's throne in heaven, also between two angels.

6. What furnishings were in the Most Holy Place? Answer: The ark of the covenant, the only piece of furniture in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 25:10-22), was a chest made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. On top of the ark were two golden cherubim. Between these angels was the mercy seat (Exodus

25:17-22), where God's presence dwelt.

This represented God's heavenly throne, also between two angels (Psalm 80:1).

The Ten Commandments were inside the ark. They represented God's character, which He writes on the hearts of His people.

7. What was inside the ark? Answer: The Ten Commandments, which God wrote on stone tablets with His own finger and which His people are to keep forever (Revelation 14:12), were inside the ark (Deuteronomy 10:4, 5). But the mercy seat was above them, symbolizing that as long as God's people confess and forsake their sins (Proverbs 28:13), mercy would be extended to them through the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat by the priest (Leviticus 16:16, 15, 16). The animal's blood represented the blood of Jesus, shed for us to bring forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22).

Animals offered in sacrifice symbolized Jesus, who gave His life for all people.

8. Why did animals need to be sacrificed in the Old Testament sanctuary services? "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Hebrews 9:22 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:28 Answer: Animal sacrifices were important to help people understand that without the shedding of Jesus' blood, their sins could not be forgiven. The harsh truth is that the penalty for sin is eternal death (Romans 6:23). Since we have all sinned, we all deserve to die. When Adam and Eve sinned, they would have immediately died if not for Jesus, who volunteered to give His perfect life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty of death for all people (Revelation 13:8). After the fall, God required sinners to bring an animal sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-7). The sinner had to kill the animal with their own hands (Leviticus 1:4, 5). It was bloody and shocking. It dramatically impressed upon the sinner the terrible consequences of sin (eternal death) and the great need for a Savior and His substitutionary sacrifice. Without a Savior, no one had any hope of salvation.

The sacrificial system taught, through the symbol of the slain animal, that God would give His Son to die for their sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). Jesus would be not only their Savior, but also their substitute (Hebrews 9:28). When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29. In the Old Testament, people looked forward to the cross for salvation. We look back to Calvary for salvation. There is no other source of salvation (Acts 4:12).

The Animal Sacrifices Taught a Startling Truth That Sin Would Cost the Life of Jesus

9. How were animals sacrificed in the sanctuary service, and what was the meaning of this?
"And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." "And he shall kill it on the north side of the altar." Leviticus 1:4, 11.
Answer: When the sinner brought an animal sacrifice to the gate of the court, the priest gave him a knife and a basin. The sinner would lay their hands on the head of the animal and confess their sins. This symbolized the transfer of sin from the sinner to the animal. At that moment, the sinner was considered guiltless, and the animal was considered guilty. Since the animal was now guilty by representation, it had to pay the penalty of sin—death. By slaughtering the animal with their own hand, the sinner was taught plainly that sin caused the death of an innocent animal and that their sin would lead to the death of Jesus, the innocent Lamb.

10. When an animal sacrifice was offered for the whole congregation, what did the priest do with the blood? What did this signify?
"And the anointed priest shall bring some of the blood of the bullock into the tabernacle of the congregation; and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, before the veil." Leviticus 4:16, 17.
Answer: When a sacrifice was made for the sins of the entire congregation, the priest, who represented Jesus (Hebrews 3:1), took the blood into the holy place and sprinkled it before the veil that separated the two rooms. God's presence was behind the veil. Thus, the sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary. This blood service performed by the priest symbolized Jesus' current ministry in heaven. After Jesus died on the cross as our sacrifice for sin, He rose and went to heaven as our High Priest to minister His blood in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:11, 12). The blood administered by the earthly priest represents Jesus applying His blood to our records of sin in the heavenly sanctuary, showing that our sins are forgiven when we confess them in His name (1 John 1:9).
As our sacrifice, Jesus brings us completely transformed lives, and all our sins are forgiven.

11. According to the sanctuary services, what are the two main roles in which Jesus serves His people? What amazing benefits do we receive from His ministry of love?
"Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7.
"Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens,

Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16.
Answer: Jesus serves as our sacrifice for sin and as our High Priest in heaven. His death as the Lamb of sacrifice and His ongoing powerful ministry as our High Priest in heaven fulfill two amazing miracles for us:
A. A complete transformation of life called the new birth, and all past sins are forgiven (John 3, Romans 3:25).
B. The ability to live in the present and future (Titus 2:14, Philippians 2:13).
These two miracles make a person righteous, meaning there is a proper relationship between the person and God. There is no possible way for a person to become righteous by their own efforts because righteousness requires miracles that only Jesus can accomplish (Acts 4:12). A person becomes righteous by believing in Jesus to do for them what they cannot do for themselves.
This is what is meant by the Bible term "righteousness by faith." I ask Jesus to be the ruler of my life and trust Him to perform the miracles necessary as I fully cooperate with Him. This righteousness, which is accomplished miraculously by Jesus in me and for me, is the only true righteousness that exists. Any other righteousness is counterfeit.
Through His miracles, Jesus will make us happily do things that please God.

12. What are the six main promises the Bible gives us about the righteousness offered to us through Jesus?
Answer:
A. He will cover our past sins and count us guiltless (Isaiah 44:22, John 1:9).
B. We were made in the image of God in the beginning (Genesis 1:26, 27). Jesus promises to restore us to the image of God (Romans 8:29).
C. Jesus gives us the desire to live righteously and then enables us with His power to accomplish it (Philippians 2:13).
D. Jesus, by His miracles, will make us gladly do things that please God (Hebrews 13:20-21, John 15:11).
E. He removes the death sentence from us by counting His sinless life and atoning death as ours (2 Corinthians 5:21).
F. Jesus takes responsibility for keeping us faithful until He comes to take us to heaven (Philippians 1:6, Jude 1:24).
Jesus is willing to fulfill all of these glorious promises in your life. Are you ready? Kneel now and ask Him to reign over your life. He will not disappoint you.
Our role in salvation is to follow lovingly and willingly where Jesus leads us.

13. Does a person have any role in becoming righteous by faith?
“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21.
Answer: Yes, Jesus says we must do the will of His Father. In the Old Testament days, a person who was truly converted continued to bring lambs for sacrifices, showing sorrow for sin and a desire to fully allow God to lead their life.
Today, although we cannot perform the miracles needed to be righteous, we must give ourselves to Jesus every day (1 Corinthians 15:31), inviting Him to rule our lives so that these miracles can take place. We must be willing to be obedient and follow wherever Jesus leads us (John 12:26, Isaiah 1:18-20). Sin causes us to want to have our own ways (Isaiah 53:6) and, thus, to rebel against God as Satan did in the beginning (Isaiah 14:12-14). Allowing Jesus to reign in our lives at times is as difficult as plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand (Matthew 5:29, 30) because sin is addictive, and it can only be overcome by the miraculous power of God (Mark 10:27).
Many believe that Jesus will take all who claim to be saved and take them to heaven, regardless of their conduct. But this is not true. It is a deception of Satan. A Christian must follow the lifestyle of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). The powerful blood of Jesus can accomplish this for all of us (Hebrews 13:12), but only if we give Jesus full control of our lives and happily follow wherever He leads, even though the way may be rocky and hard at times (Matthew 7:13, 14, 21).
The Lord’s goat represented Jesus, who would die for our sins.

14. Can you help me understand the Day of Atonement?
Answer:
A. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, a great day of judgment took place in Israel (Leviticus 23:27). Everyone was required to confess every sin. Those who refused that day were completely cut off from the camp of Israel (Leviticus 23:29).
B. Two goats were chosen: one, the Lord’s goat, and the other, the goat of Azazel, representing Satan (Leviticus 16:8). The Lord’s goat was slain and offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:9). But on this day, blood was taken to the Most Holy Place and sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14). On this special day of judgment, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to meet God at the mercy seat.
The sprinkled blood (which represented the sacrifice of Jesus) was accepted by God, and the confessed sins of the people were transferred from the sanctuary to the high priest. He then transferred these confessed sins to the scapegoat, which was led into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:16, 20-22). In this way, the sanctuary was cleansed from the people’s sins, which had been transferred there through the sprinkled blood and collected for one year.

The Day of Atonement in Israel was a symbol of the final judgment, which will resolve the issue of sin forever in the entire world.

15. Does the Day of Atonement symbolize or represent part of God's great plan of salvation, as other parts of the earthly sanctuary and its services did? "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Hebrews 9:23.

Answer: Yes. The ceremonies of that day pointed to the removal of sin and the true High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Through His shed blood, used for those written in the book of life, Christ would confirm His people's decision to serve Him forever. This special judgment day, like Israel's Yom Kippur, showed the final atonement that would be made for the earth. Based on the annual type of the old Day of Atonement, all humanity is assured that our faithful High Priest, Jesus, is still the intercessor in heaven for His people and is ready to remove the sins of all who will have faith in His shed blood. The final atonement leads to the final judgment, which will settle the matter of sin in every person's life and culminate in either life or death.

Important Events
In the two following Guides, you will discover how the pattern of the earthly sanctuary, especially the Day of Atonement, parallels significant events of the end times, which God will bring to pass in the heavenly sanctuary.

Judgment Date
In the next Study Guide, we will explore the important Bible prophecy where God sets the date for the commencement of the heavenly judgment. It's really exciting!

16. I am ready to accept the righteousness of Christ, which includes forgiveness, cleansing from sin, and the ability to live in the present and future.
Answer:

Questions of Questions

1. What furniture was in the courtyard of the sanctuary? (2)
_____ Mercy seat.
_____ Laver.
_____ Chairs.
_____ Altar of burnt offering.

2. The presence of God dwelled on the mercy seat. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

3. The seven-branched lampstand represented (1)
_____ Jesus, the light of the world.
_____ The second coming of Christ.
_____ The shining walls of the New Jerusalem.

4. The purpose of the sanctuary and its services was to (1)
_____ Help people understand angels.
_____ Provide people with meat.
_____ Be a symbol of the plan of salvation.

5. Who designed the plans for the sanctuary? (1)
_____ Noah.
_____ An angel.
_____ Aaron.
_____ God.

6. The Ten Commandments were inside the Ark of the Covenant. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

7. The sacrificed animals represented (1)
_____ The Holy Spirit.
_____ War.
_____ Jesus.

8. According to the sanctuary, in which two roles does Jesus serve us? (2)
_____ King.
_____ Sacrifice.
_____ High Priest.
_____ Ruler of the world.

9. Which of the following was true about the earthly sanctuary? (2)
_____ It had three rooms.
_____ It was a tent-like structure.
_____ Its dimensions were 500’ x 1000’.
_____ The courtyard was made of bronze pillars and linen curtains.
_____ The roof was made of Egyptian tiles.
_____ The laver was in the Most Holy Place.

10. Righteousness by faith is the only true righteousness. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

11. Righteousness by faith comes from (1)
_____ Human works.
_____ Being baptized.
_____ Faith in Jesus Christ alone.

12. Who killed the sacrificial animal brought by the sinner? (1)
_____ God.
_____ The priest.
_____ The sinner.

13. Which statements are true about the righteousness that Jesus offers? (3)
_____ It restores us to the image of God.
_____ It is not a miracle.
_____ Our good deeds are a major part of it.
_____ It covers our past sins.
_____ It gives us a desire to live rightly.

14. Which of the following are true about the Day of Atonement? (4)
_____ It occurred every month.

_____ It was a day of judgment.
_____ It was a day of games and joyful celebration.
_____ It symbolized the final judgment.
_____ The scapegoat represented Satan.
_____ Blood was taken into the Most Holy Place.

15. Righteousness means a right relationship with God. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

16. Killing the animal helped people realize that sin brought the death penalty upon all people. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

Right on Time! Prophetic Appointment Revealed!

Lesson 18

Buckle up! You are about to explore the longest time prophecy in the Bible—a prophecy that accurately predicted the first coming of Jesus and the timing of His death. In Study Guide 16, "The Angel's Message from Heaven," you learned that God has a crucial message the world must hear before Christ returns! The first part of this message commands people to worship God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come (Revelation 14:7). In Daniel 8 and 9, God reveals the date when His final judgment begins and provides powerful prophetic clues that confirm Christ as the Messiah. No prophecy in all of Scripture is more significant—yet very few people understand it! Some even misinterpret it completely. Please read Daniel chapters 8 and 9 before starting this Study Guide, and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in understanding this amazing lesson.

The Ram Represents Medo-Persia

1. In a vision, Daniel saw a ram with two horns pushing westward, northward, and southward, conquering every animal in its path (Daniel 8:3, 4). What does the ram represent?

"The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia." (Daniel 8:20)

Answer: The ram represents the world empire of Media and Persia, which was also symbolized by the bear in Daniel 7:5. The prophecies of the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation follow the principle of "repeat and expand," meaning that each new vision revisits the earlier prophecies and provides additional details. This method enhances clarity and certainty in understanding Bible prophecy.

The Goat Represents Greece

2. What striking animal did Daniel see next?

"And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. Now as for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation." (Daniel 8:21, 22)

Answer: In Daniel's vision, a male goat with a large horn appeared suddenly, moving swiftly across the earth. It attacked and defeated the ram. The large

horn was broken, and in its place, four horns arose. The goat represents the third world empire—Greece—and the large horn symbolizes Alexander the Great. The four horns that emerged after the large horn was broken represent the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided. In Daniel 7:6, these four kingdoms are symbolized by the four heads of the leopard, which also represents Greece. The accuracy of these symbols makes it easy to identify them in history.

MKOA	**JUMLA**
I. Makedonia *(Masedonia ilitawala Ugiriki kwa miaka 200.)*	**Cassander**
II. Asia *(Inaitwa Asia Ndogo leo. Ni Uturuki ya kisasa.)*	**Lysimachus - Uongo sim cus** *(kwa ujumla ilitawala sehemu ya magharibi ya Asia Ndogo pamoja na Thrace huko Uropa.)*
III. Syria	**Seleuchus -** *(pamoja na sehemu za Asia.)*
IV. Misri	**Ptolemy** *(Kleopatra mwenye sifa mbaya ali-kuwa Ptolemy wa mwisho kutawala Misri.)*

The "Little Horn" in Daniel 8 Represents Rome in Both Its Pagan and Papal Phases

Therefore, the little horn of the end times represents the papacy.

3. According to Daniel 8:8, 9, a powerful little horn later emerged. What does the little horn represent?

Answer: The little horn represents Rome. Some have suggested that the little horn symbolizes Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king who ruled Palestine in the second century B.C. and disrupted Jewish worship. Others, including many Protestant Reformers, believed that the little horn represents Rome in both its pagan and papal forms. Let's examine the clear biblical evidence for this:

A. According to the prophetic principle of "repeat and expand," Rome must be the power represented here because both Daniel chapters 2 and 7 point to Rome as the kingdom following Greece. Daniel 7:24-27 also confirms that Rome, in its papal form, would be succeeded by Christ's kingdom. The little horn of Daniel chapter 8 fits this sequence exactly: It follows Greece and is eventually destroyed "without human hand" at Christ's second coming. (Compare Daniel 8:25 with Daniel 2:34.)

B. Daniel chapter 8 states that the Medes and Persians would be “great” (verse 4), the Greeks “very great” (verse 8), and the little horn power “exceedingly great” (verse 9). History clearly shows that no power following Greece surpassed Rome in greatness.

C. Rome extended its authority south (Egypt), east (Macedonia), and toward the “Beautiful Land” (Palestine) precisely as the prophecy foretold (verse 9). No other major power fits this description as accurately as Rome.

D. Only Rome stood against Jesus, the “Prince of the host” (verse 11) and the “Prince of princes” (verse 25). Pagan Rome crucified Him. It also destroyed the Jewish temple. Papal Rome cast down the heavenly sanctuary (verse 11) and “trampled it underfoot” (verse 13) by replacing Christ’s heavenly priestly ministry with an earthly priesthood that claims to forgive sins. Only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21). And Jesus is our sole High Priest and Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

The little horn power persecuted and destroyed millions of God’s people.

4. Daniel 8 reveals that this little horn power would destroy many of God’s people (verses 10, 24, 25) and cast truth to the ground (verse 12). When the holy one asked how long God’s people and the heavenly sanctuary would be trampled, what was heaven’s answer?
“He said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.’” (Daniel 8:14)

Answer: Heaven’s answer was that the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed after 2,300 prophetic days, or 2,300 actual years. (Study Guide 15 provides a complete explanation of the prophetic day-for-year principle found in Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34.) We have already learned that the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary occurred on the Day of Atonement in ancient Israel.

On that day, God’s people were clearly identified as His, and the record of their sins was removed. Those who clung to their sins were cut off from Israel permanently. Thus, the camp was cleansed from sin.

Here, Heaven assured Daniel that sin and the little horn power would not continue to succeed, dominate the world, and persecute God’s people forever. Instead, after 2,300 years, God would intervene through the heavenly Day of Atonement, or judgment, where sin and sinners would be identified and eventually removed from the universe permanently. The world would be cleansed of sin. Evil against God’s people would ultimately be corrected, and the peace and harmony of Eden would fill the entire world again.

Daniel prayed for understanding of the 2,300-year prophecy.

5. What key point did the angel Gabriel emphasize repeatedly?
"Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end." (Daniel 8:17)
"I will tell you what will happen in the latter time of the indignation." (Daniel 8:19)
"Seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future." (Daniel 8:26)

Answer: Gabriel repeatedly emphasized that the vision of the 2,300 days pertained to the events of the time of the end, which began in 1798, as we learned in Study Guide 15. The angel wanted us to understand that the 2,300-day prophecy is a message primarily relevant to those of us living in the final days of earth's history. It holds special meaning for today.

Introduction to Daniel Chapter 9

After Daniel's vision in chapter 8, the angel Gabriel came to explain the vision. When Gabriel reached the part about the 2,300 days, Daniel fainted and was sick for several days. He eventually resumed his royal duties but remained troubled by the unexplained portion of the vision—the 2,300 days. Daniel earnestly prayed for his people, the Jews who were in captivity under the Medes and Persians. He confessed his sins and pleaded with God to forgive his people. Daniel chapter 9 begins with the prophet's sincere prayer of confession and supplication to God.

Take a moment now to read Daniel 9 before continuing with this Study Guide.

The angel Gabriel came to Daniel to explain the 2,300-year prophecy.

6. While Daniel was praying, who suddenly touched him and with what message (Daniel 9:21-23)?
Answer: The angel Gabriel touched him and said that he had come to explain the vision that was outlined in Daniel chapter 8 (compare Daniel 8:26 with Daniel 9:23).

7. How much of the 2,300 days was allocated (or "cut off") for Daniel's people, the Jews, and their capital city, Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24)?
Answer: Seventy weeks were "determined," or cut off, for the Jews. Seventy prophetic weeks equal 490 literal years (70 x 7 = 490). God allocated 490 years from the 2,300 years to give His chosen people another opportunity to repent and serve Him.

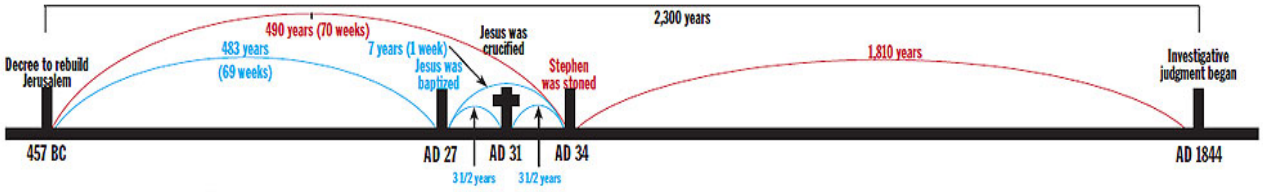
8. What event and date would mark the starting point for the 2,300-day and 490-year prophecies (Daniel 9:25)?
Answer: The starting point was the decree from King Artaxerxes of Persia, which allowed God's people (in captivity under the Medes and Persians) to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. This decree, found in Ezra chapter 7, was issued in 457 B.C.—the seventh year of the king's reign (verse 7)—and was implemented in the fall of that year. Artaxerxes began his reign in 464 B.C.

The baptism of Jesus was the exact fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

9. The angel said that 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 literal years (69 x 7 = 483), added to 457 B.C. would reach the Messiah (Daniel 9:25). Did this happen?
Answer: Yes, absolutely! The math shows that counting 483 years forward from the fall of 457 B.C. reaches the fall of A.D. 27. "Messiah" means "Anointed One" (John 1:41, margin). Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) at His baptism (Luke 3:21, 22). This took place in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar's reign (Luke 3:1), which was A.D. 27.

Jesus then began preaching, saying, "The time is fulfilled" (referring to the 483 years leading to the Messiah). This confirms the prophecy (Mark 1:14, 15; Galatians 4:4). This remarkable fulfillment proves:

A. The Bible is inspired.
B. Jesus is the Messiah.
C. All other dates in the 2,300/490-year prophecy are valid. What a solid foundation to build upon!



10. So far, we have examined 483 years of the 490-year prophecy. One prophetic week, or seven literal years, remains (Daniel 9:26, 27). What happens next? When does it happen?

Answer: Jesus is "cut off" or crucified "in the middle of the week," which is three and a half years after His anointing, or in the spring of 31 AD. Please note how the gospel is revealed in verse 26: "After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself."

Praise be to God—when Jesus was cut off, it was not for Himself. He "committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22) but was crucified for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; Isaiah 53:5). The precious life of Jesus was offered lovingly and willingly to save us from sin. Hallelujah—what a Savior! The atoning sacrifice of Jesus is the very heart of Daniel chapters 8 and 9.
The disciples preached to crowds of Jews.

11. Since Jesus died after three and a half years, how could He "confirm the covenant with many" for the full final seven years, as Daniel 9:27 states?
Answer: The covenant is His blessed agreement to save people from their sins (Hebrews 10:16, 17). After His three-and-a-half-year ministry ended, Jesus confirmed the covenant through His disciples (Hebrews 2:3). He sent them first to the Jewish nation (Matthew 10:5, 6) because His chosen people still had three and a half years remaining in their 490-year period of probation.
After the stoning of Stephen, the disciples began to preach to the Gentiles.

12. What did the disciples do after the 490-year period of final opportunity for the Jewish nation ended in the spring of 34 AD?
Answer: They began to preach the gospel to others and to the nations of the world (Acts 13:46). Stephen, a righteous deacon, was publicly stoned in 34 AD. From that time onward, the Jews, because they rejected Jesus and God's plan, were no longer God's chosen people or nation. Instead, God now considers people from all nations who accept and serve Him to be spiritual Jews. They have become His chosen people—"heirs according to the promise." Spiritual Jews, of course, include Jews who individually accept and serve Jesus (Galatians 3:27-29; Romans 2:28, 29).
The investigative judgment of God is witnessed by the heavenly host.

13. After 34 AD, how many years of the 2,300-year prophecy remained? What is the ending date of that prophecy? What did the angel say would happen at that time (Daniel 8:14)?
Answer: There were 1,810 years remaining (2,300 minus 490 = 1,810). The ending date of the prophecy is 1844 (34 AD + 1810 = 1844). The angel said that the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed, or the heavenly judgment would begin. (The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in 70 AD.) We learned in Study Guide 17 that the heavenly Day of Atonement, or judgment, was scheduled for the end time. Now we know that its starting date is 1844. God set this date. It is as certain as the 27 AD date for Jesus being the Messiah. God's end-time people must be proclaiming it (Revelation 14:6, 7).

You will be thrilled and delighted to learn more about this judgment in Study Guide 19. In Noah's day, God said the judgment of the Flood would occur in 120 years (Genesis 6:3), and it did. In Daniel's day, God said His end-time

judgment would begin after 2,300 years (Daniel 8:14), and it did. God's final judgment has been in session since 1844.

The Meaning of Atonement

The English word "atonement" originally meant "at-one-ment," that is, the state of being "at one" or in harmony. It signifies the restoration of relationship. Perfect harmony originally existed throughout the entire universe. Then Lucifer, a gifted heavenly angel (as we learned in Study Guide 2), rebelled against God and His principles of government. One-third of the heavenly angels joined Lucifer's rebellion (Revelation 12:3, 4, 7-9).

This rebellion against God and His principles of love is called sin in the Bible (Isaiah 53:6; 1 John 3:4). It brings heartbreak, confusion, chaos, disasters, disappointments, sorrow, betrayal, and all kinds of evil. Worst of all, its penalty is death (Romans 6:23)—an irreversible death in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Sin spreads quickly and is more dangerous than the most aggressive form of cancer. It jeopardized the entire universe.
Therefore, God cast Lucifer and his angels out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9), and Lucifer received a new name—"Satan," which means "adversary." His fallen angels are now called demons. Satan deceived Adam and Eve, and thus sin came upon the entire human race. What a terrible disaster! The great controversy between good and evil had begun, and evil seemed to be winning. The situation appeared hopeless.

But no! Jesus, the Son of God—God Himself, who was infinitely greater than all human beings combined—agreed to give His life to pay the death penalty for every sinner (1 Corinthians 5:7). By accepting His sacrifice, sinners would be freed from the guilt of sin (Romans 3:25). This glorious plan also involved Jesus entering a person's life when invited (Revelation 3:20) and transforming them into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). It provided power from Jesus to resist Satan and to restore every converted person to the image of God in which they were created (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 8:29).

This blessed atoning sacrifice includes God's plan to eradicate sin and destroy it—along with Satan, his fallen angels, and all who join him in rebellion (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:8). Furthermore, complete information about Jesus and His loving government and Satan's cruel dictatorship will be given to every person on earth so that all may make an intelligent and informed decision to align themselves with either Christ or Satan (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6, 7).

The case of every individual will be reviewed in heaven's courtroom (Romans

14:10-12), and God will honor each person's choice to serve either Christ or Satan (Revelation 22:11, 12). Finally, after sin is eradicated, God's plan is to create a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17), where sin will never arise again (Nahum 1:9), and to give it to His people as their eternal home (Revelation 21:1-5). Then the Father and the Son will dwell with Their people in perfect joy and harmony forever.

All of this is encompassed in "at-one-ment." God has revealed it to us in His Word and symbolized it in the Old Testament sanctuary services, especially the Day of Atonement. Jesus is the key to atonement. His loving sacrifice for us at Calvary makes everything possible. The removal of sin from our lives and from the universe is possible only through Him (Acts 4:12). No wonder the final three-angels' message from heaven calls us all to worship Him (Revelation 14:6, 7).

Why would anyone disregard such an essential part of this prophecy?

14. Why do some Bible interpreters separate the last week (or seven years) of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and apply it to the work of the Antichrist at the end of world history?

Answer: This is a good question—"Why would anyone remove the last seven years of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and place them at the end of world history?" Let us review the facts:

A. There is no biblical authority or evidence to insert a gap anywhere within the 490-year prophecy. The years are continuous, just as the 70 years of the captivity of God's people mentioned in Daniel 9:2 were continuous.

B. Nowhere in the Scriptures does a specific time unit (days, weeks, months, years) that makes up a period of time mean anything other than consecutive or sequential time units. The burden of proof is on those who claim that any part of any time prophecy should be separated and counted later.

C. AD 27 (the year of Jesus' baptism) marked the beginning of the final seven years of the prophecy, which Jesus emphasized by immediately preaching, "The time is fulfilled." (Mark 1:15).

D. At His death on the cross in the spring of AD 31, Jesus cried out, "It is finished." The Savior here clearly refers to the prophecy of His death found in Daniel 9, as follows:

1. "The Messiah" would be "cut off" or crucified (verse 26).

2. “He would bring an end to sacrifice and offering” by dying for all as the true Lamb of God (verse 27, 1 Corinthians 5:7, 15:3).

3. “He would make reconciliation for iniquity” (verse 24).

There is no biblical authority or evidence for separating the final week, or seven years, of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and applying it to the work of the Antichrist near the end of world history. Most importantly, separating the final seven years from the 490-year prophecy distorts the true meaning of much prophecy in the books of Daniel and Revelation, preventing people from accurately understanding it. This is why God condemns private interpretations of prophecy, such as this seven-year gap theory. Such interpretations mislead people.
---

15. I have accepted Christ’s atoning sacrifice for my life and invited Him to cleanse me from sin and make me a new person.

Answer:

Reflection Questions

1. Do the little horns in Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 8 represent the same power?
The little horn of Daniel 7 represents the papacy. The little horn of Daniel 8 represents both pagan and papal Rome.

2. The “2,300 days” in Daniel 8:14, literally translated from Hebrew, reads “2,300 evenings and mornings.” Does this mean 1,150 days, as some argue?
No. The Bible clearly shows in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31 that an evening and a morning equal one day. Nothing in history at the end of 1,150 days fulfills this prophecy.

3. What role does “choice” play in a Christian’s life?
It is a key factor in success. God’s way has always involved freedom of choice (Joshua 24:15). Although He wants to save everyone (1 Timothy 2:3, 4), He still allows free will (Deuteronomy 30:19). God allowed Satan to choose to rebel and permitted Adam and Eve to disobey. Salvation is never something forced on us or predetermined to send us to heaven regardless of how we live or even if we do not want to go.

Choice means I am always free to change my mind. Jesus asks me to choose Him (Matthew 11:28-30) and to reaffirm that choice daily (Psalm 86:3). If my daily choice is for Him, He will transform me and ultimately bring me to His new, blessed kingdom. But please note: I am free to turn away at any time. God will never force me. My daily choice to serve Him is crucial.

4. Many believe that King Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn power of Daniel 8. How can we be sure this is not true?
There are many reasons. Some of them include:

A. Antiochus Epiphanes was not "exceedingly great," as the prophecy requires (Daniel 8:9).

B. He did not rule at the "time of the end" or near the end of the Seleucid kingdom, as the prophecy demands (Daniel 8:23), but rather in the middle.

C. Those who teach that Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn interpret the 2,300 days as literal days instead of prophetic years. This literal time period of just over six years has no meaningful fulfillment in Daniel 8. Every attempt to fit this period with Antiochus Epiphanes has failed, which is an embarrassment to its supporters.

D. The little horn still exists in the "time of the end" (Daniel 8:12, 17, 19), while Antiochus Epiphanes died in 164 BC.

E. The little horn was to become "exceedingly great" toward the south, the east, and Palestine (Daniel 8:9). While Antiochus Epiphanes ruled Palestine temporarily, he had no significant success in Egypt (south) and Macedonia (east).

F. The little horn was to cast down the sanctuary of God (Daniel 8:11). Antiochus Epiphanes did not destroy the temple in Jerusalem. He defiled it, but it was the Romans who destroyed it in AD 70. Nor did he destroy Jerusalem, as the prophecy states (Daniel 9:26).

G. Christ applied the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:26-27, not to Antiochus Epiphanes' past actions in 167 BC, but to a future event when the Roman army would destroy Jerusalem and the temple within His generation in AD 70 (Luke 21:20-24). In Matthew 24:15, Jesus specifically mentioned the prophet Daniel, saying that Daniel's prophecy would be fulfilled when Christians would see the abomination standing in the holy place in Jerusalem—a future event.

H. Jesus explicitly linked the destruction of Jerusalem to Israel's final rejection of Him as King and Savior (Matthew 21:33-43; 23:37, 38; Luke 19:41-44). This connection between rejecting the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is the central message of Daniel 9:26-27. Applying this prophecy to Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in 164 BC, long before Jesus' birth, completely distorts the meaning of Daniel 8 and 9—the most important time prophecies in the Bible.

Questions of thoughts

1. The ram of Daniel 8 represents (1)
_____ Babylon.
_____ Medo-Persia.
_____ Greece.
_____ Rome.

2. What does the male goat of Daniel 8 represent? (1)
_____ Egypt.
_____ Palestine.
_____ Greece.
_____ Assyria.

3. The power of the little horn in Daniel 8 represents (1)
_____ Antiochus Epiphanes.
_____ Rome, in both its pagan and papal phases.
_____ Atheism.
_____ Iraq.

4. The Day of Atonement in ancient Israel was a day of judgment. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

5. How many of the 2,300 years were allotted to the Jews? (1)
_____ 490 years.
_____ 700 years.
_____ 1810 years.
_____ 100 years.

6. In Bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

7. The prophecy of 2,300 years predicted (500 years before it happened) that the Messiah would appear in 27 AD. He appeared on time. This proves that (3)
_____ The Bible is inspired.
_____ The angel Gabriel guessed by luck.
_____ All other dates in prophecy are accurate.
_____ Jesus is the Messiah.

8. When the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation ended in 34 AD, what did the disciples do? (1)
_____ They began preaching to other nations.
_____ They took a long vacation.
_____ They said no Jew could be saved after AD 34.

9. According to the 2,300-year prophecy of Daniel chapters 8 and 9, what happened in 1844? (1)
_____ Judgment began in heaven.
_____ The day of mercy for the Jewish nation ended.
_____ Jesus ascended to heaven.
_____ God closed mercy for everyone.

10. The heavenly Day of Atonement, or final atonement, will bring the entire universe into perfect harmony with God. Which of the following statements are true about aspects of the atonement? (10)
_____ Jesus gave His life to pay our death penalty.
_____ Jesus freed us from the guilt of sin.
_____ Jesus transforms us into completely new people.
_____ Jesus restores us to God's image.
_____ In the heavenly court, God honors each person's choice to serve Christ or Satan.
_____ A full report goes to everyone on earth about Satan's destructive plan and God's glorious plan to save people.
_____ Sin, Satan, and sinners will be separated and destroyed.
_____ God will create a new heaven and a new earth for His people and will dwell with them.
_____ Sin will never arise again.

_____ The atonement was made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary.
_____ Satan and his angels will repent and be saved.

11. There is no biblical authority or evidence to separate the last week or seven years of the 490 years allotted to the Jewish nation and apply it to the work of the Antichrist near the end of the world's history. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

12. In 34 AD, (3)
_____ Mercy ended for the Jews as God's chosen nation.
_____ The disciples began preaching to other nations.
_____ Stephen, the righteous deacon, was stoned.
_____ Judgment began in heaven.

13. The 2,300-day period began in (1)
_____ 34 AD
_____ 1944
_____ 1491 BC
_____ 457 BC

14. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation primarily concern us and our time. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No

Case Closed

Lesson 19

The court is in session, the judgment has been pronounced... the case is closed! Few thoughts could be more sobering. The day is quickly approaching when the life of every person who has ever lived will be reviewed before the all-knowing eyes of God (2 Corinthians 5:10). But don't let this reality frighten you—take heart! Millions have already discovered the judgment message in this Study Guide to be incredibly good news! In the four instances where the book of Revelation mentions the final judgment, it results in praise and thanksgiving! But did you know that the Bible mentions judgment more than a thousand times? Almost every Bible writer refers to it, so its importance cannot be overstated. In the next few minutes, you will receive a clear understanding of this often-overlooked subject.

Phase One of the Final Judgment

1. The angel Gabriel gave Daniel the prophecy of the heavenly judgment in 1844. The first phase of the judgment is called the pre-advent judgment because it takes place before Jesus' second coming. Which group of people is considered in this first phase of judgment? When does it end?

"Judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17). "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Revelation 22:11, 12). (See also 1 Timothy 3:15.)

Answer: It ends just before Jesus' second coming. Those (both living and dead) who professed to be Christians—the "house of God"—will be considered in the pre-advent judgment. (The date 1844 is established in Study Guide 18.)

Jesus stands with His faithful people in judgment and promises them a positive verdict.

2. Who presides over the judgment? Who is the defense attorney? The judge? The prosecutor? Who are the witnesses?

"The Ancient of Days did sit, … his throne was like the fiery flame." "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9, 10). "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1). "The

Father … has committed all judgment to the Son." (John 5:22). "The devil … the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, is cast down." (Revelation 12:9, 10). "These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Revelation 3:14). (See also Colossians 1:12-15.)

Answer: God the Father, the Ancient of Days, presides over the judgment. He loves you deeply (John 16:27). Satan is your only accuser. In the heavenly court, Jesus—who loves you—is your advocate, your judge, and your witness. And He promises that the judgment will be "in favor of the saints" (Daniel 7:22, NEB).*

*The New English Bible, (C) 1961, 1970 by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press. Used by permission.

The evidence presented in the judgment comes from the books of heaven.

3. What is the source of the evidence used in the judgment before Christ's return? To what standard will everyone be judged? Since God already knows everything about everyone, why have a judgment?

"The court was seated, and the books were opened."
— Daniel 7:10

"The dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."
— Revelation 20:12

"They… will be judged by the law of liberty."
— James 2:12

"We have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."
— 1 Corinthians 4:9

Answer:
The evidence in the heavenly court comes from the books where every detail of a person's life is recorded. For the faithful, the record of prayers, repentance, and forgiveness of sins will be there for all to see. These records will show that God's power enables Christians to live transformed lives. God delights in His saints and will take joy in presenting the evidence of their faithful lives.

The judgment will confirm that “there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1).

The Ten Commandments are God’s standard in the judgment (James 2:10–12). Breaking His law is sin (1 John 3:4), and the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled by Jesus in all who believe in Him (Romans 8:3, 4). To claim that this is impossible is to question the truth of Jesus’ word and the power He provides.

The judgment is not to inform God—He already knows everything (2 Timothy 2:19). However, those who are redeemed will come to heaven from a world corrupted by sin. Angels and the inhabitants of other unfallen worlds would naturally have concerns about welcoming anyone who might bring sin back into God’s kingdom.

Thus, the judgment reveals every detail and answers every question. Satan’s goal has always been to portray God as unjust, cruel, unloving, and untrustworthy. This makes it even more essential for all beings in the universe to see how patient and fair God has been with sinners.

The primary purpose of the judgment is to vindicate God’s character (Revelation 11:16–19; 15:2–4; 16:5, 7; 19:1, 2; Daniel 4:36, 37). Notice that praise and glory are given to God for how He handles the judgment.

Every part of a person’s life will be reviewed in the judgment.

---

4. What part of a person’s life is considered in the judgment before Christ’s return? What will be confirmed? How will rewards be determined?

“God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”
— Ecclesiastes 12:14

“Let both grow together until the harvest.”
— Matthew 13:30

“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend.”
— Matthew 13:41

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.”
— Revelation 22:12

Answer:
Every detail of a person’s life will be reviewed—including thoughts and secret actions. For this reason, this first phase of judgment is also called the investigative judgment.

The judgment will confirm who will be saved among those who profess to be Christians. It will also verify who is lost—those whose names are not accepted during this investigative judgment.

Although we are saved by grace, rewards will be given according to our works—our actions and conduct—because they confirm the authenticity of a Christian’s faith (James 2:26).

The Second Phase of the Final Judgment

5. Which group is involved in the heavenly judgment during the 1,000 years of Revelation chapter 20? What is the purpose of this second phase of judgment?

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?… Do you not know that we shall judge angels?”
— 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.”
— Revelation 20:4

Answer:
The “saints,” or the righteous of all ages whom Christ takes to heaven in the clouds at His second coming, will participate in this second phase of judgment.

Imagine a family discovering that their beloved son, who was murdered, is not in heaven—but the murderer is. They would certainly need some answers. This second phase of judgment will address all the questions of the righteous.

The life of every lost individual (including Satan and his angels) will be carefully examined by the righteous, who will fully agree with Jesus’ decisions

regarding the reward for each person. It will become clear to everyone that judgment is not arbitrary. Instead, it simply confirms the choices people have already made to serve either Jesus or another master (Revelation 22:11, 12).

(For a review of the 1,000 years, see Study Guide 12.)*****”5-

6. When and where will the third phase of the final judgment take place? What new group will be present in this phase of judgment?
“On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.” “Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” “The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah.” — Zechariah 14:4, 5, 10.
“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” — Revelation 21:2.
“When the thousand years are over, Satan ... will go out to deceive the nations ... to gather them for battle.” — Revelation 20:7, 8.

The wicked will attempt to attack the Holy City.

Answer: The third phase of judgment will take place on Earth at the end of the 1,000 years described in Revelation 20, after Jesus returns to Earth with the Holy City. All the wicked who have ever lived, including Satan and his angels, will be present. At the end of the 1,000 years, all the wicked who have died throughout history will be resurrected (Revelation 20:5). Satan immediately launches a powerful propaganda campaign to deceive them. Shockingly, he succeeds in convincing the nations of the world that they can capture the Holy City.

7. What happens next?
“They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves.” — Revelation 20:9.

Answer: The wicked surround the city and prepare to attack it. The third phase of judgment will interrupt their plan to assault the city.

8. What halts their battle plan, and what will be the outcome?
“I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done.” — Revelation 20:12.
“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” — 2 Corinthians 5:10.
“As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God. So then, each of us will give an account of

ourselves to God." — Romans 14:11, 12.

Answer: Without warning, God appears in dazzling brightness over the city (Revelation 19:11-21). The moment of truth has arrived. Every lost soul since the beginning of the world, including Satan and his angels, now faces God in judgment. Every eye is fixed on the King of kings (Revelation 20:12).

Each Person Sees Their Own Life Reviewed
Then every lost soul recalls their personal life story: God's persistent, loving calls to repentance, the quiet, gentle voice of conviction that was often rejected. Everything is revealed. The evidence is undeniable, and the truth is irrefutable. God wants the wicked to fully understand. He provides all necessary explanations to ensure complete clarity. The books and records are available for review.

Nothing Is Hidden
God is not involved in any kind of divine cover-up. No evidence has been destroyed, no records erased. Nothing is concealed. Everything is laid bare, and everyone who has ever lived—along with all the good and evil angels—witnesses this drama of all dramas.

The Lost Fall to Their Knees
Suddenly, there is movement. One lost soul falls to their knees, admitting their guilt and openly confessing that God was more than fair. Stubborn pride had prevented their surrender. Now, all around, people and even the evil angels fall to their knees. Then, in one final collective act, almost simultaneously, the entire assembly of lost people and evil angels—including Satan—prostrates themselves before God (Romans 14:11). They publicly clear God's name of all false accusations and testify that He has treated them with love, justice, and mercy.

All Admit the Judgment Is Just
Everyone acknowledges that the death sentence pronounced upon them is just—the only safe solution to the problem of sin. Of every lost person, it could be said: "You are destroyed, Israel, because you are against me, against your helper." — Hosea 13:9. God now stands vindicated before the entire universe. Satan's accusations and claims are exposed and conclusively discredited as malicious lies.

Fire from Heaven Will Eradicate Sin and Sinners Forever

9. What final steps will eliminate sin from the entire universe and prepare a safe and glorious future for the righteous?

“They surrounded the camp of God’s people ... but fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur.” — Revelation 20:9, 10.
“You will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet.” — Malachi 4:3.
“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.” — Isaiah 65:17.
“We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.” — 2 Peter 3:13.
“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them.” — Revelation 21:3.

Answer: Fire from heaven will rain down upon the wicked. This fire will completely destroy sin and sinners from the universe forever. (See Study Guide 11 for a full explanation of the lake of fire.) This will be a time of deep sorrow and heartbreak for God’s people. Nearly everyone will have a loved one or friend consumed in the fire. Guardian angels will likely weep over the loss of those they protected and loved for so many years. Even Christ Himself will surely grieve for those He loved and pleaded with for so long. During this solemn moment, the indescribable sorrow of God, our loving Father, over the terrible cost of sin will be deeply felt.

A New Heaven and a New Earth
Then the Lord will wipe away every tear from the eyes of His redeemed people (Revelation 21:4) and create a new heaven and a new earth, more beautiful than words can describe, for His saints. Best of all, He will dwell here with His people for all eternity. No one would want to miss that.
The sacrificial animal represented Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.

10. How did the “Day of Atonement” service in the earthly sanctuary of the Old Testament illustrate God’s judgment and His plan to remove sin from the world and restore complete harmony?
Answer: In Lesson Guide 2, we learned how Satan falsely accused and opposed God and brought the terrible evil of sin into the world. The Day of Atonement in ancient Israel symbolically taught how God would deal with the problem of sin and restore harmony to the universe.
(Atonement means “at-one-ment,” or “bringing all things into divine harmony.”)

In the earthly sanctuary, the symbolic steps included:

A. The Lord’s goat was sacrificed to cover the sins of the people.

B. The priest ministered the blood before the mercy seat.

C. Judgment was conducted through this process:
(1) The righteous were confirmed,
(2) The unrepentant were cut off, and
(3) The record of sin was removed from the sanctuary.

D. The record of sin was placed on the scapegoat (Azazel).

E. The scapegoat was sent into the wilderness.

F. The people were cleansed from their sins.

G. Everyone began a new year with a clean slate.

These five symbolic steps represent the actual atonement events initiated from the heavenly sanctuary—God's headquarters for the universe. Each point above corresponds to a real event in the divine plan of atonement:

A. Jesus' sacrificial death as a substitute for humanity (1 Corinthians 15:3; 5:7).

B. Jesus, as our High Priest, restoring people to the image of God (Hebrews 4:14-16; Romans 8:29).

C. Judgment reviews and confirms every life, revealing good and evil, and then removes the record of sin from the heavenly sanctuary (Revelation 20:12; Acts 3:19-21).

D. The responsibility for originating sin and leading humanity into sin is placed upon Satan (1 John 3:8; Revelation 22:12).

E. Satan is banished to the wilderness (the 1,000 years of Revelation 20).

F. Satan, sin, and sinners are permanently destroyed (Revelation 20:10; 21:8; Psalm 37:10, 20; Nahum 1:9).

G. A new earth is created for God's people. Everything lost through sin will be restored to the Lord's redeemed (2 Peter 3:13; Acts 3:20, 21).

Atonement will not be complete until the world and everything in it are fully restored to their pre-sin condition with the assurance that sin will never arise again.
After judgment, sin will disappear forever. The righteous will be safe for eternity.

11. What good news about the judgment is revealed in this Study Guide and summarized below?
Answer:

A. God and His way of handling the sin problem will be vindicated and glorified before the entire universe. This is the central purpose of the judgment.

B. The judgment will be decided in favor of God's people.

C. The righteous will be safe from sin forever.

D. Sin will be completely eradicated and will never arise again.

E. Everything Adam and Eve lost through sin will be restored to the redeemed.

F. The wicked will be reduced to ashes, not tortured forever.

G. In the judgment, Jesus is our Judge, Advocate, and Witness.

H. Both the Father and the Son love us. The devil is the accuser.

I. The heavenly records will support the righteous because they reveal how the grace of the gospel transformed their lives.

J. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The judgment will only confirm this truth.

K. Not a single being (human or angel) will complain that God is unfair. All will agree that God has been loving, just, gracious, and kind in dealing with everyone.

12. God promises to set you free in the heavenly judgment if you invite Him into your life and allow Him to take control. Will you invite Him into your life today?

Answer:

Thought Questions

1. What is the difference between accepting Jesus as my Savior and accepting Him as my Lord?

The difference is significant.

When I accept Him as my Savior, He saves me from the guilt and penalty of sin and gives me new birth. He transforms me from a sinner to a saint. This is a glorious miracle and is essential for salvation. No one can be saved without it. However, Jesus' work in me does not end there. I am born again, but His plan is for me to become like Him (Ephesians 4:13).
When I daily accept Him as the ruler, or Lord, of my life, He miraculously helps me grow in grace and Christian character until I reach maturity in Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

The Problem – I Want My Own Way
The issue is that I want to control my own life—to have my own way. The Bible calls this "iniquity" or sin (Isaiah 53:6). Making Jesus my Lord is so important that the New Testament refers to Him as "Lord" 766 times. In the book of Acts alone, He is called "Lord" 110 times and "Savior" only twice. This emphasizes the importance of recognizing Him as the Lord and Master of our lives.

A Forgotten Condition – Making Him Lord
Jesus repeatedly emphasized His Lordship because He knew it would be overlooked and neglected (2 Corinthians 4:5). Unless I make Him the Lord of my life, I cannot become a complete Christian clothed in Christ's righteousness. Instead, I will remain "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"—and worse, I will think that I "need nothing" (Revelation 3:17).

2. Since the record of God's people's sins was transferred to the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, does that make him our sin-bearer as well? I thought only Jesus bore our sins.

The scapegoat (Azazel), who represents Satan, does not bear or atone for our sins in any way. The Lord's goat, sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, represents Jesus, who bore and paid for our sins at Calvary. Jesus alone "takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Satan will be punished (like all other sinners—Revelation 20:12-15) for his own sins, which include his responsibility for:
(1) The existence of sin,
(2) His evil actions, and
(3) Influencing everyone on earth to commit sin.

God will hold him fully accountable for his wickedness. This is the meaning of transferring the record of sins to the scapegoat (Satan) on the Day of Atonement.
3. The Bible is clear that God forgives all confessed sins (1 John 1:9). It is also clear that, although forgiven, the records of these sins remain in the books

of heaven until the end of time (Acts 3:19-21). Why aren't sins erased when they are forgiven?

There is a very good reason. The judgment in heaven will not be complete until the judgment of the wicked takes place—just before their destruction at the end of the world. If God were to destroy the records before this final phase of judgment, He could be accused of a massive cover-up. All moral records remain open for review until the judgment is complete.

4. Some say judgment took place at the cross. Others say it happens at death. Can we be sure that the timing of judgment, as presented in this Study Guide, is correct?

Yes. To ensure that we can be certain about the timing of judgment, God clearly mentioned it three times in Daniel chapter 7. Pay attention to God's specific timing. God left no room for uncertainty. The divine sequence is described three times (verses 8-14, 20-22, 24-27) in this chapter as follows:

A. The power of the little horn – it reigned from AD 538 to 1798. (See Study Guide 15.)

B. Judgment – it begins after 1798 (in the year 1844) and continues until the second coming of Jesus.

C. God's new kingdom – established at the end of the judgment.

Therefore, God makes it clear that judgment does not occur at death or the cross but between 1798 and the second coming of Jesus. Remember that the message of the first angel includes the phrase, "The hour of His judgment has come" (Revelation 14:6, 7). God's people in the last days must be proclaiming to the world that the final judgment is now in session!

5. What important lessons can we learn from our study of judgment?

Consider the following five points:

A. God may seem to delay action, but His timing is perfect. No one who is lost will be able to say, "I didn't understand" or "I didn't know."

B. Satan and all forms of evil will ultimately be dealt with by God in judgment. Since judgment is God's work and He has all the truth, we should refrain from judging others and let God handle it. It is a serious matter for us to take on God's work of judgment—it is to usurp His authority.

C. God allows us all the freedom to decide how we will relate to Him and whom we will serve. However, we must be ready for the consequences when we choose against His Word.

D. God loves us so much that He has given us the books of Daniel and Revelation to clarify these end-time issues. Our only safety lies in listening to and following His counsel from these great prophetic books.

E. Satan is determined to destroy each of us. His deceptive strategies are effective and convincing enough that all but a very few will be ensnared. Without the power of Jesus' resurrection in our daily lives to protect us from Satan's traps, we will be destroyed by him.

Questions

1. How many phases of judgment are there? (1)
_____ Six.
_____ One.
_____ Three.

2. Identify the true aspects of the first phase of judgment. (7)
_____ It is the pre-advent judgment.
_____ It began in 1844.
_____ It is happening now.
_____ Satan is the accuser.
_____ Angel Gabriel is the judge.
_____ God presides.
_____ Prophet Jonah predicted it.
_____ God's law is the standard.
_____ It examines the lives of those who have claimed to be Christians.

3. What is true about the second phase of judgment, which takes place during the 1,000 years? (3)
_____ The righteous of all ages will be present.
_____ Satan will continue to disrupt the court proceedings.
_____ Everyone will agree that Satan's punishment is just.
_____ Satan's angels will be forgiven.
_____ The wicked will demand their rights.
_____ The righteous will learn why some of their friends are lost.
4. Jesus will serve in three roles. What are they? (3)
_____ Judge.

_____ Witness.
_____ Guarantor.
_____ Court clerk.
_____ Defense attorney.

5. The wicked will be present for judgment at the end of the 1,000 years after surrounding the holy city. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

6. God will make it clear to every lost person and angel why they are lost. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

7. In which phase of judgment will every person (good and bad) who has ever lived, along with all evil angels and Satan, be present face-to-face? (1)
_____ The first phase—the current pre-advent judgment.
_____ The second phase—during the 1,000 years.
_____ The third phase—at the end of the 1,000 years.

8. Why are the record books necessary in the heavenly judgment? (1)
_____ To inform God of the truth.
_____ To remind God of what He may have forgotten.
_____ To give the angels something to do.
_____ To help people, angels, and other worlds' inhabitants understand how God handles judgment fairly and justly.

9. "Atonement" means "bringing all things into perfect divine harmony." Which of the following are part of the grand heavenly atonement? (5)
_____ Jesus' death on the cross.
_____ Judgment.
_____ Jesus' ministry as our High Priest.
_____ The flood in Noah's day.
_____ Daniel in the lion's den.
_____ The final destruction of sin and sinners.
_____ The creation of the new heavens and new earth.

10. What are the good news aspects of the judgment? (5)
_____ The judgment will be decided in favor of the saints.
_____ The devil burns forever in hell.
_____ Sin will never rise again.
_____ Sin can easily rise again in the future.
_____ Jesus is our judge, attorney, and witness.

_____ God's way of handling sin and salvation will be fully confirmed.
_____ Everything Adam and Eve lost through sin will be restored.

11. What is true about Satan as the scapegoat of judgment? (3)
_____ He is punished for originating sin.
_____ He is punished for leading everyone into sin.
_____ He has no part in paying for our sins.
_____ Satan will reject being the scapegoat and escape.

12. Judgment is not arbitrary. Instead, it essentially confirms the decisions people have already made—either to serve Jesus or to choose another master. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

13. The primary purpose of judgment is to inform people, Satan, good and evil angels, and other worlds' inhabitants that God has handled the sin crisis with wisdom, fairness, and integrity from the beginning. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

The Mark of the Beast

Scriptures: Revelation 13:1-8, Revelation 14:9-18

Lesson 20

A tattoo number, a computer chip under the skin, or something more subtle? This is one of the most misinterpreted prophecies in the entire Bible—but it is crucial to understand this topic accurately. However, in studying the mark of the beast, we must address very sensitive issues, name names, and be specific. This is not a popular thing to do today, but we must be firm because God loves His people and wants them to know the truth. This message is not ours—it is Jesus' message. And with eternal death facing those who receive the mark, it would be a crime not to help Him deliver this message.

Perhaps this lesson should come with a warning: "THE DEVIL DOES NOT WANT YOU TO READ AND COMPLETE THIS STUDY GUIDE." Please read Revelation 13:1-8, 14:9-12, and 16-18, and pray for the Holy Spirit to give you a faithful and understanding heart before embarking on this study journey.

Quick Reminder

From Lesson 2, we learned that a fierce conflict is ongoing between God and Satan. This battle has been waged for centuries since Lucifer—the most powerful angel in heaven—rebelled against God. With angels who joined him, he sought to overthrow God and take control of the universe. God and His faithful angels had no choice but to cast Lucifer and his angels out of heaven. Lucifer, who became known as the Devil and Satan, was furious. His determination to destroy God and rule the world has only grown stronger over the years. Shockingly, most of the world's population supports him in his rebellion.

God also seeks people's loyalty and cooperation, but He allows everyone to choose freely. Soon, everyone on Earth will either align with Satan or God. The final battle between Satan and God is near and is described in the book of Revelation. This book reveals that God has a sign, or mark, identifying His people. Satan also has a mark that identifies those who follow him. As always, Satan will work through an earthly power—symbolized as a beast in Revelation—to enforce his mark.

This study guide will reveal the mark of the beast, which every lost person at the end of time will receive. Unless you know what his mark is, how can you avoid receiving it?

The Papacy is the Antichrist

1. To know what "the mark" is, we must first identify the beast. How does the Bible describe this beast?

Answer: Revelation 13:1-8, 16-18 gives 11 identifying characteristics listed below:

A. It rises out of the sea (verse 1).
B. It is a composite of the four beasts in Daniel 7 (verse 2).
C. The dragon gives it power and authority (verse 2).
D. It receives a deadly wound (verse 3).
E. The deadly wound heals (verse 3).
F. It becomes a powerful political entity (verses 3, 7).
G. It becomes a powerful religious organization (verses 3, 8).
H. It is guilty of blasphemy (verses 1, 5, 6).
I. It persecutes and kills the saints (verse 7).
J. It rules for 42 months (verse 5).
K. It has the mysterious number 666 (verse 18).

Do some of these points sound familiar? They should! We encountered many of them when studying the Antichrist in Daniel 7. The “beast” of Revelation 13 is another name for the Antichrist, which we learned from Daniel 7 is the papacy.

The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation often cover the same prophetic foundations but add new details that strengthen and confirm the prophecy. So, expect to learn new things about the Antichrist in this study guide. Let’s now examine these 11 identifying points one by one:

A. It would rise from the sea (Revelation 13:1).

In prophecy, sea (or water) represents people or a populated area (Revelation 17:15). Therefore, the beast, or Antichrist, would arise among established nations. The papacy indeed arose in Western Europe, which fits this point perfectly.

B. It would be a composite of the four beasts in Daniel 7 (Revelation 13:2).

Compare the beasts of Daniel 7 with the beast in Revelation 13:
Table***##
The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four world empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The beast in Revelation 13 combines characteristics of all these empires because the papacy adopted pagan beliefs from all four and spread them globally under a Christian disguise.

A historical quote supports this:
“In a way, the [papacy] copied its structure from the Roman Empire, preserved the philosophical ideas of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and integrated practices from the Roman and Byzantine Empires, while remaining itself.”

C. It would receive its power, seat (capital city), and authority from the dragon (Revelation 13:2).

To identify the dragon, we refer to Revelation 12, where a pure woman symbolizes God’s true church (Jeremiah 6:2). This woman is about to give birth, and the dragon waits to devour the child. The child is clearly Jesus,

whom Herod (under pagan Rome) tried to kill (Matthew 2:16). Thus, the dragon represents pagan Rome, but the power behind it was Satan (Revelation 12:7-9).

The papacy indeed received its capital and authority from pagan Rome, fulfilling this point.

D. It would receive a deadly wound (Revelation 13:3).

The deadly wound occurred in 1798 when Napoleon's general Berthier entered Rome and took Pope Pius VI captive. Napoleon decreed that the papacy should end. Pope Pius VI died in 1799, and many believed the papacy had perished.
E. The deadly wound would heal, and the whole world would marvel at the beast (Revelation 13:3).Since its healing, the papacy's power has grown exponentially. Today, it is one of the most influential religious and political organizations worldwide.
Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit and Vatican insider, confirms this in his book The Keys of This Blood, describing the papacy's global power and influence.
The study continues to identify further characteristics of the beast and how the papacy aligns with every prophetic detail. Understanding these points is crucial to avoid receiving the mark of the beast.
ABOUT THE POPE:
He is determined to be the ruler of the world like Constantine in his days (49). He is protected by four governments (120). He is the most recognized person of the 20th century (123). He is a personal friend of leaders from 91 countries (490). People worldwide view him as ready for a global moral government with control (160). Sixteen thousand journalists reported on his visit to America (490).

ABOUT THE PAPACY:

The U.S. ambassador says the Vatican is incomparable as a "listening post" (120). The Vatican knows by Saturday what will happen on Monday anywhere in the world (439). The papal structure is prepared for global governance now (143).

Clearly, the wound has healed, and the eyes of nations are on the Vatican, so this point also fits the papacy.

F. It would be a powerful political authority (Revelation 13:3, 7).
See point E above.

G. It would be a very powerful religious organization (Revelation 13:3, 8).
See point E above.

H. It would be guilty of blasphemy (Revelation 13:5, 6).
The papacy is guilty of blasphemy because its priests claim to forgive sins, and its popes claim to be Christ.

I. It would make war and persecute the saints (Revelation 13:7).
The papacy persecuted and killed millions of saints during the Dark Ages.

J. It would rule for 42 months (Revelation 13:5).
The papacy ruled for 42 prophetic months, equivalent to 1,260 years, from 538 to 1798 AD.

Points H through J also fit the papacy. We have briefly mentioned them here because they were covered in detail in Study Guide 15, Question 8, sections E, G, and H.

K. It would have the mysterious number 666 (Revelation 13:18).
This verse states, "It is the number of a man," and Revelation 15:2 says it is "the number of his name." Whom do you think of when you think of the papacy? Normally, we all think of the pope. What is his official title? Here is a Catholic quote: "The title of the pope of Rome is 'Vicarius Filii Dei' (English: 'Vicar of the Son of God')." Malachi Martin, in The Keys of This Blood, uses the same title for the pope on pages 114 and 122. The footnote of Revelation 13:18 in some editions of the Douay [Catholic] Bible says, "The letters of his name shall make up this number."

Again, the papacy matches the identification of the beast with the "mark." No other power in history could align with these divine descriptions. Now that we have identified the beast, we can discover its mark or sign of authority. But first, let's look at God's Word to understand the mark of authority.

1. Andre Retif, The Catholic Spirit, trans. by Dom Aldhelm Dean, Vol. 88 of The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism (New York, Hawthorne Books, 1959), p. 85.

2. Adolf Harnack, What Is Christianity?, trans. by Thomas Bailey Saunders (New York: Putnam, 2nd rev. ed., 1901), p. 270.

3. Alexander Clarence Flick, The Rise of the Mediaeval Church (reprint: New York, Burt Franklin, 1959), pp. 148, 149.

4. Joseph Rickaby, “The Modern Papacy,” Lectures on the History of Religion, Lecture 24, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1910), p. 1.

5. (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1990)

6. “Answers to Readers’ Questions,” Our Sunday Visitor, Nov. 15, 1914.

The Sabbath as a Sign or Symbol of God’s Power

2. What is the Sign or Symbol of God’s Authority?
“I also gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between me and them, so that they would know that I, the LORD, made them holy.” (Ezekiel 20:12)
“It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth.” (Exodus 31:17)

Answer: The Scriptures above state that God gave us His Sabbath as a glorious sign of His power to create and His power to sanctify (transform and save) us. In the Bible, the words seal, sign, mark, and token are used interchangeably. The sign of God—the Sabbath—represents His holy power to rule as both Creator and Savior. Revelation 7:1-3 states that it will be written on the foreheads (minds, Hebrews 10:16) of His people. It will signify that they belong to Him and have His character. Hebrews 4:4-10 confirms this by saying that when we enter into His rest (receive salvation), we are to keep His seventh-day Sabbath as a sign, or symbol, of salvation.

True Sabbath observance signifies that a person has surrendered their life to Jesus Christ and is willing to follow Him wherever He leads.

Since the sign, or mark, of God’s authority and power is His holy Sabbath day, it logically follows that the sign, or mark, of God’s opponent—the beast—might also involve a holy day. Let’s see if it does.

(Compare Genesis 17:11 with Romans 4:11 and Revelation 7:3 with Ezekiel 9:4.)

Sunday as a Holy Day Is the Mark of the Beast, or a Sign of Authority

3. What Does the Papacy Say Is Its Sign or Mark of Authority?

Answer: Consider the following excerpt from a Catholic catechism:

“Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?”

“Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day—a change for which there is no scriptural authority.” (8)

Therefore, the papacy here claims that it changed the Sabbath to Sunday and that nearly all churches accepted the new holy day. Hence, the papacy asserts that Sunday as a holy day is the mark, or sign, of its authority and power.

(8 Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism [FRS No. 7.], (3rd American ed., rev.: New York, Edward Dunigan & Bro., 1876), p. 174.)

Changing the Sabbath to Sunday Involves Altering God’s Law—A Very Serious Matter

4. Did God Predict This Change in the Scriptures?

Answer: Yes! In describing the Antichrist in Daniel 7:25, God said it would “intend to change times and law.”

A. How Has the Papacy Attempted to Change God’s Law?
In three distinct ways:

1. In its catechisms, it has omitted the second commandment against idolatry.

2. It has shortened the fourth commandment (Sabbath) from 94 words to just eight. The original Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) clearly states that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. As changed by the papacy, the commandment reads: “Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath day.” Stated this way, it could refer to any day.

3. It divided the tenth commandment into two separate commandments.

B. How Has the Papacy Attempted to Change God’s Times?
In two ways:

1. It changed the time of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day.

2. It also altered God's biblical reckoning of time for the Sabbath. Instead of observing the Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday (as commanded in Leviticus 23:32), it adopted the pagan Roman practice of counting a day from midnight to midnight.

God foretold that these "changes" would be attempted by the beast, or the Antichrist.

Here is Another Statement from a Catholic Catechism:

"Question: Which is the Sabbath day?"

"Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day."

"Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"

"Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (9)

Here is another Catholic statement:
"The Church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance from Saturday to Sunday is proof of that fact." (10)

The papacy states in these references that its successful change of Sabbath observance to Sunday worship is evidence that its authority is superior to, or "above," the Scriptures.

(9 Peter Geiermann, The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine (St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1957 ed.), p. 50.)

10. The Catholic Record (London, Ontario, Canada, September 1, 1923).
The papacy changed the Sabbath to Sunday.

5. How could anyone dare to try to change God's holy day?
Answer: We ask the papacy, "Did you really change the Sabbath to Sunday?"

They answer, "Yes, we did. It is our mark or sign of authority and power."

We ask, "How could you even think of doing that?"

It is an important question. But the question that the papacy officially asks

Protestants is even more significant. Please read it carefully:

"You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! But by whom? Who has the authority to change the clear command of Almighty God? When God said, 'Keep the seventh day holy,' who dares to say, 'No, you may work and do all worldly things on the seventh day, but you shall keep the first day holy instead'?

The question that I do not know how you will answer is this: You are a Protestant, and you claim to go by the Bible and the Bible alone. Yet, in such a crucial matter as keeping one day out of seven holy, you go against the clear letter of the Bible and keep another day in place of the one commanded by the Bible.

The command to keep the seventh day holy is one of the Ten Commandments. You believe the other nine still bind you. Who gave you the authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your principles—if you truly follow the Bible and the Bible alone—you should be able to provide a portion of the New Testament where this fourth commandment has been explicitly changed."

11. The Library of Christian Doctrine: Why Don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day? (London: Burns and Oates, Ltd.), p. 3, 4.

Sadly, both Catholicism and Protestantism stand guilty before the heavenly judgment seat for rejecting God's holy Sabbath, His sacred sign of identity. Religious leaders who disregard God's holy Sabbath will face His wrath.

6. What solemn warnings has God given concerning His law and His sign or mark?
Answer:
A. God warns religious leaders against causing people to stumble by saying that some commandments do not matter (Malachi 2:7-9). For example, some ministers teach, "It does not matter which day you keep holy."

B. God warns people who want their ministers to preach lies instead of the truth about His law (Isaiah 30:9, 10).

C. God warns people against hardening their hearts against the truth of His law (Zechariah 7:12).

D. God warns those who say it would be "strange" to obey His law, such as

the Sabbath (Hosea 8:12).

E. God says that chaos, disasters, troubles, and world problems come because people refuse to follow His law and have even tried to change it (Isaiah 24:4-6).

F. God warns religious leaders who refuse to preach the end-time prophecies (Isaiah 29:10, 11).

G. God sternly warns that leaders who teach there is no difference between the holy (such as God's holy Sabbath) and the common (such as Sunday) will face His wrath (Ezekiel 22:26, 31).

The forehead represents the mind. People will receive a mark on their foreheads by observing Sunday as a holy day.

7. Revelation 13:16 says people will receive the mark of the beast on their forehead or their hand. What does this mean?
Answer: The forehead represents the mind (Hebrews 10:16). A person will be marked on their forehead by choosing to keep Sunday as a holy day.

The hand symbolizes work (Ecclesiastes 9:10). A person will be marked on their hand by working on God's holy Sabbath or by following Sunday laws for practical reasons (such as work or family).

The mark, whether for God or the beast, will not be visible to people. Essentially, you will mark yourself by accepting either God's sign—the Sabbath—or the beast's mark—Sunday. Though it is unseen by humans, God will know who has the mark (2 Timothy 2:19).

8. According to Isaiah 58:1, 13, 14, what crucial message does God give to His people in the last days?
"Shout aloud, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet; declare to My people their rebellion."
"If you turn your foot from breaking the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight... then you shall delight yourself in the Lord." (Isaiah 58:1, 13, 14).

Answer: He says to show "My people" that they are sinning (perhaps unknowingly) by trampling on His holy day and to urge them to stop breaking His Sabbath so He can bless them. Speak loudly so they can hear!

Note that the third angel of Revelation 14:9-12, who brings the message about

the mark of the beast, also speaks with a loud voice (verse 9). The message is too important to treat casually. It is a matter of life or death. Jesus says His sheep—His people—will follow Him when He calls (John 10:16, 27).

9. Do people who worship on Sunday (as a holy day) have the mark of the beast now?
Answer: No! No one will receive the mark of the beast until Sunday worship is enforced by law. At that time (in the future), those who choose to follow the beast's false teachings and worship on Sunday (the beast's counterfeit holy day) will receive the mark of the beast.

Those who follow Jesus and obey His truth will keep the Sabbath holy and receive His seal. Those who expect to reject the mark of the beast in the future must now come under the banner of Jesus' Sabbath. His power is available to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). With Him, all things are possible (Mark 10:27).

10. According to the book of Revelation, whom did John specifically see in God's eternal kingdom?
Answer: The answer is threefold and crystal clear:

A. Those who have God's seal or sign (His Sabbath) on their foreheads (Revelation 7:3).

B. Those who refused to identify with the beast or its image and who rejected its mark or name on their foreheads (Revelation 15:2).

C. People who today and forever follow wherever Jesus leads, trusting Him completely (Revelation 14:4). There is no other way.

Following Jesus must include keeping His seventh-day Sabbath holy.

11. What does Jesus tell people today?
"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).

Answer: What a wonderful promise! If we follow Him, we will not end up in darkness but will have His glorious truth. Nothing could be more exciting!

Furthermore, following Him and keeping His Sabbath will place God's seal on our foreheads and protect us from the terrifying plagues (Psalm 91:10) that will fall on the disobedient (Revelation 16). It also marks us as ready for Jesus' second coming.

What a blessing it is to have God's protection and assurance!

Urgent Warning
You will discover some astonishing information as you study the last three lessons of the Nine Study Guides, which address the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14. These Study Guides will explain (1) the role of the United States in the final conflict of the world, (2) how churches and world religions will be involved, (3) what global conditions will trigger the final world battle, and (4) Satan's remarkable strategy to deceive billions.

Perhaps you are wondering what Protestant churches say about the papal claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday. The quotes found in the "Your Thought Questions Answered" section of this lesson will provide shocking answers.

12. I have now decided to begin keeping His seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) as His holy day and to follow Him wherever He leads.
Answer:

Thought Questions

1. What do other preachers and pastors say about the Sabbath and Sunday?
Answer:
Here are various statements from churches and other authorities regarding the Sabbath:

Baptist:
"There was and is a commandment to 'keep holy the Sabbath day,' but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. ... It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week. ... Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament—absolutely not. There is no scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh day to the first day of the week."
— Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of The Baptist Manual, in a paper read before a meeting of Baptist ministers in New York on November 13, 1893.

Catholic:
"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [Catholics] never sanctify."
— James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, 16th edition, 1880, p. 111.

Church of Christ:
"Finally, we have the testimony of Christ upon this subject. In Mark 2:27, He says, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' From this passage, it is clear that the Sabbath was made not just for the Israelites, as Paley and Hengstenberg would have us believe, but for mankind ... that is, for the entire race, and that it was given to Adam, even in Eden, as one of those primeval institutions which God designed for the benefit of all humanity."
— Robert Milligan, Scheme of Redemption, (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1962), p. 165.

Congregationalist:
"The Christian Sabbath [Sunday] is not in the Scriptures, and was not called the Sabbath by the early Church."
— Dwight's Theology, Vol. 4, p. 401.

Episcopal:
"Sunday (Dies Solis, of the Roman calendar, 'day of the sun,' because it was dedicated to the sun), the first day of the week, was adopted by early Christians as a day of worship... There is no regulation for its observance in the New Testament, nor, indeed, any indication that the observance was to be commanded."
— "Sunday," A Religious Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, (New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 2259.

Lutheran:
"The observance of the Lord's Day [Sunday] is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the Church."
— Augsburg Confession of Faith, quoted in Catholic Sabbath Manual, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 10.

Methodist:
"Take the matter of Sunday. There is no clear scriptural evidence that the early church observed the first day of the week as a day of worship, and there is no text telling Christians to observe that day or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to it."
— Harris Franklin Rall, Christian Advocate, July 2, 1942.

Moody Bible Institute:
"The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word 'remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on stone tablets at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been abolished when

they will admit that the other nine are still binding?"
— D.L. Moody, Weighed and Wanting, p. 47.

Presbyterian:
"Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand.... The teachings of Christ confirm the perpetuity of the Sabbath."
— T.C. Blake, D.D., Theology Condensed, pp. 474, 475.

Pentecostal:
"'Why do we worship on Sunday? Does not the Bible teach us that Saturday should be the Lord's Day?' ... It seems we must seek the answer from some other source than the New Testament."
— David A. Womack, "Is Sunday the Lord's Day?" The Pentecostal Evangel, August 9, 1959, No. 2361, p. 3.

Encyclopedia:
"Sunday was the name given by the heathens to the first day of the week because it was the day on which they worshipped the sun, ... the seventh day was blessed and sanctified by God Himself, ... and He requires His creatures to keep it holy to Him. This command is universal and perpetual."
— Eadie's Biblical Cyclopedia, 1872 ed., p. 561.

Questions of thought

1. Many people have already received the mark of the beast. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

2. The mark of the beast is (1)
_____ Your Social Security number.
_____ Sunday as a holy day.
_____ Grocery store barcodes.

3. The organization of the beast that has the mark is (1)
_____ The United Nations.
_____ The Papacy.
_____ The European Union.
_____ The Trinity Commission.

4. The mark is literal and will be visible to everyone. (1)
_____ Yes.

_____ No.

5. God also has a mark, or sign, of His authority and power. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

6. God's mark of authority is (1)
_____ A secret number given to every faithful Christian.
_____ Speaking in tongues.
_____ Observing the Sabbath in remembrance of Creation and sanctification.
_____ Baptism.

7. How did the "beast" attempt to change God's law? (2)
_____ By changing the Sabbath (the fourth commandment) to Sunday.
_____ By teaching that adultery is not a sin.
_____ By removing the commandment against worshiping images.

8. In Bible prophecy, how long is 42 months? (1)
_____ 420 literal years.
_____ Three and a half literal years.
_____ 1,260 literal days.
_____ 1,260 literal years.

9. Where will the mark of the beast be placed? (2)
_____ On the hand.
_____ On the mouth.
_____ On the cheek.
_____ On the forehead.

10. Where will God's mark be placed? (1)
_____ On the hand.
_____ On the forehead.
_____ On a person's tongue.

11. Which of the three angels' messages is a warning against the mark of the beast? (1)
_____ The first angel's message.
_____ The second angel's message.
_____ The third angel's message.

12. Did the beast attempt to change God's times? (2)
_____ By celebrating New Year's Day as a holiday.
_____ By changing God's holy day from the seventh day to the first day of the

week.
_____ By setting God's holy hours from midnight to midnight instead of sunset to sunset.

13. Did Jesus give us a warning message about the mark of the beast? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

14. In Scripture, the words "sign," "mark," "seal," and "token" are used interchangeably. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

15. There is no biblical authority for observing Sunday as a holy day. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

America in Bible Prophecy

Lesson 21
Could it be true? America in Bible prophecy—absolutely! When you think about it, it makes sense that the most powerful and influential nation in the world would play a key role in the astounding closing events of earth's history. But even more amazing things await you as the Bible reveals how the world's leading nation came to be and why! Please read Revelation 13:11-18 before beginning this guide, because these eight verses provide a prophetic picture of America's future.

The beast of Revelation 13:1-10 represents the papacy.

1. Two major world powers are represented in Revelation chapter 13. What is the first one?

Answer: The beast with seven heads (Revelation 13:1-10) is none other than the Roman Papacy.
(See Study Guide 15 for a complete lesson on this topic.) Remember that beasts in Bible prophecy represent nations or world powers (Daniel 7:17, 23). In 1798, General Berthier inflicted a deadly wound on the papacy by taking the pope captive.

2. In what year was the papacy predicted to lose its worldwide influence and power?

“And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.” (Revelation 13:5)

Answer: The Bible predicted that the papacy would lose its global influence and power at the end of the 42 months. This prophecy was fulfilled in 1798, when Napoleon’s General Berthier took the pope captive, and the papal power suffered a deadly wound. (For full details, see Study Guide 15.)

The Beast of Revelation 13:11-18 Represents America

3. Which nation was prophesied to arise at the same time the papacy was receiving a deadly wound?
“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.” (Revelation 13:11)

Answer:
The captivity of the pope mentioned in verse 10 occurred in 1798, and a new power (verse 11) appeared at that time. The United States declared its independence in 1776, adopted the Constitution in 1787, ratified the Bill of Rights in 1791, and was recognized as a world power by 1798. This timeline corresponds with the United States. No other power fits these criteria.

Prophecy foretold that America would arise from a sparsely populated area.

4. What does it mean that the beast “comes up out of the earth”?
Answer:
This nation rises “out of the earth” instead of the sea, as the other nations described in Daniel and Revelation did. We know from Revelation that water represents areas with large populations:
“The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” (Revelation 17:15)

Therefore, the earth represents the opposite – a sparsely populated area. This means that this new nation would arise from a part of the world that was largely unpopulated before the late 1700s. It could not arise among the crowded and struggling nations of the Old World. It had to emerge in a land with fewer inhabitants.

5. What do its two lamb-like horns and the absence of crowns symbolize?
Answer:
Horns represent kings and kingdoms, or governments (Daniel 7:24; 8:21). In this case, they symbolize the two governing principles of America: civil liberty and religious freedom. These two principles are also called “republicanism” (a government without a king) and “Protestantism” (a church without a pope).

Unlike many nations in history, which taxed their citizens to support state religions and oppressed religious dissenters, America introduced something entirely new – the freedom to worship as one chooses without government interference and with government protection. The absence of crowns indicates a republican form of government rather than a monarchy.

The lamb-like horns suggest a nation that is innocent, young, non-oppressive, peace-loving, and spiritual. Jesus is referred to as the Lamb 28 times in the book of Revelation, indicating that this new government sought to uphold Christ-like principles. No other power on earth fits the characteristics and timeline of the lamb-like beast except the United States.

Special Note:
How we wish the description of America ended here, but it does not, because Jesus did not stop there. What follows is shocking and distressing.

The United States is indeed a great nation—protecting freedom of conscience, the press, speech, and enterprise. Its generosity, compassion for the underprivileged, and strong Christian heritage are remarkable. Although not perfect, millions from other nations rush to become American citizens each year. If America’s doors were opened wide, a large portion of the world’s population would immediately move there, viewing it as “heaven on earth.”

Sadly, this greatly blessed nation will undergo drastic changes in the future, causing unprecedented sorrow and distress for God’s people. We report this with calmness and deep concern.

America in the End Times Will Force People to Worship or Face Punishment

6. What does it mean when prophecy in Revelation 13:11 says America will speak “like a dragon”?
Answer:
As we learned in Study Guide 20, the dragon is Satan, who works through various governments to establish his evil kingdom and crush God’s church by

persecuting and destroying His people. Satan's ultimate goal has always been to seize the authority and throne of God and to force people to worship and obey him (see Study Guide 2 for more details).
So, when America "speaks like a dragon," it means that the United States (under Satan's influence) will, in the last days, force people to worship against their consciences or face punishment.

Apostate Religion and Civil Governments Will Unite in the End Times to Force Consciences

7. What will America do that causes it to speak like a dragon?
Answer:
Consider these four critical actions:

A. "He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence." (Revelation 13:12)
The United States will become a persecuting power, forcing people to violate their consciences, just as the papal power described in the first half of Revelation 13 did.

B. "He causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (Revelation 13:12)
The United States will lead the world in forcing worship and obedience to the papal Antichrist. The ultimate issue will be worship. Whom will you worship and obey—Christ the Creator and Redeemer, or the Antichrist?

The entire movement will appear highly spiritual. Miraculous signs will occur (Revelation 13:14, 15), deceiving billions (Revelation 13:3). Those who refuse to join the movement will be seen as extremists. Jesus refers to end-time Protestant America as the "false prophet" (Revelation 19:20; 20:10) because it will appear righteous but will act in a Satanic manner.

C. "Telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast." (Revelation 13:14)
The United States will create an image of the beast by enforcing religious laws. This will mirror the union of church and state used by the papacy during the Middle Ages when millions were martyred for their faith.

D. "And cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed." (Revelation 13:15)
The United States will eventually influence all nations to impose a worldwide death decree on those who refuse to worship the beast or his image.
---

8. What specific issues will lead to the use of force and the death decree?
"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast ... and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast." (Revelation 13:15-17)

Answer:
The final conflict will center on worship and obedience to the beast—Sunday as a holy day—versus worship and obedience to Christ—His seventh-day Sabbath.

When issues become clear, and people are forced to choose between worshiping on Sunday or Sabbath, those who choose Sunday over the Sabbath will, in essence, worship the beast.
---

9. Can the government really control buying and selling?
Answer:
During World War II, purchasing certain goods (like sugar, tires, and gasoline) was controlled through ration stamps. Without these stamps, money was useless.

In our computerized age, a system using Social Security numbers or other identifiers could easily track and restrict transactions. Although we do not know the exact method, we can be certain that it will happen, as Revelation 13:16-17 clearly states.

Two Emerging Powers
Revelation chapter 13 is clear. Two great nations will emerge in the end times: the United States and the Papacy. The United States will support the Papacy by leading the effort to force the people of the world to worship the beast (the Papacy) and receive its mark, or face death. The following two questions will evaluate the power of these two great nations.

The Papacy is the most powerful religious and political authority in the world.

10. How much power and influence does the Papacy have today?
Answer: It is the most powerful religious and political authority in the world. Nearly every leading nation has an official ambassador or government representative at the Vatican. Consider the following facts:

A. The Papacy holds such tremendous influence and power that almost every major nation consults with it before making major policy decisions. "Its large diplomatic corps maintains relations with more than 100 nations." U.S. News

and World Report, October 30, 1978, p. 24.

B. It takes credit for the fall of communism, claiming that Mary, the mother of Jesus, guided the pope's strategy to bring down communism. "Handmaid or Feminist," Time, December 30, 1991, pp. 64, 65.

C. The pope's goal is to unite the Christian world under papal leadership by the end of this century. He has made over 40 world trips to lay the groundwork for this goal. Gene H. Hogberg, The Plain Truth, November/December 1989, pp. 24, 25.

D. The global response has been remarkably close. During the Iraq crisis, the pope and the U.S. president sometimes discussed world issues weekly by telephone. U.S. News and World Report, August 13, 1990, p. 18.

E. On June 7, 1982, former President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II met for 50 minutes at the Vatican and formed a plan to eliminate communism. The United States shipped tons of advanced communication equipment to Poland (the starting point) to help spread vital information to citizens. "The Holy Alliance," Time, February 1992, pp. 28, 31, 35.

F. Gorbachev said, "Everything that happened in Eastern Europe in recent years would not have been possible without the pope's efforts and the significant role, including the political role, he played on the world stage." Mikhail Gorbachev, Toronto Star, March 9, 1992.

The Papacy, which once referred to Protestants as "heretics," now calls them "separated brethren" and graciously suggests that all work and pray together for peace and God's presence. Millions of Protestants are deeply drawn to this appeal. Indeed, several Protestant denominations have engaged in formal talks with the Papacy to resolve differences that caused the Reformation.

America is the world's leading military power.

11. How much power and influence does the United States have today?
Answer: The United States is considered the world's leading military power and the center of global influence. Consider the following:

A. "[America is] the only remaining superpower on the planet." "The UN Obsession," Time, May 9, 1994, p. 86.

B. "There is no prospect in the immediate future of any power to rival the United States." Charles Krauthammer, "The Lonely Superpower," The New Republic, July 29, 1992, p. 23.

C. Yassir Arafat referred to America as the "new Rome" because, just as ancient Rome was the unrivaled power of its time, the United States is now number one. Newsweek, August 12, 1991, p. 33.

D. "America's power now determines all major global events." Jim Hoagland, "Of Heroes ...," The Washington Post, August 21, 1991, p. A-23.

When a Marxist group overthrew Ethiopia's government, America was asked to mediate. When Boris Yeltsin took power as president of the new independent Russia, his first visit was to the United States. Former USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev turned to America in his crisis. When Kuwait was invaded, its government sought help from America. The U.S.-led war against Iraq was supported by nearly the entire world.

A National Public Radio journalist referred to the U.S. president as the "president of the world." We now have "an unusual structure of a unipolar world, with the United States at the apex of the international system." Krauthammer, The New Republic, p. 23.

All nations of the world now look to the United States for protection and support.

12. It is clear that the influence and authority of the United States and the Papacy are rapidly increasing. What other factors might help lay the foundation for a global law to kill those who refuse to violate their conscience?
Answer: We cannot say for certain, but some emerging factors include the following:

A. Terrorist activities.
B. Unrest and the increase of crime and evil.
C. The war on drugs.
D. Major economic collapse.
E. AIDS and other epidemic diseases.
F. Nuclear threats from radical nations.
G. Political corruption.
H. Severe injustice in the courts.
I. Welfare abuse.
J. Increasing taxes.
K. Pornography and rampant immorality.
L. Terrifying global disasters.
M. Radical "special interest" groups.
N. The abortion crisis.
A backlash against corruption, lawlessness, immorality, permissiveness,

injustice, poverty, weak and incompetent political leaders, and many similar woes could easily spark demands for strict laws, especially if they are enforced with determination.

13. When the world's condition worsens, what will Satan do to deceive many people?
"And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived." — Revelation 13:13, 14.

Answer:
The United States will experience a false revival worldwide and will push for religious laws to be passed, forcing everyone to participate. (This is represented by the "image of the beast" in Revelation 13:14.) People will be required to ignore God's holy seventh-day Sabbath and instead worship on the beast's "holy" day—Sunday. Some will comply for social or economic reasons.

The world's conditions will become so unbearable that a global movement calling for a "return to God and prayer," including worship and prayer on Sunday, will seem to be the only solution. Satan will deceive the world into believing that accepting the Bible's truth and honoring Sunday is necessary. However, obeying and worshiping the beast will exclude people from God's kingdom. No wonder Jesus warns about worshiping the beast and receiving its mark in Revelation!

In the last days, God's message of final hope will reach everyone.

14. While interest in the false revival increases, what will be happening with the true worldwide revival led by God's people in the end times?

Answer:
The Bible says the entire world will be "illuminated" by God's glory (Revelation 18:1). Everyone on earth will be reached (Mark 16:15) with God's final message, which is the threefold message of Revelation 14:6-14.

God's last-day church will grow rapidly as millions join His people, accepting His offer of salvation through free grace and faith in Jesus, transforming them into His obedient servants. Many people and leaders from all nations will refuse to worship the beast and embrace its false teachings. Instead, they will worship and obey Jesus alone. They will receive His holy sign—the

Sabbath—on their foreheads (Revelation 7:2, 3), sealing them for eternity.

Growing Revival Angers the False Movement
This increasing growth among God's people will anger the false movement. Its leaders will become convinced that those refusing to participate in the false global revival are the cause of the world's troubles (Daniel 11:44). They will deny them the right to buy and sell (Revelation 13:16, 17), but God will feed (Isaiah 33:16) and protect His people (Psalm 34:7).

Satan's Greatest Deception—Impersonating Christ

15. In desperation, what will the U.S.-led coalition eventually decide to do to its enemies (Revelation 13:15)? What will its leaders do to convince people that God is with them?

Answer:
They will perform miraculous signs convincing everyone except God's faithful people (Matthew 24:24). Using spirits (or fallen angels) from Satan (Revelation 16:13, 14), they will impersonate dead loved ones through spiritualism (Revelation 18:23) and may even claim to be prophets and apostles of the Bible.

These lying spirits (John 8:44) will insist that God sent them to encourage everyone to join the movement.

Satan Appears as Christ—His Angels Impersonate Christian Ministers
Satan's angels will also appear as God-fearing pastors, and Satan will present himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). As his ultimate deception, Satan will claim to be Jesus (Matthew 24:23, 24).

Pretending to be Christ, Satan could easily claim that he changed the Sabbath to Sunday and encourage his followers to maintain their global revival and observe his "holy" day—Sunday.

Billions Will Be Deceived
Believing Satan is Jesus, billions will bow at his feet and join the false movement. "The whole world marveled and followed the beast." — Revelation 13:3 (NEB).*

This deception will have enormous consequences. However, God's end-time people will not be deceived because they test everything by the Bible (Isaiah 8:19, 20; 2 Timothy 2:15). The Bible says God's law cannot be changed (Matthew 5:18). It also states that when Jesus returns, every eye will see Him

(Revelation 1:7), and He will not touch the earth but remain in the clouds and call His people to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

The New English Bible, ©1961, 1970 by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press. Used by permission.

16. How can we stay safe from the powerful deceptions of the last days?

Answer:

A. Test every teaching by the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:19, 20).

B. Follow the truth as Jesus reveals it. He promises that those who do so will never end up in error (John 7:17).

C. Stay close to Jesus daily (John 15:5).

Reminder: This is Study Guide 6 in our series of nine on the three angels' messages. The next Study Guide will show how Christian churches and other world religions will respond to end-time events.

17. Are you willing to worship and obey Jesus, even if it means facing ridicule, persecution, and ultimately the death penalty?

Answer:

Reflection Questions

1. It seems unfair that, during the final crisis, people who never heard God's truth before will unknowingly choose the counterfeit and be lost.

No one will face the final crisis without first hearing (Mark 16:15) and understanding (John 1:9) God's vital last-day message (Revelation 14:6). People will choose to receive the mark of the beast at that time simply because they do not want to pay the price of following Christ.

2. What is the battle of Armageddon mentioned in Revelation 16:12-16? When and where will it be fought?

The battle of Armageddon is the final war between Christ and Satan. It will be fought on earth and begin just before the end of time. The battle will be interrupted by Jesus' second coming. It will resume after 1,000 years when

the wicked surround the Holy City, hoping to capture it. The battle will end when God sends fire from heaven to destroy the wicked (Revelation 20:9). Study Guide 12 explains the 1,000 years in detail.

What Does "Armageddon" Mean?
Armageddon is a symbolic name for the "battle of the great day of God Almighty" between Christ and Satan, involving all the nations of the world (Revelation 16:12-16, 19).

The "kings of the east" represent God the Father and God the Son. In the Bible, "the east" symbolizes God's heavenly kingdom (Revelation 7:2; Ezekiel 43:2; Matthew 24:27).

In this final battle, nearly the entire world will unite (Revelation 16:14) to fight against Jesus, the Lamb, and His people (Revelation 17:14; 19:19). Their aim will be to destroy all who refuse to worship the beast and accept his mark (Revelation 13:15-17).
Deception Follows Rejection
People who reject God's last-day threefold message (even though they know it is true) will be so deceived that they will sincerely believe they are supporting God's kingdom by attempting to destroy His people (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

They will view the saints as stubborn, hopeless fanatics who are destroying the entire world by refusing to join the false global revival.

The Second Coming of Jesus Will Stop the War
The war will be worldwide. Governments will simultaneously attempt to destroy God's people, but God will intervene. The symbolic Euphrates River will dry up (Revelation 16:12). The waters represent people (Revelation 17:15). The drying up of the Euphrates means that the people who have been supporting the beast (Satan's kingdom) will suddenly withdraw their support. The beast's support will dry up. Its alliance (Revelation 16:13, 14) will collapse (Revelation 16:19). The second coming of Jesus will stop this war and save His people (Revelation 6:14-17; 16:18-21; 19:11-20).

War Resumes After 1,000 Years
After the 1,000 years, Satan will openly emerge as the leader of armies against God and His people. He will once again wage war against God as he tries to seize the Holy City. Then Satan and his followers will be destroyed by fire from heaven (see Study Guides 11 and 12). Every follower of Satan will be destroyed. Every follower of Jesus will enter His eternal kingdom.

3. The Bible says, "The time is coming when anyone who kills you will think

they are offering a service to God" (John 16:2). Do you think this will be literally fulfilled in our time?
Yes. The final-day alliance of world governments and religions will eventually lose all compassion for God's people who refuse to join the counterfeit revival or accept its mark (Sunday worship). They will believe that the miraculous signs accompanying their revival prove its authenticity—signs like healing the sick or the conversion of notorious God-haters, immoral movie stars, drug lords, and infamous criminals. This alliance will insist that no one should be allowed to disrupt this global revival uniting all religions. Everyone will be urged to set aside personal feelings and "stubborn doctrines" (such as the Sabbath) and join the worldwide movement for peace and brotherhood. Everything else will be considered secondary. Those who refuse to comply will be viewed as disloyal, unpatriotic, anti-Christ, and ultimately as dangerous fanatics who should not be tolerated. On that day, those who kill God's people will believe they are doing God a service.

4. When I study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, it seems clear that the real enemy is always the devil. Do you agree?
Absolutely! You are 100% correct! Satan is always the true enemy. He uses leaders and nations of the world to harm God's people, thereby causing grief to Jesus and the Father. We easily forget that Satan is the enemy. He is responsible for all evil. Let us blame him and be cautious in how we judge and condemn the people or organizations that harm God's people and the church. Sometimes, they are unaware or completely ignorant that they are hurting anyone. But that is never the case with Satan—he always knows exactly what he is doing. He deliberately hurts God and His people.

5. Would the death of a pope or the election of a new president affect the prophecy about America in Revelation 13:11-18?
The prophecy will be fulfilled regardless of who is pope or president. A new pope or president might temporarily accelerate or slow down its fulfillment, but the final outcome is guaranteed by Bible prophecy.

6. Are the lamb-like beast of Revelation 13:11-18 and the "false prophet" of Revelation 16:13 the same power?
Yes. In Revelation 19:20, where God mentions the destruction of the Antichrist beast, He also refers to the destruction of the false prophet. In this passage, God identifies the false prophet as the power that "worked miracles" before the beast and "deceived those who received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image." This is a clear reference to the actions of the lamb-like beast described in Revelation 13:11-18. In this Study Guide, we have identified the lamb-like beast as the United States. Therefore, the lamb-like beast and the false prophet are clearly the same power.

Questions:

1. In Bible prophecy, America is compared to:

( ) A man dressed in red, white, and blue.

( ) An eagle with a computer on its back.

( ) A beast with two horns like a lamb.

2. What do the two horns represent?

( ) Wealth and military power.

( ) Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.

( ) Civil and religious freedom.

3. What does “coming up out of the earth” mean?

( ) That Americans would prefer rural living.

( ) That this new nation would arise in a sparsely populated area.

( ) That some early Americans would live in caves.

4. In this prophecy, the horns like a lamb mean that America:

( ) Will be shy and restrained.

( ) Will be a sheep-raising nation.

( ) Will arise as a peaceful, spiritual nation.

5. According to Revelation 13, when did America emerge?

( ) 1492.

( ) 1798.

( ) 1620.

6. Revelation 13 says that America will eventually speak “like a dragon.” What does this mean?

( ) Its people will become angry and difficult to understand.

( ) It will use fire-based weapons of destruction.

( ) It will force people to worship against their conscience or face death.

7. God’s mark, sign, or symbol of authority is:

( ) The Lamb.

( ) The beast with two horns.

( ) The Sabbath, God’s holy day.

8. How will America make the “image of the beast”?

( ) By producing and selling many images of the beast.

( ) By making a beast statue to display in Washington, D.C.

( ) By forming a church-state union (modeled after the papacy at its height) that will enforce religious practices.

9. According to Revelation 13:15-17, what punishment will be given to those who refuse the mark of the beast?

( ) Not allowed to buy or sell.

( ) Exiled to outer space.

( ) Death.

( ) Forced to apologize personally to the beast.

10. What two earthly powers will have the most influence at the end of time?

( ) Revived Europe.

( ) Japan.

( ) China.

( ) The United States.

( ) The Papacy.

11. What are truths about the Battle of Armageddon?

( ) It is Earth's final battle.

( ) The "kings of the east" are Japan and China.

( ) The beast's goal is to destroy God's people.

( ) It will be worldwide.

( ) It begins before Jesus' second coming and ends after the wicked surround the Holy City at the end of the 1,000 years.

( ) Armageddon symbolizes the final battle between Christ and the Antichrist, or Satan.

( ) Drying up the Euphrates means the beast will lose the support of most followers.

( ) It will be fought only in Palestine.

12. How successful will God's true end-time revival be?

( ) The whole world will be converted.

( ) Everyone will hear the message.

( ) Millions will accept it.

( ) It will fail; the devil will stop it.

13. How successful will the counterfeit end-time movement be?

( ) Many nations will not support it.

( ) It will succeed only in America and Europe.

( ) Everyone except God's faithful will join and support it.

14. How powerful will the false revival's miracles be?

( ) Not very; people will see through the tricks.

( ) Strong enough to deceive nearly the entire world.

( ) Only the uneducated will be fooled.

( ) So powerful that only God's chosen ones will avoid deception.

Another Woman

Lesson 22

Every marriage must be based on faithfulness—and likewise, in our union with Christ, we must remain faithful to Him and His Word. Revelation speaks of Christ's true bride, but there is another woman who seeks to lead the faithful away from God's Word. Revelation gives a shocking message about Babylon, this other woman. Babylon has fallen, and Christ's people must avoid her allurements or perish! This marks the beginning of the second part of the three angels' messages. In this lesson, you will discover the true identity of spiritual Babylon and learn how to avoid being deceived by her seductive beauty... What could be more important?

In the book of Revelation, God calls this woman "Babylon."

1. How does Jesus describe Babylon in the book of Revelation?
"I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters."

“And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns... In her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (Revelation 17:1, 3-5).

Answer:
In Revelation 17:1-6, Jesus describes Babylon as a harlot dressed in scarlet and purple. She sits on a scarlet-colored beast with seven heads and ten horns and is seated on many waters.

2. Who is the pure woman symbolized in Revelation chapter 12?
Answer:
The pure woman, clothed with the sun, is described in Revelation 12:1-6. As we learned in Study Guide 20, this pure woman represents God’s true church, which remains faithful to her bridegroom, Jesus. We will study Revelation chapter 12 in greater depth in Study Guide 23.

3. What does a harlot represent in Bible prophecy?
“Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations… You trusted in your beauty, and played the harlot” (Ezekiel 16:2, 15).

Answer:
Just as a pure woman represents a faithful church devoted to Jesus, an unclean woman symbolizes a corrupt or fallen church that is unfaithful to Him (James 4:4).

Many Protestant Reformers taught that “Babylon” in Revelation 17 refers to the papacy.

4. Can we identify the harlot (church) called “Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots” in Revelation chapter 17?
Answer:
Yes, it is widely recognized that there is only one church that claims to be the “mother church”—the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic priest John A. O’Brien stated: “The observance [of Sunday] remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which non-Catholic denominations broke away.”

The characteristics used in Revelation 17 to describe Mother Babylon and the beast she rides clearly align with the papacy:

A. She persecuted the saints (verse 6). (See Study Guides 15 and 20.)
B. She is dressed in purple and scarlet (verse 4). Popes often wear the royal color purple in official functions, and scarlet is the color worn by Catholic cardinals.

C. The seven heads of the beast (verse 3) represent seven mountains (verse 9). It is well known that Rome—the headquarters of the papacy—is built on seven hills.
D. The beast is guilty of blasphemy (verse 3), which also clearly aligns with the papacy. (See Study Guides 15 and 20.)
E. She reigns over the kings of the earth (verse 18).

Historian Alexander Flick states that by the 13th century, the pope was, "at least in theory and claim, the ruler of the whole world in both spiritual and temporal matters." Such authority cannot be attributed to any other earthly kingdom or government. Revelation 17 identifies the papacy with unmistakable clarity.

Note: Many leaders of the Protestant Reformation (including Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Cranmer, Tyndale, Latimer, Ridley, and others) taught that the papacy is the power described here.

1. John A. O'Brien, The Faith of Millions (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), p. 401.

2. The Rise of the Mediaeval Church (New York: Burt Franklin, 1959), pp. 575, 576.

3. George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 32-34.

The word "Babel" originated from the Tower of Babel. It means "confusion."

5. What is the literal meaning of the word "Babel," and what is its origin?
Answer: The words "Babel" and "Babylon" mean "confusion." The name Babel originated from the Tower of Babel, which was built after the Flood by rebellious pagans who hoped to construct it so high that floodwaters could never cover it again (Genesis 11:4). However, the Lord confused their language, resulting in such chaos that they were forced to stop building. They then called the tower "Babel" or "confusion."

Later, during the Old Testament era, a global pagan empire called Babylon arose, which became an enemy of God's people, Israel. It was marked by rebellion, disobedience, the persecution of God's people, pride, and idolatry (Jeremiah 39:6, 7; 50:29, 31-33; 51:24, 34, 47; Daniel chapters 3 and 5). In Isaiah chapter 14, God uses Babylon as a symbol of Satan himself due to its opposition to and destruction of God's work and people.

In the New Testament book of Revelation, the word "Babylon" is used to signify a religious system that opposes God's spiritual Israel—His church (Revelation 14:8; 16:19). Churches that accept the false teachings of Mother Babylon become "Babylon" themselves.

6. Who are the harlot daughters of Mother Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17:5?

Answer: They represent certain churches that initially opposed the false teachings of Mother Babylon and separated from her during the great Protestant Reformation. However, later they began to adopt the principles and practices of the mother and thus fell themselves. No woman is born a harlot, and neither were these Protestant churches in their beginning. Any church or organization that teaches and follows the false doctrines and practices of Babylon becomes a fallen church or daughter. Thus, "Babylon" is a family name encompassing the mother church and her fallen daughters.

The beast of Revelation 17 represents civil government. A woman riding a beast signifies that the church controls the state.

7. Why is Mother Babylon depicted riding a beast in Revelation 17? What does the beast represent?

Answer: In Revelation 13:1-10, Jesus identifies the papacy as a blend of church and state (for more details, see Study Guide 20). In Revelation 17, Jesus depicts the church (the harlot) and the state (the beast) as separate entities, though they are related. The woman sits on the beast, symbolizing that the church is controlling the government.

Non-Christian religions and apostate Protestantism will join the papacy as allies in the final conflict against God and His followers.

8. What other powers will join the papacy in fulfilling end-time events?

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:13, 14).

Answer: The dragon of Revelation 12:3, 4 and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-14 and 19:20 will form an alliance with the beast of Revelation 13:1-10, which is the papacy.

A. The dragon of Revelation chapter 12 represents Satan working through pagan Rome (see Study Guide 20 for more details). In the last days, it includes non-Christian religions such as Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, New Age

spirituality, secular humanism, etc.

B. The false prophet represents apostate Protestantism based in America, which will lead in enforcing and promoting worldwide worship of the beast (see Study Guide 21).

C. The beast is the papacy (see Study Guide 20).

D. These three powers—non-Christian religions and secular governments, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism—will unite in the final battle of Armageddon against God, His law, and His faithful followers. This alliance is called "Babylon the Great" by Jesus in Revelation 18:2.

Satan's powerful miracles, performed through his angels who masquerade as the spirits of the dead, will unite the world in supporting the beast.

9. How will these diverse organizations successfully unite?
"These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast" (Revelation 17:13).

Answer: Revelation 16:13, 14 states that "unclean spirits like frogs," which are "spirits of demons," will unite them through the miracles they perform. Spiritualism—the belief that the dead are alive and can communicate with the living—will be the common thread binding them together. Satan and his angels, posing as the spirits of deceased loved ones, ancient prophets, heavenly angels (2 Corinthians 11:13, 14), and even Christ Himself (Matthew 24:24), will convince the world that their work is divinely directed (see Study Guide 10). Tragically, all three groups believe that the dead are alive:

A. Roman Catholicism prays to Mary and other deceased saints, believing these saints bless their followers through miracles.

B. Nearly all non-Christian religions practice some form of ancestor worship or spirit communication. The New Age movement emphasizes "channeling" to communicate with the dead.

C. Apostate Protestantism teaches that the dead are not truly dead but rather alive in heaven or hell. This belief leaves them vulnerable to deception by evil spirits pretending to be the dead.

Babylon falls because it abandons the truth of the Bible.

10. What sins does God blame Babylon for?

A. “Babylon the Great has fallen.” (Revelation 18:2)
Answer: Falling means abandoning the truth of the Bible and the true worship of the true God (2 Peter 3:17).

B. “It has become a dwelling place for demons and a prison for every unclean spirit.” “By your sorcery all the nations were deceived.” (Revelation 18:2, 23)
Answer: Here, God accuses Babylon of (1) communicating directly with demons by inviting evil spirits through spiritualism, and (2) deceiving almost the entire world through false, demonic spirits.

C. “The inhabitants of the earth were made drunk” with the wine of her abominations and fornication found in her cup (Revelation 17:2, 4; 18:3).
Answer: The word “abomination” in the Bible signifies falsehood (Proverbs 12:22). Babylon’s wine, which contains false teachings, confuses and spiritually intoxicates those who drink it.

D. “The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” (Revelation 18:3)
Answer: The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7, 8) and must love and be faithful to Him alone, which Jesus said means keeping His commandments (John 14:15). Here, the papacy is blamed for turning away from her husband, Jesus (James 4:4), and forming unlawful relationships with civil governments (church-state union) for her support.

E. The trafficking of “the souls of men.” (Revelation 18:13)
Answer: Here, God condemns Babylon for treating people as commodities rather than as precious children of God.
Accepting false teachings brings spiritual drunkenness, making it very difficult to understand the truth.

11. What are some of the false teachings in Babylon’s wine that cause people to become spiritually drunk and confused?
Answer: Surprisingly, some of the most popular Protestant teachings today are not found in the Bible at all. They were brought into Protestant churches by the mother church of Rome, which adopted them from paganism. Some of these false teachings include:

A. God’s law has been changed or abolished.
God’s law cannot be changed or abolished (Luke 16:17). Study Guide 6 provides irrefutable evidence.

B. The soul is immortal.
The Bible mentions “soul” and “spirit” 1,700 times but never describes them as immortal. People die (Job 4:17), and no one receives immortality until Jesus’ second coming (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). (See Study Guide 10 for more details.)

C. Sinners burn forever in hell.
The Bible teaches that sinners will be completely destroyed (cease to exist) in both body and soul by fire (Matthew 10:28). Eternal torment in hell is not taught in the Bible. (See Study Guide 11 for clarification.)

D. Immersion baptism is not necessary.
Immersion baptism is the only baptism recognized by Scripture. (See Study Guide 9 for more details.)

E. Sunday is God’s holy day.
The Bible clearly teaches that God’s holy day is the seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday. (For more information, see Study Guide 7.)

Note: Believing these false teachings leads to “confusion” (which is the meaning of the word “Babylon”) and makes understanding the Scriptures much harder.

Thought-Provoking Reflections
It is sobering to realize that many people may be drinking Babylon’s wine unknowingly. Perhaps this is all new to you. If so, please ask God to guide you (Matthew 7:7). Then, search the Scriptures to see if these things are true (Acts 17:11). Promise to follow wherever Jesus leads, and He will not allow you to be led into error (John 7:17).

Heavenly angels will be on the side of God’s people in the final battle of the world.

12. Who will be on the Lord’s side in the battle of Armageddon?
Answer: In this final conflict, the heavenly angels (Hebrews 1:13, 14; Matthew 13:41, 42) and God’s people—the remnant (Revelation 12:17)—will join with Jesus, who leads the armies of heaven (Revelation 19:11-16), against Satan and his followers.

God’s remnant consists of those who reject Babylon’s falsehoods (Study Guide 23 will provide more details). They are known for:
(1) Their love for Jesus (1 John 5:2, 3)
(2) Their faithfulness and trust in Him (Revelation 14:12)

(3) Their unwavering obedience to His Word and commandments (Revelation 12:17; John 8:31, 32).

In the last days, Satan will deceive everyone unwilling to seek clear biblical evidence for every doctrine.

13. What strategy will Satan use in the final conflict between God's truth and his lies?
Answer: Although Satan hates God and His Son, he rarely admits this openly. Instead, he and his evil spirits will masquerade as holy angels and dedicated Christian ministers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). What he presents as evidence will seem righteous, spiritual, and Christlike—so convincing that almost the entire world will be deceived and follow him (Matthew 24:24). Satan will even use the Bible, as he did when tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). His reasoning is so persuasive that it deceived one-third of heaven's angels, Adam and Eve, and (at the time of the Flood) everyone on earth except eight people.

The word of God exposes satan's strategies

14. What is God's counter-strategy?
"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20)
Answer: God always opposes Satan's lies with the truth of the Bible. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus repeatedly quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11). Through His faithful people, God will expose the unbiblical nature of Babylon the Great. He will reveal that Babylon presents a false gospel (Galatians 1:8-12) that has led billions astray. God's counter-strategy is outlined in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14.

15. Will God's end-time messages of warning and hope have an impact?
"After these things, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory." (Revelation 18:1)
Answer: In Scripture, angels represent messengers or messages (Hebrews 1:13, 14). God's final call will be so powerful that the entire world will be illuminated with His truth and glory. This urgent message will reach every person on earth (Revelation 14:6; Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14).

16. What urgent call will Jesus make to those in Babylon?
Answer: Jesus will say: "Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." (Revelation 18:4, 5).

17. How will Jesus' people in Babylon respond when they hear His call?
Answer: Jesus answers: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:16, 27).

18. If you are in Babylon, are you ready to obey Jesus' urgent call to come out?
Answer:
Questions of Thought
1. Should I stay in Babylon and try to reform it instead of leaving?
No. Jesus says Babylon will be destroyed, not reformed. It will be hopelessly drunk on her wine (identified as false doctrine in Revelation 18:5, 6). This is why He calls His people to come out (Revelation 18:4).

2. Who are the kings of the east in Revelation 16:12?
The kings of the east are the heavenly Kings (the Father and the Son). They are called the kings of the east because that is the direction from which heavenly beings approach the earth. Consider the following examples:

A. Jesus' second coming will be from the east (Matthew 24:27).
B. The glory of God comes from the east (Ezekiel 43:2).
C. The sealing angel of Revelation comes from the east (Revelation 7:2).
D. The sun, symbolizing Jesus, rises in the east (Malachi 4:2).

3. Does the warning about Babylon's fall suggest that Babylon has not always fallen?
Yes, it does. Many churches that make up Babylon once stood firm, tall, and faithful to Jesus. Their founders were God-fearing people who diligently studied the Bible to discover its truths. Not all churches have fallen today. However, any church that teaches the false doctrines of Babylon and follows her practices becomes one of her fallen daughters.

4. Where should a Christian go when called out of Babylon?
Find people who keep God's commandments, have the faith of Jesus, and preach the three angels' messages worldwide—and join them (Revelation 14:6-12). Lesson Guide 23 will fully explain God's end-time church.

5. What do the ten kings of Revelation 17:12-16 represent?
The ten kings symbolize the nations of the world. The ten toes of the image in Daniel 2 and the ten horns of the dreadful beast in Daniel 7 represented the ten kingdoms of Europe. However, Revelation chapters 11 through 18 expand this meaning to refer to "all the kings of the earth" or "all nations" (see Revelation 16:14; 18:3).

6. What does the symbolism of “frogs” mean in Revelation 16:13, 14?
Frogs catch their prey with their tongues, which may symbolize the counterfeit gift of tongues spreading worldwide today. Remember, miracles—including the gift of tongues—only prove supernatural power. But the Bible warns that supernatural power can come from either God or Satan. It further states that Satan, masquerading as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), will use miraculous powers so effectively that nearly the whole world will be deceived and follow him (Revelation 13:3). Currently, Satan uses the counterfeit gift of tongues to unite churches and religions of all kinds—including pagans and spirit worshipers. Each group believes that the gift of tongues confirms their authenticity.

We Must Test the Spirits
The Bible warns us to test the spirits (1 John 4:1). If they do not agree with Scripture, they are false (Isaiah 8:19, 20). Furthermore, the true gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given to someone who knowingly and deliberately obeys Satan (Acts 5:32). The true gift of tongues enables someone to speak fluently in foreign languages they have not previously learned (Acts 2:4-12). God uses this gift when necessary to communicate His end-time message to those of other languages. It was needed on the day of Pentecost because 17 language groups were present, and the disciples probably knew only one language.

7. Will the New Age movement play a major role in the final conflict between good and evil?
Absolutely! It is heavily involved with witchcraft, psychic phenomena, and communication with spirits. Spirit communication will be a major factor in the final worldwide deception. Combined with the supernatural power of the counterfeit gift of tongues and the global union of churches, spirit communication will spread worldwide. The New Age belief in spirit communication and reincarnation is ancient paganism in a new disguise. Its belief in an immortal soul that can communicate with the living is the same old lie Satan told Eve in Eden: “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). (See Lesson Guide 10 for more details about death.)

8. Is the Antichrist power mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures?
Yes, the Antichrist power (or its activities) is referred to in at least nine prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments: Daniel 7; Daniel 8, 9; Daniel 11; Revelation 12; Revelation 13; Revelation 16; Revelation 17; Revelation 18; and Revelation 19. When God emphasizes the same power nine different times, He wants us to pay attention.

9. Did the kingdom of Satan called “Babylon” originate at the Tower of Babel?
No, it began when Satan rebelled against God in heaven. In fact, the prophet

Isaiah compares Lucifer's fall from heaven to the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4, 12-15). God has viewed Satan's kingdom as Babylon since the beginning of sin. Satan's clear objective is to overthrow God, destroy His kingdom, and establish his kingdom of rebellion on earth. Jesus said there are only two sides (Matthew 7:13, 14). Every person on earth will ultimately align with either Jesus or Babylon. It is a matter of life and death. Those who serve and support Jesus will be saved in His heavenly kingdom. Those who support Babylon will be destroyed by fire. And there is very little time left to decide. This is why obeying Jesus' end-time warning against Babylon is so urgent.

10. In Revelation 16:12, what does the drying up of the Euphrates River mean to prepare the way for the kings of the east?
Before ancient Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian general Darius, the Euphrates River, which flowed under the city's walls, was diverted into a man-made lake. This diversion allowed Darius' army to enter the city under the walls through the dried-up riverbed. In Revelation, "waters" represent people (Revelation 17:15). Thus, the Euphrates River refers to the supporters of "Mystery Babylon," whose support dries up as they turn against her to destroy her (Revelation 17:16). This withdrawal of support for "Mystery Babylon" ensures victory for the kings of the east—the heavenly Father and the Son.

Questions for Review
1. What does the word "Babylon" mean? (1)
[ ] Confusion
[ ] Rebellion
[ ] Deceiver

2. Who is the mother Babylon compared to in Bible prophecy? (1)
[ ] The United Nations
[ ] The Papacy
[ ] Mary, the mother of Jesus

3. Who are the daughters of mother Babylon? (1)
[ ] New Testament women—Priscilla, Elizabeth, and Dorcas
[ ] The queens of Europe
[ ] Churches that follow the false teachings and practices of mother Babylon

4. What does mother Babylon sitting on the scarlet beast represent? (1)
[ ] A church controlling a government that closely supports it
[ ] Women make good animal trainers
[ ] Women should ride instead of walking

5. Which false teachings of Babylon will spiritually confuse people? (4)
[ ] The holiness of marriage
[ ] Death is sleep
[ ] Sinners burn forever in hell
[ ] Sunday as God's holy day
[ ] The soul or spirit is immortal
[ ] Baptism by immersion
[ ] God's law is abolished or changed

6. "Babylon is fallen" means that (1)
[ ] An angel fell from heaven
[ ] Babylon experienced an earthquake
[ ] The mother church and other churches accepting her false teachings have fallen from Bible truth and true worship of the living God

7. The symbol "Kings of the east" represents (1)
[ ] Jesus and His Father
[ ] Satan working through paganism
[ ] The nations of the world

8. What does the drying up of the Euphrates River symbolize? (1)
[ ] A severe water shortage in the last days
[ ] No food supply in the end times
[ ] Babylon losing the support of her followers

9. Is Babylon a family name that includes nearly all religions and churches? (1)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

10. Who specifically is calling people out of Babylon? (1)
[ ] Angels
[ ] The ten kings
[ ] Lucifer
[ ] Jesus

11. Wouldn't it be better to try to reform a fallen church instead of leaving it? (1)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

12. What does being drunk on Babylon's wine mean? (1)
[ ] Being intoxicated

[ ] Joining Babylon in a feast
[ ] Being physically sick
[ ] Being confused by her false teachings

13. What three powers will unite to fight against Jesus and His people in the last days? (3)
[ ] Non-Christian religions
[ ] The United Nations
[ ] Apostate Protestantism
[ ] Space travelers
[ ] The Papacy

14. When Jesus calls His people out of Babylon, will they come out? (1)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No
15. Are there many people in Babylon who do not know it? (1)
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

The Bride of Christ

Lesson 23

The Bible says there is only one body, or church, that Jesus calls His people to in the last days—the bride of Christ. For some, this is frightening because there are thousands of different churches today that call themselves Christian. Nearly all claim to be God's church, yet each one differs greatly in Bible interpretation, beliefs, and practices. It is impossible for a sincere seeker of truth to investigate the claims of each one. However, we can be thankful that Jesus has solved this problem for us by describing His church so clearly that you can easily recognize it! These clear and powerful descriptions are found in Revelation 12 and 14, and they will excite you with astonishing truths to guide you in the last days. Please read Revelation 12:1-17 before you begin this journey of discovery

1. By what prophetic symbol does Jesus represent His true church?

"I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman." —Jeremiah 6:2
"And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'" —Isaiah 51:16

Answer: We learned in Lesson 22 that Jesus represents His true, pure church

(Zion) as a pure woman and an apostate church as a harlot. Other Scriptures that use this symbol include 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-23, and Revelation 19:7-8.

2. In Revelation 12:1, Jesus describes His church as a woman "clothed with the sun," standing on the "moon," and wearing a "crown of twelve stars." What do these symbols mean?

Answer:

A. The sun represents Jesus, His gospel, and His righteousness.
"For the Lord God is a sun." —Psalm 84:11 (See also Malachi 4:2.) Without Jesus, there is no salvation (Acts 4:12). Above all else, Jesus wants His church to shine with His presence and glory.

B. The moon under her feet represents the Old Testament sacrificial system. Just as the moon reflects the sun's light, the sacrificial system had spiritual value only as it reflected the light of the coming Messiah (Hebrews 10:1).

C. The crown of twelve stars represents the work of the 12 apostles, who established the early New Testament church.
3. The prophecy then says that the woman is in labor, about to give birth to a child who will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron. She gives birth to a "male child," who is later taken up to God's throne in heaven (Revelation 12:1, 2, 5). Who is this child?

Answer: The child is Jesus, who will one day rule all nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:13-16, Psalm 2:7-9). Jesus, who was crucified for our sins, was resurrected from the dead and ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). His resurrection power in our lives is one of His greatest gifts (Philippians 3:10).

4. Revelation 12:3, 4 introduces a "great red dragon" who hates the "male child" and tries to kill Him at birth. Who is this dragon?

Answer: The dragon represents Satan, who was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) and who worked through pagan Rome during Jesus' birth. The ruler who tried to kill Jesus was Herod, a king under pagan Rome, who ordered the slaughter of all male infants in Bethlehem, hoping to destroy Jesus (Matthew 2:16).

The third of the stars symbolizes the fallen angels who were cast out of heaven with Lucifer.

5. What do the “seven heads,” “ten horns,” and “one-third of the stars of heaven” in Revelation 12:3, 4 represent?

Answer:

A. The seven heads represent the seven hills or mountains on which Rome is built (Revelation 17:9-10).

B. The ten horns represent nations or governments that support the main power in persecuting God’s people. During the time of pagan Rome (Revelation 12:3-4), these horns represented the ten barbarian tribes that eventually overthrew the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:23-24), forming modern Europe. In the last days, these horns symbolize the nations of the world united against God’s people (Revelation 16:14, 17:12-13, 16).

C. The third of the stars refers to the angels who joined Lucifer’s rebellion and were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:9, Luke 10:18, Isaiah 14:12).

6. What did Satan do after he failed to destroy the child Jesus?

“He persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.” —Revelation 12:13

Answer: Since he could no longer attack Jesus personally, Satan turned his fury toward God’s church and His people.

7. What did the woman (church) do to protect herself, and what is the “wilderness” mentioned in Revelation 12:6, 14?
Answer:
A. The church fled into the wilderness—a symbol of desolate places (mountains, caves, forests)—to escape persecution during the 1,260 years (A.D. 538–1798) of papal oppression (Ezekiel 4:6). Groups like the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Huguenots sought refuge in remote areas.
B. This “wilderness” period corresponds to the 1,260 years of papal supremacy and persecution (Daniel 7:25). During this time, God’s true church was not a recognized institution but remained faithful to apostolic teachings.

8. In Revelation 12:17, God calls His end-time church the remnant. What does “remnant” mean?
Answer: It means the last remaining portion—the final faithful church that maintains the same teachings and practices as the apostolic church.

9. What additional identifying marks does Revelation 12:17 give for God’s

end-time remnant church?

Answer:

1. It keeps all of God's commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath (John 14:15, Revelation 22:14).
2. It has the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

Summary of the Identifying Marks of God's End-Time Church:

1. It did not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538–1798.
2. It emerged after 1798.
3. It keeps all of God's commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath.
4. It has the gift of prophecy.

God calls all His faithful followers to this end-time church, which holds fast to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.

The Remnant of God Must Preach the Three Angels' Messages Worldwide

10. What Are the Last Two Identifying Marks of God's Remnant Church Given in Revelation?

Answer: The last two of the six marks are:
(5) It will be a worldwide missionary church (Revelation 14:6).
(6) It will be preaching the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14, summarized below:

A. God's Judgment Is in Session – Worship Him!

God's end-time church must preach that judgment began in 1844 (see Study Guides 18 and 19). It also calls people to "worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water" (Revelation 14:7). How do we worship God as the Creator? The answer is in the fourth commandment:
"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."
"For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8, 11)
Thus, the first angel's message commands all to worship God as the Creator by keeping His seventh-day Sabbath, which He gave as a memorial of creation.

B. Come Out of Fallen Babylon

C. Do Not Worship the Beast or Receive His Mark, Which Is Sunday as a Holy Day – Beware of Counterfeits

Summary of the Last Two Identifying Marks:

5. God's end-time church will be a worldwide missionary church.
6. It will teach and preach Jesus' threefold message of Revelation 14:6-14.
Now, Let's Review the Six Marks That Jesus Gives to Identify His End-Time Remnant Church:
1. It would not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
2. It would arise and carry out its mission after 1798.
3. It would keep all Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.
4. It would have the gift of prophecy.
5. It would be a worldwide missionary church.
6. It would teach and preach Jesus' threefold message of Revelation 14:6-14.
Jesus promises that all who sincerely seek His six identifying marks will find His remnant church.

11. Now That We Have Established Jesus' Six Identifying Marks for His End-Time Remnant Church, What Does Jesus Tell Us to Do, and What Will Be the Result?

Answer: "Seek, and you will find." (Matthew 7:7)
Jesus gives you these six characteristics and says, "Go find My church." He promises that those who seek heavenly things will find them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only church that matches all six identifying marks.

12. How Many Churches Fit These Six Characteristics?

Answer: Jesus gave specific and unique identifying marks that match only one church. He did not give vague, general statements like, "There will be many good people in My church" or "There will also be hypocrites." How many churches would fit those two statements? All of them.
Those two statements could also apply to a grocery store or a civic club downtown—they could fit anything and thus mean nothing. Instead, Jesus gave clear, specific, highly detailed identifying marks that match only one church—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Let's double-check the facts:
The Seventh-day Adventist Church:
1. Did not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
2. Emerged after 1798, beginning in the early 1840s.
3. Keeps all Ten Commandments, including the fourth—God's holy seventh-day Sabbath.
4. Has the gift of prophecy.

5. Is a worldwide missionary church, operating in 208 of the world's 236 countries.
6. Teaches and preaches Jesus' great threefold message of Revelation 14:6-14.
Jesus asks you to take these six identifying marks and examine for yourself. It's simple. You can't miss it.

13. After One of Jesus' Children Obeys His Loving Warning Call and Leaves Babylon (Revelation 18:2, 4), What Does Jesus Ask Them to Do Next?
"You were called in one body." (Colossians 3:15)
"And He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church." (Colossians 1:18)
Answer: The Bible says that God's people are called into one body, or church. Jesus asks those who leave Babylon to join the remnant church—of which He is the head. Jesus said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." (John 10:16) He also calls them "My people" in the Old Testament (Isaiah 58:1) and the New Testament (Revelation 18:4). Regarding His sheep outside His fold (church), He says:
"Them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16)
"My sheep hear My voice, … and they follow Me." (John 10:27)
When God calls people out of Babylon, He asks them to join His remnant church. People join His remnant church through baptism.

14. How Does a Person Enter That Body, or Church?
"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks." (1 Corinthians 12:13)
Answer: We enter Jesus' end-time remnant church through baptism. (See Study Guide 9 for more details on baptism.)

15. Does the Bible Provide Any Additional Evidence That Jesus Has Only One End-Time Remnant Church Where He Calls All His People?Answer: Yes, it does. Let's review:
A. The Bible says there is only one true body, or church (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18).
B. The Bible says our days are like the days of Noah (Luke 17:26, 27). How many ways were there to be saved in Noah's day? Only one, the ark. Once again today, God has provided only one ark, or church, to bring His people safely into His heavenly kingdom. Make sure you get into the right ark! The Bible says, "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47) It was true in apostolic times, and it remains true today.
God Promises That His Remnant Church Will Triumph in Glory

16. What Good News Does the Bible Give About God's Remnant Church?

Answer:
A. Its main mission is the “everlasting gospel” of righteousness by faith in Jesus alone (Revelation 14:6).
B. It is built upon Jesus, the Rock (1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4), and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18).
C. Jesus died for His church (Ephesians 5:25).
D. Jesus describes His remnant church so clearly that it is easy to identify. He also describes the fallen churches and calls His people out of them. Satan will deceive only those who close their eyes and hearts.
E. Its teachings are all true (1 Timothy 3:15).

17. What Good News Does the Bible Give About God’s Remnant People?

Answer: They will:
A. Be saved in His heavenly kingdom (Revelation 15:2).
B. Overcome Satan by the “power” and “blood” of Jesus (Revelation 12:10, 11).
C. Have patience (Revelation 14:12).
D. Have the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12)
E. Experience glorious freedom (John 8:31, 32).
18. The World’s Time Is Running Out – What Is Jesus’ Urgent Plea to His People Now?
“Come into the ark, you and all your household.” (Genesis 7:1)
Answer: In Noah’s day, only eight people (including Noah himself) obeyed God’s invitation. Today, Jesus waits at the door of His final ark, the remnant church, for you.
Will you answer His call?

Questions on Thought
1. China, home to a quarter of the world’s population, remains largely untouched by the gospel. Will it not take a long time to reach everyone there? “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27). The Bible says the Lord “will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness” (Romans 9:28). The same Lord who gave Jonah the power to lead an entire city to repentance in less than 40 days (Jonah chapter 3) will finish His work quickly in these last days. He says His work will progress with such astonishing speed that it will almost be impossible for God’s church to handle the influx of people (Amos 9:13). God promised it. It will happen. Soon and suddenly, everything will end. Long-term planning in God’s work is uncertain today. This is a time of great urgency, and urgency demands quick action. Long-term thinkers might be caught off guard and wake up too late.

2. Is there really a significant danger that many who call themselves Christians

will be caught off guard and lost when Jesus returns?
Yes, Jesus made this very clear. He warned about several things that will trap and destroy Christians:
A. Gluttony – This refers to excess in anything – eating, working, studying, entertainment, etc. It disrupts balance, clouds clear thinking, and hinders spending time with Jesus.
B. Intoxication – This refers to anything that dulls our spiritual senses and causes indifference toward heavenly matters. Examples include pornography, immoral sexual relationships, bad company, neglecting Bible study, neglecting prayer, and avoiding church worship. Such things cause people to live in a dream world and miss out on reality.
C. The Cares of This Life – Many Christians become so busy with everyday responsibilities that they crowd out time for Jesus, prayer, studying the Word, witnessing, and attending church services. This shifts our focus from the ultimate goal to secondary matters.
D. Spiritual Sleep – This may be the greatest danger today. When someone is spiritually asleep, they are unaware of their condition. Taking our relationship with Jesus lightly, having a form of godliness without power, applying sermons to others rather than ourselves, and refusing to engage fully in Christ's work – all these things, unless miraculously awakened, will cause people to sleep through the final call.

3. I joined God's remnant church and have never been happier in my life. But I have also never been attacked so much by Satan. Why is this?
Because Satan is furious with God's faithful people and spends his time trying to harm and discourage them (Revelation 12:17). Jesus did not promise that His followers would be free from trials, troubles, Satan's attacks, or even severe suffering. In fact, He promised that such experiences would come (2 Timothy 3:12). However, He also made these glorious promises:

4. He will give His people victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).
5. He will be with His people always, through everything they face (Matthew 28:20).

6. He will give them peace (John 16:33; Psalm 119:165).

7. He will never leave them (Hebrews 13:5).

8. Jesus and His Father will hold Their children so securely that no one can snatch them from Their hands (John 10:28, 29). Amen!

9. What does the word "church" mean?
The word "church" comes from the Greek word ekklesia, meaning "the called-

out ones." This fits perfectly! Jesus' people are called out of the world and out of Babylon into His precious and safe fold. People become part of Jesus' end-time remnant church through baptism when Jesus calls them. Jesus says, "My sheep hear My voice... and they follow Me." (John 10:27).

Quiz Questions
1. How does Jesus symbolize His true church in prophecy?
[ ] As a tall tower
[ ] As a beast
[ ] By a bright angel
[x] As a pure woman
[ ] By a mysterious cloud

2. What is the "wilderness" where the church fled?
[x] A solitary place like caves and forests
[ ] The Sahara Desert
[ ] Iraq
[ ] The Gobi Desert

3. Which of the following are part of the three angels' messages?
[x] Babylon has fallen – Come out of her!
[ ] Hell burns forever and ever.
[x] God's judgment is ongoing – Fear, praise, and worship Him by keeping His holy Sabbath, which is His sign or seal.
[ ] The plagues are finished.
[ ] Everyone will be saved.
[x] Do not worship the beast or receive his mark.

4. Jesus identifies six characteristics of His remnant church. Which are they?
[ ] Have many good Christians.
[x] Keep the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath.
[ ] Have some hypocrites.
[ ] Enjoy singing Christian songs.
[ ] Pray frequently.
[x] Did not exist as an official organization between AD 538 and 1798.
[x] Have the gift of prophecy.
[ ] Speak in tongues.
[x] Be a worldwide missionary church.
[ ] Have many beautiful church buildings.
[x] Arise and do its work after 1798.
[x] Preach and teach the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14.

5. How long was the church to remain in the wilderness?

[ ] Five years
[ ] 1,000 years
[ ] 680 years
[x] 1,260 years
[ ] 33 years

6. In Revelation 12, who does the child born of the woman represent?
[ ] The apostolic church
[x] Jesus
[ ] The gospel to the Gentiles

7. Does Jesus call His people out of the world and Babylon into His remnant church?
[x] Yes
[ ] No

8. How does someone join the remnant church?
[ ] By shaking the pastor's hand
[ ] By signing a membership card
[x] By baptism
[ ] By making a large donation

9. Are there many good Christians in all churches and even outside any church?
[x] Yes
[ ] N0

10. Which things cause Christians to be lost?

[ ] Backsliding

[x] The cares of this life

[ ] Being too zealous for religion

[x] Spiritual intoxication

[x] Spiritual sleep

[ ] Faithful witnessing

[ ] Reading the newspaper

11. Will God finish His work on earth by rapidly spreading the gospel to every creature?

[x] Yes

[ ] No

12. Which promises does God give to His children?

[x] Peace

[ ] A trouble-free life

[x] Victory

[ ] No sickness

[x] No one can snatch them from His hands

[x] He will never leave them

[ ] Wealth

13. What does the word “church” literally mean?

[ ] A properly organized place of worship

[ ] An assembly of believers

[x] “The called-out ones”

[ ] The main church building

Does God Guide Astrologers and Psychics?

Lesson 24

If someone suddenly appeared claiming to be a prophet—drawing large crowds with exciting messages, healing the sick, raising the dead, calling fire down from heaven, and revealing secret details about your life—would you believe them? Should you believe them? Your eternal destiny may depend on your ability to distinguish between true and false prophets. Therefore, it is crucial to know what the Bible says on this important topic!

1. Does the Bible teach that there will be true prophets in the last days of the world?In the last days," says God, "I will pour outmy Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will
prophesy." (Acts 2:17)
Answer: Yes, both men and women will prophesy in the last days (Joel 2:28-32). The gift of prophecy is essential for completing God's church.

2. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave the gift of "prophets" to His church, along with four other gifts: apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:7-11). Why did God give these gifts to the church?
"To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)
Answer: Jesus gave all five gifts to equip the saints. The completion of God's end-time church is impossible without all these gifts, including prophecy.

3. In Bible times, was the gift of prophecy only given to men?
Answer: No! In addition to many male prophets, God also gave the gift of prophecy to at least eight women: Anna (Luke 2:36-38), Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8, 9).

4. How long will these gifts remain in His church?
"Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)
Answer: They will remain until all God's people are united, mature Christians—this will happen at the end of time.

5. Where do true prophets get their messages?
"Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

Answer: Prophets speak as they are led by the Holy Spirit. They do not express their personal opinions in spiritual matters—their thoughts come from Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

1. Normally, God speaks to a prophet through visions and dreams.

6. God speaks to prophets in three different ways. What are these ways?
"When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams." "With him, I speak face to face." (Numbers 12:6, 8).
Answer: Visions, dreams, or face to face.

7. What are the physical signs of a true prophet in vision?
Answer:
A. At first, they will lose physical strength (Daniel 10:8).

B. Later, they may receive supernatural strength (Daniel 10:18, 19).

C. There will be no breath in their body (Daniel 10:17).

D. They will be able to speak (Daniel 10:16).

E. They will not be aware of their earthly surroundings (Daniel 10:5-8; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

F. Their eyes will be open (Numbers 24:4).

Note: Although these six biblical signs are physical evidence of a true prophet in vision, not all of them will always be present simultaneously. A prophet's vision can be genuine without displaying all six signs.

8. Is performing great miracles proof that a prophet is from God?
"They are demonic spirits that perform signs." (Revelation 16:14).
Answer: No! Satan and his agents also have the ability to perform miracles. Miracles only prove the presence of supernatural power, but that power can come from either God or Satan (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Revelation 13:13, 14).

In the last days, false prophets will be so convincing that they will deceive billions of people and lead them to destruction.

9. What warning does Jesus give us about the dangers of the last days?
"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:24).

Answer: God warns us about false Christs and false prophets who will be so persuasive that they will deceive everyone except God's chosen ones. Billions will be misled and lost.

10. How can I know if a prophet is true or false?
"Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn." (Isaiah 8:20).
Answer: Test their teachings and conduct against the Word of God, the Bible. If they teach or act contrary to Scripture, they are false prophets, and "there is no light in them."

11. Are there specific types of false prophets mentioned and condemned in the Bible?
Answer: Yes. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 and Revelation 21:8 speak against the following types of false prophets:

A. Sorcerer – someone who uses spells or charms.

B. Observer of times – astrologer.

C. Enchanter – someone who claims to communicate with the dead.

D. Medium – someone who channels spirits.

E. Diviner – fortune-teller.

F. Witch – a female psychic.

G. Necromancer – another term for someone who communicates with the dead.

H. Wizard – a male psychic.

Note: Many of these false prophets claim to communicate with the spirits of the dead. The Bible clearly states that the living cannot contact the dead (for more information on this, see Lesson Guide 10). What are thought to be the spirits of the dead are actually evil angels, or demons (Revelation 16:13, 14). Crystal balls, palm readings, tea leaf interpretations, astrology, and speaking with what are believed to be the spirits of the dead are not God's ways of communicating with people. Scripture clearly teaches that those who engage in such practices are detestable (Deuteronomy 18:12), and worse, those who continue in these practices will be excluded from God's kingdom (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8, 22:14-15).

12. Is the primary role of a true prophet to serve the church or to minister to unbelievers?
"Prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers." (1 Corinthians 14:22).
Answer: The Bible is clear. Although a prophet's message may sometimes address the general public, the primary purpose of prophecy is to serve the church.

13. Does God's end-time church have the gift of prophecy?
Answer: In Lesson Guide 23, we discovered that Jesus provides six characteristics of His end-time church. Let's review these characteristics:

A. It would not exist as an official organization between AD 538 and 1798.

B. It would arise and do its work after 1798.

C. It would keep the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

D. It would have the gift of prophecy.

E. It would be a worldwide missionary church.

F. It would teach and preach Jesus' threefold message of Revelation 14:6-14.

It is important to remember that God's end-time church must meet all six of Jesus' characteristics. This means that the gift of prophecy must be included—it will have a prophet.

14. How will joining God's end-time church, which possesses all these gifts, affect you spiritually?
"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming." (Ephesians 4:14).
Answer: It will anchor you spiritually. You will no longer be uncertain or unstable in your faith.

15. What part of the body best represents the gift of prophecy?
"In the past, if someone wanted to inquire of God, they would say, 'Come, let us go to the seer.'" (1 Samuel 9:9).
Answer: Since a prophet is sometimes called a "seer" (someone who can see future events), the eyes best represent the gift of prophecy.

16. What condition would a church be in without the gift of prophecy?
Answer: It would be blind. Jesus mentioned the dangers that follow when He said, “If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” (Matthew 15:14)



17. Must God’s end-time church have all the spiritual gifts that Christ gave?
Answer: Yes. Scripture clearly teaches that God’s end-time church will “not lack any spiritual gift,” which means it must possess all gifts, including the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 1:5-8).

18. Does Revelation 12:17 indicate that God’s end-time church will have a prophet?
Answer: Yes. Revelation 19:10 explains that the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The angel who spoke to John identified himself as one of the prophets (Revelation 22:9), clarifying that having the “testimony of Jesus” is equivalent to being a prophet.

19. What does the phrase “testimony of Jesus” mean?
Answer: It means that the words of a prophet are a special message from Jesus to His people (Revelation 1:1; Amos 3:7).

20. What are the Bible’s criteria for a true prophet?
Answer:

A. Live a godly life (Matthew 7:15-20).

B. Be called to serve by God (Isaiah 6:1-10; Jeremiah 1:5-10; Amos 7:14, 15).

C. Speak and write in harmony with Scripture (Isaiah 8:19, 20).

D. Predict future events accurately (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

E. Receive visions (Numbers 12:6).

21. Did God send a prophet to His end-time church?
Answer: Yes, He did! Here is a brief overview:

God Calls a Young Woman

God's last-day church began to emerge in the early 1840s and urgently needed guidance. In harmony with His promise in Amos 3:7, God called a young woman named Ellen Harmon to be His prophet. Ellen accepted the call. She had been injured in an accident at the age of nine and had to leave school with only three years of formal education. Her health deteriorated to the point that, when God called her at the age of 17, she weighed only 70 pounds and was expected to die.

She Served for 70 Years

Ellen accepted God's call, trusting that He would physically sustain her and keep her humble. She lived 70 more years, dying at the age of 87. She emphasized that her purpose and mission were to point the church and its members to the Bible, which should be their standard of faith, and to the free gift of Jesus' righteousness. Ellen fulfilled every biblical test of a prophet outlined in this Study Guide.

Her Pen Name and Books

Ellen married James White, a minister, and wrote under the name Ellen G. White. She became one of the most prolific female authors in history. Her books, read worldwide, offer inspired counsel on health, education, temperance, Christian home life, parenting, publishing and writing, helping the needy, stewardship, evangelism, Christian living, and more.

Her book Education is considered an authority in its field. It has been used as a textbook in a major world university. It is so profound and relevant that it was once plagiarized by a national minister of education, who published it under his own name. Dr. Florence Stratemeyer, former professor of education at Columbia University, said the book contains "advanced educational concepts" and was "over 50 years ahead of its time." Dr. Clive McCay, former professor of nutrition at Cornell University, remarked about her writings on health: "Despite the fact that Mrs. White's works were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better guide for general health exists today." News broadcaster Paul Harvey said she "wrote with deep insight on nutrition, and all but two of the many principles she advocated have been scientifically established."

Her book The Desire of Ages, on the life of Christ, has been described as a "masterpiece of English literature" by Stationers Hall in London. It is uplifting and inspiring beyond words. On the topic of intelligence, she stated that IQ could be increased long before scientists recognized this possibility. In 1905, she said that cancer is caused by a virus or germ, a theory that the medical field only began accepting in the 1950s. Ellen G. White is considered the fourth most-translated author of all time. Her book on Christian living, Steps to Christ, has been translated into over 150 languages and dialects.

Ellen White had many visions, all of which meet the Bible's criteria for a true prophet.

22. Did Ellen White have visions?

Answer: Yes. She had many visions, ranging from a few minutes to six hours. These visions meet the biblical tests of a true prophet as outlined in this Study Guide.

23. Are Ellen White's writings intended to be part of the Bible or an addition to it?

Answer: No! All teachings come from the Bible alone. As a last-day prophet, her purpose was to emphasize Jesus' love, His soon return, and to point people to the Bible. She particularly focused on Revelation 14:6-14—the three angels' messages—and urged people to share this message of hope globally.

24. Do Ellen White's writings agree with Scripture?

Answer: Yes! Her writings are filled with Scripture. Her clear and stated goal was to direct people to the Bible, and her teachings never contradict God's Word.

25. How can I accept Ellen White as a true prophet if I haven't read her writings?

Answer: You can't until you read them yourself. However, you can know that she (1) meets the tests of a prophet, (2) did the work of a prophet, and (3) the true church of God in the last days must have a prophet. We encourage you to read one of her books—perhaps The Desire of Ages—and ask yourself if it draws you closer to Jesus and aligns with the Bible.

26. What three-part instruction does Paul give us about prophets?

Answer:

1. “Do not despise prophecy.”

2. “Test everything.”

3. “Hold fast to what is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21)

Paul instructs believers not to reject prophets but to test them by the Bible. If their words and actions agree with Scripture, we should follow them.

27. How does Jesus view the rejection of a true prophet’s words?

Answer: Jesus considers rejecting a true prophet as rejecting God’s counsel (Luke 7:28-30). Moreover, He states that spiritual success depends on believing His prophets (2 Chronicles 20:20)

The words of a true prophet always lead people to a deep understanding of the Bible.
28. Do true prophets of the last days introduce new teachings, or do their messages come from the Bible?

Answer: True last-day prophets do not introduce new doctrines (Revelation 22:18, 19). All teachings must come from the Bible alone.

However, true prophets:
A. Reveal new insights into old Bible truths (Amos 3:7).
B. Lead God’s people to walk closely with Jesus.
C. Clarify difficult or obscure parts of the Bible.
D. Protect against spiritual error and deception.
E. Help interpret end-time prophecies with current world events.
F. Remind people of the soon return of Jesus.

Jesus promises to bless His last-day church with the gift of prophecy. He is doing everything possible to save His people and bring them into His eternal kingdom (Matthew 19:27-29).

29. Are you willing to test Ellen White’s writings by Scripture and accept them if they align?

Answer: [Your answer here]

Questions on Prophecy

1. Please check the items below that have the same meaning: (4)
_____ The testimony of Jesus.
_____ The gift of speaking in tongues.
_____ The spirit of prophecy.
_____ Predictions by psychologists.
_____ The gift of prophecy.
_____ Communicating with the dead.
_____ Prophets speaking to the church.

2. Does God give the gift of prophecy to both men and women? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

3. According to Ephesians chapter 4, what five gifts did Jesus leave the church when He ascended? (5)
_____ Prophets.
_____ Teachers.
_____ Singing.
_____ Helping the needy.
_____ Pastors.
_____ Apostles.
_____ Witnessing.
_____ Evangelists.

4. How long did these five gifts, including prophets, last in the church? (1)
_____ Until the New Testament prophets died.
_____ Until the judgment begins.
_____ Until the end of the world.

5. According to the Bible, which of the following are true about a prophet in vision? (5)
_____ Speaks in unknown tongues.
_____ Never speaks during visions.
_____ Eyes remain open.
_____ Often behaves violently.
_____ No breath in the body.
_____ Sometimes speaks while in vision.

_____ Unaware of earthly surroundings.
_____ May receive supernatural strength.

6. Performing miracles is always proof that a prophet is from God. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

7. I can know for sure that a prophet is from God if they (1)
_____ Are humble and gracious in behavior.
_____ Perform amazing miracles.
_____ Shine brightly.
_____ Seem to know the Bible well.
_____ Resemble Jesus.
_____ Speak and act according to the Bible.

8. Which of the following is not condemned by the Bible? (1)
_____ A fortune-teller.
_____ Male and female psychologists.
_____ An astrologer.
_____ A sorcerer.
_____ Someone who casts spells or uses charms.
_____ A medium or channeler.
_____ A prophet who speaks and lives according to the Bible.

9. The primary work of a prophet is to serve the church. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

10. The church cannot be God’s true end-time church without a prophet. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

11. Which part of the body represents prophecy? (1)
_____ Mouth.
_____ Hands.
_____ Feet.
_____ Ears.

_____ Eyes.

12. Additional true prophets of the end times may arise before the second coming of Jesus. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

13. Following “the Bible and the Bible alone” means one must accept a true prophet. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

14. What three things about prophecy does the Bible command in 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21? (3)
_____ Do not despise prophets or prophecy.
_____ Follow all prophets.
_____ Test or prove the words and actions of a prophet by the Bible.
_____ Ask the prophets if they are true or false.
_____ Believe or hold firmly to what is good.
_____ Ignore all prophets.

15. When we reject the counsel of a true prophet, we reject God’s counsel. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

16. True prophets of the end times teach new doctrines not found in the Bible. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

17. Why do many churches lack a prophet or true prophets? (1)
_____ They would not believe them if they came.
_____ They do not keep all of God’s commandments.
_____ They have all the light they need without a prophet.

18. Without vision, people perish. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

19. A church without the gift of prophecy is blind. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

Do We Trust God

Lesson 25

Do you really trust God?... The truth is, many people say "yes," but their actions say otherwise. Even worse, because they do not trust Him, they may be robbing Him! "Come on!" you say, "No one would steal or snatch money from God." But God's shocking message to His people is, "You have robbed Me" (Malachi 3:8). Accurate records reveal that billions of people rob God, and although it may seem surprising, they use the stolen money to subsidize their careless spending habits! However, many are unaware of their misuse, and in this Study Guide, we will show you how to avoid making the same mistake and how to achieve financial success through genuine faith in God.

A Tenth of Our Income Belongs to God

1. According to the Bible, what portion of our income belongs to the Lord?
"And all the tithe of the land ... is the Lord's." (Leviticus 27:30)
Answer: The tithe belongs to God.

The word "tithe" literally means "ten."

2. What is "tithe"?
"I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance... The tithes of the Israelites... I give to the Levites as their inheritance." (Numbers 18:21, 24)
Answer: Tithe is one-tenth of a person's income. The word "tithe" literally means "ten." Tithe belongs to God—it is His. I have no right to keep it. When I return tithe, I am not giving a gift; I am returning to God what already belongs to Him. Unless I return one-tenth of my income to God, I am not paying tithe.

Tithe Should Be Brought to God's Storehouse, or the Church

3. Where does the Lord ask His people to bring the tithe?
"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse." (Malachi 3:10)
Answer: He asks us to bring the tithe into His storehouse.

4. What does the Lord mean when He speaks of His storehouse?
"Then all Judah brought the tithe of grain, new wine, and oil to the storerooms." (Nehemiah 13:12)
Answer: In Malachi 3:10, God refers to the storehouse as "My house," meaning His temple or church. Nehemiah 13:12 further clarifies that the tithe was to be brought into the temple treasury, which is God's storehouse. Other scriptures referring to the storehouse as the temple treasury or rooms include 1 Chronicles 9:26 (see margin); 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12 (see margin); and Nehemiah 10:37, 38. In Old Testament times, God's people brought 10 percent of all their increase—including crops and animals—to the storehouse.

Tithing Existed Before the Law of Moses

5. Some think tithing was part of Moses' ceremonial laws that ended at the cross. How does the Bible show us that this is not true?
"And [Abram] gave him a tithe of all." (Genesis 14:20)
"And of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You." (Genesis 28:22)
Answer: These verses reveal that Abraham and Jacob, who lived long before Moses' time, paid tithe from their income. We can conclude that God's plan for tithing existed before the law of Moses.

Jesus Approved of Tithing

6. Did Jesus abolish the plan of tithing?
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe... and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." (Matthew 23:23)
Answer: No! On the contrary, He approved of it. Jesus rebuked the Jews for neglecting the more important matters of the law—"justice, mercy, and faith"—even though they were careful to pay tithe. He clearly told them they should continue tithing while also practicing justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

Tithe Supported the Priests in the Old Testament

7. What was the tithe used for in the Old Testament?
"I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting." (Numbers 18:21)
Answer: In Old Testament times, the tithe supported the priests. The tribe of Levi (the priests) did not receive land for farming or business like the other

11 tribes. The Levites worked full-time in the temple, caring for its services and serving God's people. Therefore, God's plan was that the tithe would provide for the priests and their families.

Today, Tithe Should Support Gospel Workers

8. Did God change His plan for the use of tithe in the New Testament?
"Do you not know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:13, 14)
Answer: No! His plan remains unchanged. Today, tithe is to be used to support those who work full-time in gospel ministry. If everyone faithfully returned tithe and it was used correctly to support gospel workers, there would be more than enough funds to spread God's final message to the whole world.

God Promises Great Blessings to Faithful Tithe-Payers

9. What amazing offer does God make to those who are unsure about tithing?
"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse... and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10)
Answer: He says, "Try Me now" and see if "I will not pour out for you such blessing" that you cannot contain it. This is the only time in the Bible where God makes such a challenge. He says, "Test Me. It works. I promise." Thousands of tithe-payers worldwide joyfully testify to the truth of God's tithing promise. They have learned this reality: "You cannot outgive God."

When We Tithe, Jesus Himself Receives Our Offering

10. When we return tithe, who actually receives our money?
"Here mortal men receive tithes, but there He receives them." (Hebrews 7:8)
Answer: Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, receives our tithes.

Tithing Is a Test of Faith—Just Like in Eden

11. What test did Adam and Eve fail, which we all face if we want to inherit His kingdom?
Answer: They took what God said was not theirs. God gave Adam and Eve the fruit of every tree in the Garden of Eden except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16, 17). That fruit was not theirs to eat. Likewise, God gives us all wealth, wisdom, and heavenly blessings.

Everything is ours—except one-tenth of our income, which belongs to Him (Leviticus 27:30). When we deliberately take God's tithe for ourselves, we repeat Adam and Eve's sin and show a tragic lack of trust in our Redeemer.

Make God Your Partner

When I return tithe to God, I make Him a partner in everything I do. What a wonderful and blessed opportunity: God and me – partners! With Him as my partner, I have everything to gain and nothing to lose. It is a dangerous thing to take God's own money, which He has designated for saving souls, and use it for our personal budgets.
God's people give offerings joyfully as an expression of their love for Him.

12. Besides the tithe, which belongs to God, what else does He ask from His people?
"Bring an offering and come into His courts." – Psalm 96:8

Answer: The Lord asks us to give offerings for His work as a demonstration of our love for Him and our gratitude for His blessings. The Bible does not specify the amount to be given for offerings.

13. How much should I give God as an offering?
"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7

Answer: The Bible does not mention a specific amount for offerings. Each person decides (as God leads) how much to give and should give cheerfully.

14. What additional principles does the Bible share about giving?

Answer:
A. My first priority should be to give myself to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).
B. I should give God the best I have (Proverbs 3:9).
C. God blesses the generous giver (Proverbs 11:24-25).
D. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
E. Being stingy prevents me from using God's blessings properly (Luke 12:16-21).
F. God gives back more than I give (Luke 6:38).
G. I should give according to how God has prospered and blessed me (1 Corinthians 16:2).
H. I should give as much as I am able (Deuteronomy 16:17).

We return the tithe to God because it already belongs to Him. Offerings,

however, are voluntary and should be given with joy.

15. What does the Lord own?

Answer:
A. All the silver and gold in the world (Haggai 2:8).
B. The earth and everything in it (Psalm 24:1).
C. The Lord owns the world and all that is in it (Psalm 50:10-12).

God allows people to use His vast resources and gives them the wisdom and ability to succeed and gather wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). In return for providing everything, God only asks that we return to Him 10% as a recognition of His investment in our business affairs, along with offerings as a sign of our love and gratitude.

16. How does the Lord describe people who do not return His 10% and give offerings?
"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings." – Malachi 3:8

Answer: He calls them robbers. Can you imagine people robbing God? Those who rob God by withholding tithes and offerings will not be allowed to enter heaven.

17. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly continue to rob Him of tithes and offerings?
"You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me." – Malachi 3:9
"Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." – 1 Corinthians 6:10

Answer: They will be under God's curse and will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

18. Why is greed so dangerous?
"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." – Luke 12:34

Answer: Because our hearts follow our investments. If my goal is to accumulate more and more money, my heart becomes selfish, greedy, and proud. But if my goal is to share, help others, and bless God's work, my heart becomes caring, loving, generous, and humble. Greed is one of the 20 terrible sins of the last days that will keep people out of heaven (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

19. How does Jesus feel when we rob Him of His holy tithe and love offerings? "That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray.'" – Hebrews 3:10

Answer: He likely feels like a parent whose child steals money from them. The money itself is not the issue – it is the lack of integrity, love, and trust that is most discouraging.

20. What inspiring things does Paul emphasize about the faithful stewardship of the Macedonian believers?

Answer: In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul describes the inspiring response of the Macedonian churches to help suffering Christians in Jerusalem:

A. (Verse 5) They first gave themselves to Jesus Christ.
B. (Verses 2-3) Although they were very poor, they gave beyond their ability.
C. (Verse 4) They urgently pleaded to give their gifts.
D. (Verse 9) Their giving reflected Jesus' sacrificial example.

21. What does God promise to those who are faithful in returning tithes and giving offerings?

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." – Malachi 3:10

Answer: God promises to bless His faithful stewards financially and spiritually, making them a blessing to others.

22. Are you ready to begin returning a tithe of your income and giving offerings to show your love and gratitude to God?

Reflection Questions:

1. The word “tithe” actually means “a tenth.”
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

2. The tithe already belongs to God.
_____ True.
_____ False.

3. I am not giving tithe unless I return a tenth of my income to God.
_____ True.
_____ False.

4. Jesus approved of returning tithes.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

5. According to the Bible, which are principles of voluntary giving? (Select 5)

_____ Give if you have leftovers.

_____ Give cheerfully.

_____ Give generously.

_____ Give to feel good.

_____ Give as God has prospered you.

_____ It is more blessed to give than to receive.

_____ God will give back more than you give.

_____ Give as you like.

_____ Give so people won’t think you’re stingy.

Questions on Tithing

1. The word “tithe” literally means “ten.” (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

2. Tithes already belong to God. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

3. I do not give tithe unless I return one-tenth of my income to God. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

4. Jesus approved of returning tithe. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

5. Which of the following are biblical guidelines and principles for freewill giving? (5)
_____ Give if you have anything left over.
_____ Give cheerfully.
_____ Give generously.
_____ Give to feel good.
_____ Give as God has prospered you.
_____ It is more blessed to give than to receive.
_____ God will give back more than you give.
_____ Give as you please.
_____ Give so that people do not think you are stingy.

6. According to the Bible, what should be the source of income for gospel workers? (1)
_____ Bingo games.
_____ White elephant sales.
_____ Tithes.
_____ Bake sales.
_____ Raffles.

7. Which patriarchs of the Old Testament returned tithe before the days of Moses, as mentioned in this Study Guide? (2)
_____ Adam.
_____ Jacob.
_____ Noah.
_____ Isaac.
_____ Abraham.
_____ Methuselah.

8. According to Malachi 3:8, what sin are people guilty of if they do not return tithe and offerings? (1)
_____ Idolatry.
_____ Breaking the Sabbath.
_____ Murder.
_____ Robbery.

9. According to the book of Hebrews, who actually receives our money when we return tithe? (1)
_____ The pastor.
_____ The needy.
_____ Jesus, our High Priest in heaven.

10. According to 2 Timothy 3:1-7, is greed one of the 20 sins of the last days that will keep people out of God's kingdom? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

11. Bringing tithe into God's storehouse means (1)
_____ Using it to buy spiritual books.
_____ Using it for any spiritual cause.
_____ Giving it to God's church treasury.

12. What does God promise faithful tithe-payers in Malachi 3:10? (1)
_____ They will never get sick.
_____ They will never lose their job.
_____ They will receive blessings too great to handle.

13. God gave Adam and Eve a test about eating a piece of fruit. According to this Study Guide, what similar test does He give His people today? (1)
_____ Reading the Bible daily.
_____ Witnessing.
_____ Returning tithe.
_____ Praying.

14. Tithing was part of the Mosaic law, which ended at the cross. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

15. How does God measure my gifts to Him? (2)
_____ By the amount I give.
_____ By the level of sacrifice.
_____ By the attitude with which I give.

16. Faithful stewardship involves not only managing my money well but also using my time for activities like prayer, witnessing, Bible study, and helping others. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

Changing Love

Lesson 26

Being in love changes everything. For example, a young woman was reading a large book for her university English literature course. She found the entire thing very boring and couldn't focus while reading it. But then she met a young professor at the university, and they quickly fell in love. Shortly afterward, she discovered that her beloved was the author of the book she had struggled with. That night, she stayed up reading the entire book in amazement, saying, "This is the best book I've ever read!" What changed her perspective? Love did.

Similarly, many people today find the Scriptures to be boring, restrictive, and unappealing. But all of that changes when you fall in love with the Author. See how in this heartwarming Study Guide!

Jesus is the Author of the Scriptures.

1. Who is the Author of the Scriptures?
“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.” (1 Peter 1:10, 11)

Answer: The God of the Bible (even in the Old Testament) is almost always Jesus Christ. Jesus created the world (John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:13-17), wrote the Ten Commandments (Nehemiah 9:6, 13), was the God of Israel (1 Corinthians 10:1-4), and inspired the writings of the prophets (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Author of the Scriptures.

Jesus loves the people of the world with eternal love.

2. What is Jesus’ attitude toward the people of the world?
“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Answer: Jesus loves us all with an indescribable, boundless love that surpasses understanding.

Jesus died for all of us, even though none of us deserved it.

3. Why should we love Jesus?
“We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)
“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Answer: We should love Him because He loved us enough to die for us—even while we were still His enemies.

A successful marriage and Christian life share common principles.

4. In what ways are a successful marriage and Christian life similar?
“And whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.” (1 John 3:22)

Answer: In a good marriage, certain things are essential, like faithfulness to your spouse. Other things may seem minor, but if they please your partner,

they become important. If something displeases your spouse, it should be avoided. The same is true for the Christian life. The commandments of Jesus are essential.

In the Scriptures, Jesus also outlines principles of behavior that please Him. Just like in a loving marriage, a Christian finds joy in doing the things that please Jesus, the One they love, and avoids what displeases Him.

Doing the things that please Jesus brings great joy and abundant life.

5. What does Jesus say about the results of doing what pleases Him?
"If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love... These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15:10, 11)

Answer: Satan claims that following Christian principles is foolish, restrictive, and meaningless. But Jesus says it brings complete joy (John 15:10, 11) and abundant life (John 10:10). Believing Satan's lies brings heartbreak and denies people the life that "is truly life."

The Bible's principles protect us from Satan's dangerous traps.

6. Why does Jesus give us specific Christian living principles?

Answer: Because they:

A. Are always for our own benefit (Deuteronomy 6:24). Just as good parents teach their children good principles, Jesus teaches His followers good principles.

B. Protect us from sin (Psalm 119:11). Jesus' principles shield us from Satan's dangerous traps.

C. Show us how to follow Christ's example (1 Peter 2:21).

D. Bring us true happiness (John 13:17).

E. Give us opportunities to express our love for Him (John 15:10).

F. Help us be a positive example to others (1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Matthew 5:16).

When I love worldly things, I become an enemy of God.

7. According to Jesus, how should Christians relate to the world's evil and worldly things?

Answer: His commands and counsel are clear and specific:

A. Do not love the world or worldly things. The things of the world that oppose God are: (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life (1 John 2:16). All sins fall into one or more of these categories. When I begin to love the world, I become an enemy of God (1 John 2:15, 16; James 4:4).

B. Keep yourself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

Christians must firmly resist worldly influences, or Satan will lead them astray.

8. What urgent warning does God give us about the world?

Answer: Jesus warns Christians, "Do not be conformed to this world." (Romans 12:2).

Satan constantly pressures Christians. Through Jesus (Philippians 4:13), we must resist Satan's suggestions, and he will flee (James 4:7).

We must guard our thoughts carefully because thoughts become actions.

9. Why do we need to guard our thoughts?
"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7)

Answer: We must guard our thoughts because they shape our behavior. God wants to help us "take every thought captive to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Christians must avoid music that weakens their desire to live godly lives.

10. What are some principles for Christian living?
"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Philippians 4:8)

Answer: Christians should avoid anything that is untrue, dishonest, unjust, impure, or unlovely. This includes:

A. Dishonesty—lying, cheating, stealing, and gossip.

B. Immorality—pornography, vulgar language, and corrupt entertainment.

C. Places that dishonor God—such as nightclubs and gambling venues.

Christians must choose music and entertainment that uplift and glorify God.

Dancing
Dancing undoubtedly leads people away from Jesus and spirituality. When the Israelites danced around the golden calf, they forgot about God (Exodus 32:17-25). When Herodias' wicked daughter danced before King Herod, John the Baptist was beheaded (Matthew 14:2-12). Consider these shocking statistics: A Catholic priest in New York said that three-quarters of the girls who confessed to fornication blamed dancing. Other priests estimated the number to be as high as nine out of ten. Remember, if Christ can participate in an activity with you, you are safe. If not, stay away from it.

TV, Videos, and Theaters
Do the things you watch on television, videos, or in movie theaters lift you spiritually, or do they drag you down? Do they lead you to a greater love for Jesus or for the world? Do they glorify Jesus or the works of the devil? In our time, even non-Christians and secular people speak out against much of the content produced for TV and movies. Satan has captured the eyes and ears of billions of people, turning the world rapidly into a pool of immorality, crime, terrorism, and hopelessness. One study reported that without TV, "10,000 fewer murders, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer assaults" would occur each year in the United States.

Jesus, who loves you, asks you to turn your eyes away from Satan's thought-control devices and focus on Him. He says, "Look unto Me, and be saved." (Isaiah 45:22).

1. Newsweek, "Mick Jagger and the Future of Rock," January 4, 1971, p. 47.

2. Circus magazine, January 31, 1976, p. 39.

3. Newsweek, "Violence, Reel to Reel," December 11, 1995, p. 47.

A safe guide for watching TV is to ask yourself, "Would I feel comfortable inviting Jesus to watch this show with me?"

11. What clear list does Jesus give us to guide our TV viewing?
"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21, NEB)

Answer: The Bible is very clear. If a family bans all TV programs that display or support any of the sins mentioned above, there would be very little left to watch. If Jesus came to visit you, what TV shows would you feel comfortable inviting Him to watch? Any show that doesn't meet His standards is probably not suitable for a Christian to watch.

(C) Delegates of Oxford University Press and Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Used with permission.

My choice of TV programs—and, in fact, my entire lifestyle—must be guided by the words of Scripture, not my personal feelings.

12. In this age of personal freedom and independent thinking, many people feel fully capable of making spiritual decisions without input from anyone, including Jesus. What does Jesus say about such people?

Answer: Listen to these clear statements from Jesus:
"You shall not do as we are doing here today—everyone doing as they see fit." (Deuteronomy 12:8)
"There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death." (Proverbs 16:25)
"The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice." (Proverbs 12:15)
"Those who trust in themselves are fools." (Proverbs 28:26)

13. What serious warnings does Jesus give us about our example and influence on others?

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6)
"Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister." (Romans 14:13)
"For none of us lives for ourselves alone." (Romans 14:7)

Answer: We expect leaders, influential people, famous athletes, and public figures to be good examples and to use their influence wisely—to pay what is called a "debt to society." However, in today's world, we are often

disappointed by the irresponsible and shameful behavior of celebrities.

Jesus says clearly in Romans 1:14 that Christians, who represent Him and His kingdom, also owe a debt to others. He firmly warns that Christians who ignore their influence and cause others to stumble will not enter His kingdom.

God asks His people to set aside ornaments and jewelry.

14. What principles does Jesus give regarding dress and adornment?

Answer:
A. Dress modestly. See 1 Timothy 2:9. Remember that the world appeals to us through "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Immodest dress involves all three and is forbidden for a Christian.

B. Set aside ornaments and jewelry. "The pride of life" is the main issue here. Followers of Jesus should look different—their appearance should reflect His light (Matthew 5:16). Adorning oneself draws attention and promotes self-glorification.

Throughout the Bible, jewelry is a sign of backsliding and rebellion. For example:

When Jacob's family rededicated themselves to God, they buried their jewelry (Genesis 35:1-4).

Before entering the Promised Land, God commanded the Israelites to remove their ornaments (Exodus 33:5-6).

In Isaiah 3:16-23, God condemns the Israelites for wearing jewelry, considering it sinful.

In Hosea 2:13, God says that when Israel left Him, they began wearing jewelry. 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3 instruct God's people not to wear gold, pearls, or expensive clothes.

God asks His people to separate themselves from Babylon (Revelation 18:2-4)—including its worldly adornments—and instead to clothe themselves with the righteousness of Jesus.

15. How are Christian behavior and obedience related to salvation?

Answer: Christian behavior and obedience are evidence that I am saved by

Jesus Christ (James 2:20-26). If a person's lifestyle does not change after conversion, it is likely the conversion was not genuine. A truly converted person finds joy in discovering Jesus' will and following it gladly.

16. Should we expect everyone to understand the Christian lifestyle?

Answer: No. Jesus said that spiritual matters appear foolish to the natural person because they are understood only through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14).

17. How would someone who rejects Christ's standards view heaven?

Answer: Such a person would be miserable in heaven. Heaven would be like "hell" for those who never formed a genuine relationship with Jesus (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

18. How can I follow these biblical guidelines without appearing judgmental or legalistic?

Answer: Everything we do should be guided by one thought: to honor and glorify Jesus (1 John 3:22).

19. I want to love Christ so much that following His standards for Christian living will be a joy and a delight.

Answer:

Questions of Reflection

1. I know what God wants me to do, but I don't feel ready to start doing it. What do you advise?
Start immediately! Never rely on feelings. God leads through the words of Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Feelings often lead to error. The Jewish leaders felt they should crucify Jesus, but they were wrong. Many will feel saved at Jesus' second coming but will actually be lost (Matthew 7:21-23). The devil influences feelings. If I rely on my feelings, he will lead me to destruction.

2. I have a problem. I really want to do something, but I realize that because of its appearance, others may feel I am doing wrong. What should I do?
The Bible is clear. It says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thessalonians 5:22). The apostle Paul also said that if eating meat caused someone to stumble, he would never eat meat again (1 Corinthians 8:13). He

further stated that if he ignored a person's feelings and continued, he would be sinning.

3. It seems to me that churches list too many things I must do and too many things I must not do. It feels overwhelming. Isn't following Jesus the main thing?
Yes, following Jesus is the main thing. However, following Jesus means one thing to one person and something else to another. The only safe way to know what it means to follow Jesus is to discover what He says in the Bible about any matter of right or wrong. Those who follow Jesus' commandments with love will one day enter His kingdom (Revelation 22:14). Those who follow human-made rules may be led away from His kingdom (Matthew 15:3-9).

4. Some of God's requirements seem meaningless and unnecessary to me. I don't understand why they are important. What do you advise?
Children often feel that some of their parents' rules (e.g., "Don't play in the street") are unreasonable. But later, they thank their parents for those rules. We are "children" in our understanding of God because His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8, 9). We must trust our loving Heavenly Father even when we do not understand. He will not withhold anything good from us (Psalm 84:11). When I am truly in love with Jesus, I will trust Him and obey even if I don't always understand why. Being born again is the key. The Bible says that when I am truly converted, obeying Jesus will not be a burden (1 John 5:4). Refusing to obey because I do not understand shows a lack of trust in my Savior.

5. Will I benefit from Jesus' loving principles, rules, and commandments?
Absolutely! Every principle, rule, and commandment of Jesus brings special blessings. The greatest earthly reward cannot compare to the blessings God gives to His obedient children. Some of these benefits include:

6. Jesus as a personal friend.

7. Jesus as a partner in business.

8. Freedom from guilt.

9. Peace of mind.

10. Freedom from fear.

11. Unspeakable joy.

12. Longer life.

13. Assurance of a heavenly home.

14. Better health.

15. Mental clarity.

16. Regarding Christian standards and lifestyle, do I have a responsibility to teach others about them?
The best principle to follow is to focus on our own lifestyle. The Bible says, "Examine yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). When our lifestyle reflects Christ, our example serves as a silent witness. However, parents have a special responsibility to teach their children how to follow Jesus.

17. What is the greatest danger for Christians today?
One of the greatest dangers is divided loyalty. Many Christians attempt to love both Jesus and the sinful pleasures of the world. Jesus warned that no one "can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24).

18. Is following this Christian moral standards legalism?
Not if you do it out of love for Jesus and because you are saved. Salvation comes only as a miraculous, free gift from Jesus. Following His moral standards out of love is never legalism.

19. Do Christian standards relate to Jesus' command to let our light shine?
Yes! Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Our light shines through our conduct, dress, speech, attitude, compassion, cleanliness, and honesty. People will see Christ reflected in our lives and may be led to Him.

20. Aren't Christian standards cultural? Shouldn't they change over time?
Customs may change, but biblical standards remain the same. "The word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). The church should lead the world, not follow it. Jesus calls us to come out and be separate (2 Corinthians 6:17).

21. Surely not all dancing is bad. Didn't David dance before the Lord?
True, not all dancing is bad. David danced before the Lord in joy and worship (2 Samuel 6:14-16). However, modern social dancing often leads to immorality and is condemned by biblical principles.

22. What does the Bible say about judging and condemning others?
"Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1, 2). Only Jesus is the

rightful judge (John 5:22).

Reflection Questions

1. The loving principles of Jesus become a joy to follow when I love Him.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

2. Following Jesus' standards because I am saved and love Him is legalism.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

3. The true author of the Bible is Jesus.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

4. "Do not love the world" means that we should not love:
_____ Our country.
_____ Planet Earth.
_____ The sinful ways of the world.

5. Why does Jesus give us specific rules and guidelines?
_____ For our benefit.
_____ So we can be good examples.
_____ To control us.
_____ To protect us from sin.
_____ To bring us true happiness.

6. Two key principles for determining Christian behavior are:
_____ Discover what the Bible says.
_____ Observe what others do.
_____ Ask, "What would Jesus do?"

7. Satan can reach us only through our five senses.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

8. Jesus provides specific guidance on:
_____ How we dress.
_____ Healthful living.
_____ Influence and example.

9. How do conduct and obedience relate to salvation?
_____ We are saved by our works.
_____ Obedience is evidence of a changed heart.

10. If I refuse to give up something Jesus asks me to, He considers it an idol.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

11. The Christian life is like a good marriage, where the goal is to please the one you love.
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

12. In what three ways does Satan lead people into sin from the options listed below? (3)
_____ Hiding their Bibles.
_____ Pride of life.
_____ Writing messages in the sky.
_____ Lust of the flesh.
_____ Lust of the eyes.

13. It is important to guard our thoughts because thoughts become actions. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

14. Some of the promised benefits of faithfully following Jesus are as follows: (7)
_____ You will know how to predict the future.
_____ You will live a longer life.
_____ You will experience unspeakable joy.
_____ You will have better health.
_____ Your hair will not turn gray.

_____ You will become a millionaire.
_____ You will be assured of a home in heaven.
_____ You will have freedom from fear.
_____ You will have Jesus as a personal friend.
_____ You will enjoy peace of mind.

15. What should I do if my behavior offends a fellow Christian? (1)
_____ Ignore it. No one can please everyone.
_____ Fight back, one by one.
_____ Try to have that person excluded from fellowship.
_____ Tell everyone so that church members can choose sides.
_____ Stop doing what is offensive.

16. What does Jesus call someone who is determined to follow their own way instead of listening to the counsel of the Bible? (1)
_____ A free thinker.
_____ A wise person.
_____ A fool.

17. A person who rejects Jesus' standards for Christian living: (1)
_____ Will suddenly start loving spiritual things when they get to heaven.
_____ Will repent for their hardness of heart after a few days in the Holy City.
_____ Will be sorrowful in heaven.

No Turning Back

Lesson 27

When a skydiver reaches the edge of the airplane door and jumps, he knows there is no turning back. He has gone too far, and if he forgets to fasten the strap to his parachute, nothing can save him—he will surely plunge to a tragic death. What a disaster! But there is something even worse that can happen to a person. Indeed, it is far worse to reach the point of no return in your relationship with God. Yet millions are approaching this point and have no idea! Could you be one of them? What is the terrible sin that could lead to such a fate? Why can't God forgive it? For a clear and insightful answer—one that is also filled with hope—take a few minutes with this fascinating Study Guide.

1. What sin cannot be forgiven by God?
“Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” (Matthew 12:31)

Answer: The sin that God cannot forgive is “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.” But what exactly is “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”? People have many different opinions about this sin. Some believe it is murder; others, cursing the Holy Spirit; others, suicide; some say it is killing an unborn child; others, denying Christ; some believe it is a particularly vile and wicked act; and others think it is worshiping a false god! The next question will shed light on this important matter.

Murder, although terrible, is not the sin that God cannot forgive.

2. What does the Bible say about sin and blasphemy?
“Every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men.” (Matthew 12:31)

Answer: The Bible clearly states that every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven. Therefore, none of the sins listed in the previous answer is the sin that God cannot forgive. No single act of any kind is the unpardonable sin.

Conflicting Voices

Yes, it may seem contradictory, but both of the following statements are true:

A. Every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven.
B. Blasphemy or sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Jesus Made Both Statements
Jesus made both statements in Matthew 12:31, so there is no mistake here. To reconcile these statements, we must understand the work of the Holy Spirit. By the way, the word “ghost” comes from “ghast,” an Old English word for “spirit.

3. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

“And when He [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”
“He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:8, 13, NKJV)

Answer: The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict me of sin and guide me into all truth. The Holy Spirit is God’s agent of conversion. Without the Holy Spirit, no one feels sorrow for sin, and no one is converted.

4. When the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin, what must I do to be forgiven?

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Answer: When the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin, I must confess my sins to be forgiven. When I confess, God not only forgives me but also miraculously cleanses me from all unrighteousness.

God is waiting and willing to forgive any and every sin I may commit (Psalm 86:5), but only if I confess and forsake it.

5. What happens if I refuse to confess my sins when convicted by the Holy Spirit?

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

Answer: If I refuse to confess my sins, Jesus cannot forgive them. Therefore, any sin I do not confess cannot be forgiven until I acknowledge it, because forgiveness always follows confession—it never comes before.

The Terrifying Danger of Resisting the Holy Spirit

Resisting the Holy Spirit is extremely dangerous because it easily leads to rejecting Him completely, which is the sin that God can never forgive. It is the point of no return.

Since the Holy Spirit is the only agent given to convict me of sin, if I ultimately reject Him, my case becomes hopeless. This lesson is so important that God explains and emphasizes it in various ways throughout the Scriptures.

When the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin, I must respond immediately.

6. When the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin or leads me to new truth, when should I act?

Answer: The Bible says:

A. “As soon as they hear of me, they will obey me.” (Psalm 18:44)
B. “I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.” (Psalm 119:60)
C. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

(2 Corinthians 6:2)
D. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)
The Bible repeatedly says that when I am convicted of sin, I must confess it immediately. And when I learn a new truth, I must accept it without delay

God warned the people in the days of Noah that His Holy Spirit would not continue to plead with them forever; nor will He today.

7. What serious warning does God give about resisting His Holy Spirit?
“My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.” (Genesis 6:3)

Answer: God clearly warns that the Holy Spirit will not continue indefinitely to plead with a person to turn away from sin and obey Him. Ignoring the alarm clock instead of waking up will eventually lead to a point where I no longer hear it. Similarly, resisting the Holy Spirit will make me deaf to His voice.
8. When does the Holy Spirit stop pleading with someone?
“Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because... though hearing, they do not hear.” (Matthew 13:13)

Answer: The Holy Spirit stops speaking to a person when that person becomes deaf to His voice. The Bible describes this as “hearing but not hearing.” There is no point in setting an alarm clock in a room full of deaf people—they won’t hear it. In the same way, a person can condition themselves not to hear the ringing of an alarm clock by repeatedly ignoring it and refusing to get up. Eventually, the alarm will ring, and they will no longer hear it.

Do not shut out the Holy Spirit
This is also true for the Holy Spirit. If I continue to resist Him, one day He will speak, and I will not hear Him. When that day comes, the Spirit sadly leaves me because I have become deaf to His appeals—I have crossed the point of no return. This is a serious and sobering warning against resisting the voice of the Holy Spirit!

When I receive new light from God’s Word, I must follow it immediately without delay.

9. Through His Holy Spirit, God brings light (John 1:9) and conviction (John 16:8) to every person on earth. What should I do when I receive light from the Holy Spirit?
“The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness.” (Proverbs 4:18, 19)

“Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.” (John 12:35)

Answer: The principle of the Bible is that when the Holy Spirit brings me new light or convicts me of sin, I must act immediately—obeying without delay. If I obey and walk in the light when I receive it, God will continue to give me more light. If I refuse, even the light I have will fade, and I will be left in darkness.

The darkness that results from continually rejecting and ultimately refusing to follow the light is the consequence of rejecting the Spirit and leaves me without hope.

Judas’ unpardonable sin was greed because he refused to confess and forsake it.

10. Can any sin become a sin against the Holy Spirit?

Answer: Yes. If I persistently refuse to confess and forsake any sin, I will eventually become deaf to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit and cross the point of no return. Here are a few biblical examples:

A. Judas’ unpardonable sin was greed (John 12:6).
Why? Was it because God could not forgive him? No! It became unpardonable simply because Judas refused to listen to the Holy Spirit and confess his sin of greed. Eventually, he became deaf to the Spirit’s voice.

B. Lucifer’s unpardonable sins were pride and self-exaltation (Isaiah 14:12-14).
God could have forgiven these sins. Lucifer could have been forgiven and cleansed, but he refused to listen until he could no longer hear the Spirit’s voice.

C. The Pharisees’ unpardonable sin was rejecting Jesus as the Messiah (Mark 3:22-30).
They were repeatedly and deeply convicted that Jesus was the Messiah, the living Son of God from heaven. But they hardened their hearts and stubbornly refused to accept Him as Savior and Lord. Eventually, they became deaf to the Spirit’s voice.

Then, one day, after witnessing another of Jesus’ great miracles, the Pharisees told the crowd that Jesus received His power from Satan.

At that moment, Christ told them that attributing His miraculous power to

the devil demonstrated that they had crossed the point of no return and had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit.

God could have, and gladly would have, forgiven them—but they refused until

I Cannot Choose the Consequences

When the Holy Spirit makes His plea, I can choose to respond or reject, but I cannot choose the consequences. If I respond consistently, I will become like Jesus. The Holy Spirit will seal me, or mark me on my forehead as a child of God (Revelation 7:2, 3), thus guaranteeing me a place in God's heavenly kingdom. If I continue to reject the Holy Spirit's promptings, I will grieve Him, and He will leave me forever, sealing my fate. What a solemn warning against ignoring the Holy Spirit!

King David knew that if the Holy Spirit left him, he would be lost. That is why he pleaded with God not to take His Spirit away.

11. After King David committed the grievous double sin of adultery and murder, what anguished prayer did he offer?
"Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." (Psalm 51:11)

Answer: He pleaded with God not to take the Holy Spirit from him. Why? Because David knew that if the Holy Spirit left him, he was condemned from that moment. He understood that only the Holy Spirit could lead him to repentance and restoration, and he trembled at the thought of becoming deaf to His voice. The Bible tells us elsewhere that God eventually left Ephraim alone because he was joined to his idols (Hosea 4:17) and refused to listen to the Spirit. He became spiritually deaf. The most tragic thing that could ever happen to a person is for God to turn away and leave them alone. Don't let that happen to you!

Sin Is Like Water—It Extinguishes the Fire of the Holy Spirit

12. What solemn command did Paul give to the church in Thessalonica?
"Do not quench the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

Answer: The plea of the Holy Spirit is like a fire burning in the mind and heart of a person. Sin has the same effect on the Holy Spirit as water does on fire. When I ignore the Holy Spirit and continue in sin, I pour water on the Spirit's fire. Paul's striking words to the Thessalonians apply to us today. Do not quench the fire of the Holy Spirit by repeatedly refusing to obey His voice. If the fire goes out, you have passed the point of no return.

Any Sin Can Quench the Fire

Any unconfessed or unrepented sin can ultimately quench the fire of the Holy Spirit. It could be rejecting God's holy seventh-day Sabbath. It might be the use of tobacco. It could be failing to forgive someone who has betrayed or hurt you. It could be immorality. It could be withholding God's tithe. Refusing to obey the Holy Spirit's voice in any area pours water on the fire of the Holy Spirit. Do not quench the fire. No greater tragedy could happen.

13. What other shocking and unimaginable statement did Paul make to the Thessalonian believers?

"They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)

Answer: What powerful and sobering words! God says that those who reject the truth and the conviction brought by the Holy Spirit will, after the Spirit leaves them, receive a strong delusion to believe that error is truth. What a terrifying thought!

The Lord Will Shut Many So-Called Christians Out of Heaven Because They Refuse to Obey

14. What heartbreaking realization will some people who are sent this strong delusion face on judgment day?

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:22, 23)

Answer: Those who cry, "Lord, Lord," will be shocked and dismayed to find themselves shut out. They will be absolutely sure they are saved. Jesus will undoubtedly remind them of that critical time in their lives when the Holy Spirit brought them new truth and conviction. It was clear and true. It kept them awake at night, struggling with their decision. How their hearts burned within them! But finally, they said, "No!" and refused to listen to the Spirit any longer. Then came the strong delusion, making them feel saved while they were lost. Could any greater tragedy befall a human being?

Assurance of Salvation While Disobeying God Is a False Assurance That Will Destroy Many

15. What special words of warning does Jesus give to help us avoid believing

we are saved when we are actually lost?
“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

Answer: Jesus earnestly warned that not all who have assurance will enter His kingdom—only those who do the will of His Father. We all desire assurance of salvation. It is a divine necessity. However, there is a false assurance prevalent in Christian communities today that promises people salvation while they continue to live in sin, without any sign of a transformed life.

Pastors Are Concerned
More and more prominent church leaders fear that many church buildings are full of people who feel “assured” but are not truly transformed by Jesus Christ. They are not obedient.

Jesus Clarifies the Truth
Jesus says true assurance is only for those who do the will of His Father. When I accept Jesus as the Lord and Master of my life, my lifestyle will change dramatically. I will become a completely new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). I will joyfully keep His commandments, do His will (John 14:15), and willingly follow where He leads (1 Peter 2:21). His amazing resurrection power (Philippians 3:10) transforms me into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). His glorious peace floods my life (John 14:27). With Jesus dwelling in me through His Spirit (Ephesians 3:16, 17), “I can do all things” (Philippians 4:13), and “nothing will be impossible” (Matthew 17:20).

True Assurance vs. False Assurance

When I follow the Savior as He leads, He promises that no one can snatch me out of His hand (John 10:28) and that a crown of life awaits me (Revelation 2:10). What an amazing, glorious, and true security Jesus gives to His followers! Any other assurance given under different conditions is false. It will lead people to the side of heavenly judgment, feeling saved while, in reality, they are lost (Proverbs 16:25).

When I make Jesus the Lord of my life, He promises to save me into His kingdom.

16. What blessed promise does God give to His faithful followers who make Him the Lord of their lives?
“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” “For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to

fulfill His good purpose." (Philippians 1:6; 2:13)

Answer: Praise God! Those who make Jesus the Lord and Master of their lives are promised the miracles of Jesus that will safely bring them to His eternal kingdom. Nothing could be better than that!

Jesus promises to enter my life when I open the door to Him.

17. What other glorious promise does Jesus offer to all of us?
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20)

Answer: Jesus promises to enter our lives when we open the door to Him. It is Jesus who knocks on the door of your heart and mine through His Holy Spirit. He—the King of kings, the Savior of the world—takes time from managing the universe to visit you and me with frequent visits of love, friendly guidance, care, and counsel. What a tragedy and incredible loss if we are too busy or disinterested in forming a warm, loving, and lasting friendship with Jesus.

Jesus' close friends will not be in danger of being rejected on the day of judgment. Jesus Himself will welcome them into His kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Plan to be part of that joyful group that will meet in the clouds at His coming.

18. Will you decide to open the door every time Jesus knocks on your heart and be ready to follow wherever He leads?

Final Word

This is the final Study Guide in our series of 27. Our loving desire is that you have been led into the presence of Jesus and have experienced a new and amazing relationship with Him. We hope you will walk closely with the Lord each day and will soon join that joyful group that will be translated into His blessed kingdom at His coming. If we do not meet on earth, let us agree to meet in the clouds on that glorious day.

Reflection Questions

1. The Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12). That doesn't seem fair. What does it mean?
The Holy Spirit appeals to all people (John 1:9), just as the sun shines on everyone and everything. The same sun that hardens the soil also melts wax. The Holy Spirit has a similar effect on our hearts depending on how we respond to His pleading. If I respond, my heart will be softened and completely changed (1 Samuel 10:6). If I resist the Spirit, my heart will become hardened (Zechariah 7:12).

Pharaoh's Response
Pharaoh hardened his heart by resisting the Holy Spirit (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34). But the Bible also says that God hardened his heart because God's Holy Spirit continued to appeal to Pharaoh. Since Pharaoh kept resisting, his heart became hard, just like the sun hardens clay. If Pharaoh had listened, his heart would have softened, just as the sun softens wax.

Judas and Peter
Christ's disciples, Judas and Peter, illustrate the same principle. Both committed serious sins—one betrayed and the other denied Jesus. Which is worse? Who can say? The same loving Holy Spirit pleaded with both of them. Judas rejected Him and became hardened like stone. Peter, on the other hand, was responsive to the Spirit, and his heart melted. He truly repented and later became one of the greatest preachers in the apostolic church.

Please read Zechariah 7:12-13 for God's strong warning about hardening our hearts against the Holy Spirit's pleading.

2. What do you think about asking for a "sign" from the Lord?
In the New Testament, Jesus speaks decisively against it. He said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign." (Matthew 12:39). He was teaching truth and supporting it with the Old Testament Scriptures available at that time. The people clearly understood what He was saying. They also witnessed His miracles but still rejected Him.

Later, He said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead." (Luke 16:31). The Bible tells us to test everything by the Scriptures (Isaiah 8:19, 20). If we commit to doing God's will and following where He leads, He promises to help us distinguish truth from error (John 7:17).

3. Is there a time when prayer is useless?
Yes. If someone knowingly disobeys God (Psalm 66:18) while still asking for His blessings (without any intention of changing), their prayer is not only worthless but also an abomination to God (Proverbs 28:9).

4. I am very worried that I may have rejected the Holy Spirit and cannot be forgiven. Can you help me?
You have not rejected the Holy Spirit. You can know this because you feel concern or guilt. Only the Holy Spirit brings conviction and concern (John 16:8-13). If the Holy Spirit had left you, you would feel no concern or conviction in your heart. Rejoice and praise God! Give your life to Him now! Follow Him and obey His guidance in the future. He will give you victory (1 Corinthians 15:57), work within you (Philippians 2:13), and keep you until His second coming (Philippians 1:6).

5. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8:5-18), what does the seed that fell by the wayside and was eaten by birds mean?
The Bible says, “The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” (Luke 8:11, 12). Jesus indicates that when we understand what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do through the Word, we must act immediately. Otherwise, Satan has an opportunity to remove that truth from our minds.

6. How can the Lord say, “I never knew you” to the people He addresses in Matthew 7:21-23? I thought God knew everyone and everything!
In this passage, Jesus refers to knowing someone as a personal friend. We come to know Him by spending time with Him daily, joyfully obeying Him, and sharing our joys and sorrows with Him as we would with a close earthly friend (John 15:14).

7. Can you explain Ephesians 4:30?
This verse says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Paul indicates that the Holy Spirit is a personal being who can be grieved by our rejection of His love. Persistent refusal to respond to His appeals can end our relationship with Him.

Questions of Questions

1. Can any sin be a sin that God cannot forgive? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

2. The sin against the Holy Spirit is (1)
_____ Murder.
_____ Cursing God.
_____ Rejecting the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit must at times withdraw from a sinner in sorrow because (1)
_____ The Holy Spirit has other things to do.
_____ The Holy Spirit has righteous anger against the sinner's bad behavior.
_____ God tells Him to do something else.
_____ The sinner has become deaf to His pleading.

4. The Holy Spirit can be "quenched" by continuing in sin when you know better. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

5. Any sin or blasphemy will be forgiven if (1)
_____ I pray enough about it.
_____ I sincerely confess to Jesus.
_____ I fast for several days.
_____ I witness faithfully.

6. Without the Holy Spirit, no one feels sorrow for sin, and no one is converted. (1)
_____ True.
_____ False.

7. Assurance of salvation can sometimes be false. Some people who are sure they are saved are actually lost. (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

8. Check the things that are the work of the Holy Spirit according to John 16:8, 13: (2)
_____ Teach me how to sing.
_____ Give me the gift of prophecy.
_____ Make me happy.

_____ Convict me of sin.
_____ Guide me into truth.

9. When the Holy Spirit convicts me of a new truth or shows me sin in my life, I must (1)
_____ Ask my pastor about it.
_____ See a psychologist.
_____ Ask God for a sign.
_____ Follow the Spirit's guidance without hesitation.
_____ Flip a coin.

10. Why did David plead with God not to take away the Holy Spirit? (1)
_____ Because the Holy Spirit helped him play his harp.
_____ Because he feared the Holy Spirit might take his life.
_____ Because he knew he would be lost if the Spirit left him.

11. According to Matthew 7:21-23, performing miracles, casting out demons, prophesying in Jesus' name, and claiming Him as Lord will not be enough on the day of judgment. What else did Jesus say was absolutely necessary? (1)
_____ Doing a lot of witnessing.
_____ Praying publicly and frequently.
_____ Fasting regularly.
_____ Attending church regularly.
_____ Doing the will of the Father in heaven.

12. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, what will happen to those who refuse to accept the truth? (1)
_____ They will be saved anyway.
_____ God will ask them to reconsider.
_____ God will send them strong delusion, and they will believe the lie.

13. When the Lord says, "I never knew you" in judgment, He means (1)
_____ He does not know who that person is.
_____ The face is familiar, but He has forgotten the name.
_____ That person never took the time to know Him as a personal friend.

14. In the New Testament, did Jesus teach against asking for a sign? (1)
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

NB; Many have placed their hopes in parents, relatives, friends, and even pastors. However, the Word of God warns us not to place our hopes in people because people have many weaknesses. There are many pastors today who

seek personal gain from their congregants. They are even willing to use inappropriate methods as long as they benefit themselves without caring for their members.
This has led to false prophets who perform fake miracles just to make money. Beloved, seek the True God, and you will be safe. The Lord will not delay; the signs indicate that He will return soon. And we would like to follow the Lamb wherever we go.
The Bible says that for the Lord, one day is like a thousand years for us. Therefore, even Methuselah or Adam, who lived long lives, actually lived for about 20 hours. And if we live for 70 years, we will have lived only 2 hours. So, even though we may think we hold important positions and ranks, the truth is that our dignity, status, or rank has been given to us by Him—Almighty God—who desires that we live a life measured by His time, that is, eternity!
Eternity is a long time, and life becomes better when we choose to be there because we will indeed have true joy. I also believe in what the Lord has said. Let us pray for one another.
JESUS is coming back! The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” Let whoever hears this also say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let them come; whoever desires, let them take the water of life freely. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
We wish you all the grace of the Lord Jesus.

MARANATHA, Beloved of the LORD! Amen.

Grace Momadi-Masaka and Daniel Masaka

Gospel in Swahili, in Exile or Online

For Questions and Answers:
Phone: +255 -755 -040766
Mbeya - Tanzania.
Email: kwelizabiblia@gmail.com

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -1

These lessons on the book of Daniel have been prepared in a very brief manner; JESUS Himself said we should read this book in Matthew 24:15. There is no other book that He specifically mentioned for us to read, and at that time, the New Testament had not yet been written! Only a few key points have been touched on superficially. For a more detailed, verse-by-verse explanation, the reader will need to consult books such as Daniel and Our Times and other English books like Daniel by Norman McNulty. Try to carefully read the Bible's book of Daniel because almost all the answers are found there! There are many study materials available in both English and Swahili online, one of which is Pastor Semba's study titled "The Prophecy of This Book, Part 1: The Relationship Between Daniel and Revelation." The books of Daniel and Revelation are essentially one book regarding future events, or the Apocalypse—do not forget this!

Why Should We Study These Books? Everyone who reads them gains a completely different experience of faith because they open the mind, bring transformation to one's life, and entirely change one's direction. The Bible tells us that blessed is the one who reads and hears these words. Jesus says, "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have!" These books act as an alarm to awaken our awareness, leading us to seek God and prepare for the Day of Judgment. Daniel and Revelation have been studied, discussed, and written about by many. Here is a list of some resources that have helped me: Pastor Ivory Myers and James Rafferty have studies titled Salvation in Symbols and Signs, which explain salvation through signs and symbols—allowing the Bible to interpret itself. For example, abundant waters, scarce waters, etc. Pastor Mark Finley has studies on Revelation: https://youtu.be/Vtt5Nl4pU84. Pastor Doug Batchelor studied the prophecies of Revelation even before becoming a Christian. Thirty years ago, his Amazing Facts and Revelation studies greatly blessed me.

God has revealed many things to us, and more continue to be revealed. You will be amazed when you take the time to read and study—soon, you will also be able to teach others with greater accuracy! These books were given to us to help us endure trials with faith. While we cannot know all the Scriptures, we can gain a more accurate and deeper understanding that will help us in these last days if we ask God for revelation. For He has said: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophetic message, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" (Revelation 1:3). Ranko Stefanovic, whom I have studied with, has also written a book on Revelation that is very helpful.

The reader is encouraged to first pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then read the relevant chapter in the Bible to get the full context before proceeding with the lesson on that chapter. Afterward, take time to reflect to grasp the complete picture.

The Book of Daniel and Our Times The book of Daniel is directly related to our times. Understanding the events ahead of us is extremely important because our response to these events will determine whether we receive eternal life or eternal destruction. This is not a minor issue for anyone who seeks eternal life. Speaking to His disciples about the events of the last days, Jesus said: "So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)" (Matthew 24:15). A great danger lies ahead! Jesus wants every reader to understand this abomination of desolation so that when they see it, they will flee to save their lives (Matthew 24:16-22).

The abomination of desolation is mentioned three times in the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:26-27; 11:31; 12:11). It goes by many names in Daniel and Revelation, including the Little Horn, the Beast, and others. You may be surprised to learn that the term beast in prophetic language is not an insult or slander, as many think. It simply means a king or a kingdom (Daniel 7:17). The Bible interprets itself!

What Is the Meaning of "Abomination"? Read 2 Kings 21:1-11 and Deuteronomy 18:9-14. It becomes clear that abomination refers to idol worship, consulting the dead, engaging with spirits, witchcraft, or divination, and worshiping the sun and celestial bodies. Pagan nations practice these things.

What Is "Desolation"? It does not mean destroying objects but rather annihilating people—that is, killing them (Daniel 8:24-25). Therefore, the abomination of desolation refers to a kingdom or authority that practices idolatry, prays to the dead, engages in occult practices, and, more than that, persecutes and destroys the saints—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12; Exodus 20:3-17; James 2:10-12). Paul calls it the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction [murderer], the opposer [or Antichrist] (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Unless everyone comes to know this entity, Jesus Christ cannot return to the earth. We will continue to suffer from diseases, poverty, and tribulations. Isn't it, then, extremely important to identify this power so that we know what to do to save our lives—not just physically but spiritually—so that we may have eternal life? (Matthew 10:26-33; John 6:39-40; Revelation 12:11). Dying or not dying is not the issue. The real concern is being ready to meet Jesus Christ when He comes on the clouds of heaven (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:29-31).

Dear Reader, By God's grace, do you want to be ready to join the saints worldwide? Read the book of Daniel and understand. Before you begin each

lesson, pray that God may give you His Spirit to guide you into all truth (John 16:13-15).

May God bless you!

Evangelist Moses Mwalumbili

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND - 2

CAN FOOD AFFECT YOUR MIND?

(Read Daniel 1 in its entirely)

Believe it or not, food can affect your mind, as well as your physical and spiritual health. For more details on this health topic, read books on Health and Nutrition, such as Health and Happiness and God's Healing, where the 8 Health Principles are explained: Proper Nutrition, Physical Exercise, Fresh Air, Clean and Safe Water, Sunlight, Rest, Temperance, and Trusting in God. By following them, you will avoid many diseases and reduce medical expenses. The only diseases that will remain are those that come through unavoidable means, which, due to sin, you cannot escape.

The first-class food that God originally gave to humanity was "every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it" (Genesis 1:29). When sin entered the world, it brought a curse not only upon all creatures but also upon the land. As a result, God added vegetables to the original human diet (Genesis 3:18).The flood lasted on the earth for five months or 150 days, destroying all vegetation (Genesis 7:24). Because of this, God added "meat" from clean animals only to the human diet (Genesis 8:3-4, as specified in Leviticus 11:1-47; Deuteronomy 14:1-21).A petrol engine runs on petrol only; a diesel engine runs on diesel only. If you want to ruin your car, put diesel in a petrol engine or petrol in a diesel engine. The manufacturer knows what fuel is suitable for the car, not the user. Likewise, God knows the food that is best for the human body, not humans who pick whatever they want as food. Rebellious people will ruin their bodies (their "engines").

God created clean and unclean animals in the first week of creation. Jesus' death on the cross was not intended to change unclean animals into clean ones, but to change sinful human beings into holy ones. Those who desire holiness will avoid eating meat from unclean animals, but those who do not seek holiness will eat anything that comes their way.

God has assigned certain animals, such as octopuses, pigs, and vultures, to clean up the earth by consuming dead matter. We have no reason to eat these creatures after the "broom" has placed them within a specific waste system (Leviticus 11:41, 43, 46, 47; Deuteronomy 14:1-4).God does not force anyone, just as a car manufacturer does not force a person to use the recommended fuel. However, the consequences in the body are inevitable. The story of Peter in Acts 10:9-16 has been misinterpreted in verses 25-29. It was only a vision, not a literal event. Even so, Peter firmly refused to kill and eat unclean animals, despite God Himself commanding him three times. God does not change; if He declared certain meats unclean, they remain unclean forever (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 89:34).People falsely use Peter's vision to justify eating unclean animals, but he himself completely refused. However, there is punishment for those who continue to eat pigs, rats, and all detestable things of the Gentiles (pagans). (Read Isaiah 65:2-6; 66:15-17).

Alcohol was never part of the drink God gave to humanity; clean and safe water is the best drink of all for human beings (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35).Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:21). Many say, "I drink a lot, but I don't get drunk." However, the problem with alcohol is not just intoxication but also its toxic effects, as alcohol contains a harmful poison. This poison negatively affects the heart, nervous system, and muscles, among other things.

God will destroy anyone who deliberately harms their body in any way—through alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or anything similar (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). These substances weaken our connection with God.

Additionally, there are popular beverages like Cola, Coffee, and Tea, which harm the nervous system, brain, and body. They should be avoided.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 3

Now, let us look at those four Hebrew young men, captives from Jerusalem, in that city of Babylon in the year 606 or 605 B.C. They were between the ages of 18 and 20. Because of their wisdom, they were selected to join other Babylonian youths in the Pagan School of Babylon for three years of training. They were given names associated with the gods of Babylon—Daniel was called Belteshazzar, Hananiah was called Shadrach, Mishael was called Meshach, and Azariah was called Abednego (Dan. 1:6,7). The king commanded that they be given the royal food so that they would grow strong and intelligent. His intention was very good. But could the king's food—which included unclean meat, was heavily seasoned with harmful spices, and possibly contained intoxicating drinks—really promote good health and a clear mind? (Dan. 1:1-

5).

These four Hebrew young men had been raised in a different environment. They followed the health principles and dietary instructions that God had given to humanity. They refrained from eating any kind of meat and from drinking wine (fermented or even fresh grape juice) because they were consecrated to the Lord as Nazirites (Numbers 6:1-5). Therefore, the king's command posed a very difficult test for them.

"But Daniel resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore, he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). What courage! His request was not easy for the overseer to grant because he feared losing his head if they appeared malnourished (Dan. 1:10).

So, Daniel said to him, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us pulse [grains, seeds, green vegetables, fruits] to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearances be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the king's food..." (Dan. 1:13). The overseer agreed to the request. What happened to their health after just those ten days?

"Their faces appeared better and healthier [those who rely on harmful beauty products should take note], and their bodies were better nourished than all the young men who ate the king's food. So, the steward took away their portion of the king's delicacies and the wine they were given to drink and gave them pulse [grains, seeds, green vegetables, fruits] instead" (Dan. 1:15,16).

The rich or royal foods that we often crave do not bring health to the body. A simple plant-based diet, unrefined and unprocessed, along with clean and pure water, is the best nutrition. For a clear mind and a healthy, well-nourished body—one that is not overweight due to disease—it is advisable to eat plant-based foods, drink clean and safe water, and follow the eight health principles.

Scientists have discovered that those who eat a plant-based diet without meat tend to live much longer than those who consume meat. The Eskimos, who live in icy regions of Canada with little vegetation, hunt sea and land animals for food. Their average lifespan is only about 40 years.

Daniel, on the other hand, lived for more than 90 years, reaching the time of King Cyrus (Dan. 1:21; 10:1). Now, let us see what happened to those four young men at the end of their three years of training. How did King Nebuchadnezzar perceive them?

"And the king talked with them, and among them all, none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah... And in every matter of wisdom and

understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom" (Dan. 1:19,20).

Why do we struggle so much with the issue of physical health? Is spiritual life not more important? "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good health [physically], just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). The wise have said, "A sound mind in a healthy body."This is a principle worth serious consideration.

The Bible's principle is this: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). We are responsible for keeping our bodies in the best health possible (1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Rom. 12:1,2). The issue of health is directly connected to our salvation. God can use us just as He used Daniel (Dan. 1:17). These young men could not have been used by the Lord so effectively if they had indulged in the rich foods of the king!

God communicates with us through a clear, unclouded mind.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND - 4

THE KING OF PEACE IS COMING VERY SOON (READ DANIEL 2 IN ITS ENTIRELY)

No human being can accurately predict future events through their own wisdom or knowledge. Astrologers [those who predict by looking at stars], soothsayers who read bones, palm readers, and even scientists are merely guessing—they cannot truly know past events or those yet to come (Dan. 2:27-28; Isa. 42:8-9; 46:9-10; 41:21-24; 8:19; James 4:13-16). Only God knows the past and the future, and He tells us before things happen. Since sin entered the world, direct communication with God was severed; now, He communicates with us through prophets He chooses, through prayer, nature, and occasionally through angelic visitations or an audible voice instructing someone on what to do (Isa. 59:2; Num. 12:6). All major events that bring calamities to mankind are revealed to His prophets (Amos 3:7).

Regarding the Flood, He informed Noah; about the destruction of Nineveh, He informed Jonah; concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, He informed Abraham. Ahead of us, there are seven plagues (Revelation 16) that will greatly impact humanity. Before they arrive, He informed John on the island of Patmos. The impending disasters can be avoided if those involved

repent and turn away from their sins (Jer. 18:7-10; Jonah 3:1-10). If we reject the prophets sent by God, we will not succeed in our journey to heaven (2 Chron. 20:20). Although the books of the Bible are sealed (66 books—39 in the Old Testament; 27 in the New Testament), God will still send prophets to warn His church (Joel 2:28-31; Eph. 4:11-14). Since there are false prophets, we must test them. There are four criteria a prophet must meet in order to be recognized as a true prophet of God:

1. Jer. 28:9; Deut. 13:1-5

2. Isa. 8:20 [Exod. 20:3-17]

3. Matt. 7:20

4. 1 John 4:1-3

Prophecy and history go hand in hand (John 14:29). The correct interpretation of prophecy will be supported by both biblical passages and history (Isa. 28:10; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Prophecy is not interpreted according to personal preference or the preference of any particular church. The dream that greatly troubled the king was about the Four Great Kingdoms that ruled the world and the kingdoms that followed until the coming of Jesus Christ to establish His eternal kingdom. The interpretation is as follows:

I. THE KINGDOM OF BABYLON (606-538 or 605-539 B.C.)

Represented by the head of gold (Dan. 2:37-38). History confirms this.

II. THE MEDO-PERSIAN KINGDOM (538-331 or 539-331 B.C.)

This kingdom overthrew the Babylonian Kingdom (Dan. 5:25-31). It is represented by the chest and arms of silver (Dan. 2:32a, 39a). History confirms this. The dates are approximate.

III. THE GREEK KINGDOM (331-168 B.C.)

The Medo-Persian Kingdom was prophesied to be overthrown by the Greeks (Dan. 8:4-7, 20-21; 11:1-3). The Greek Kingdom is represented by the belly and thighs of bronze (Dan. 2:32b, 39b). History confirms this.

IV. THE ROMAN EMPIRE (168 B.C. - 476 A.D.)

The Roman Empire is represented by the legs of iron. The Bible describes the Roman Empire as one that crushed and shattered the previous kingdoms

like iron. Daniel was not given the name of this empire, but history confirms that the Romans defeated the Greeks in 168 B.C. When Christ was born, this empire was still ruling the world, including Palestine, under Emperor Augustus (Luke 2:1-7; John 11:48).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND - 5

V. THE PAPAL KINGDOM (538-1798 A.D.)

It emerged from the remnants of the Roman Empire after it was overthrown by the barbarian [pagan] tribes of Northern Europe in 476 A.D. It is represented by the feet (Dan. 2:33b, 41a). The clay represents the church or God's people (Isa. 64:8; Jer. 18:6). The iron represents the government. Thus, the mixing of clay and iron symbolizes the union of religion and government under a single religious leader in Rome. History confirms that this kingdom arose from the remnants of the Roman Empire after its fall and ruled the world from 538 A.D. This is the rule of the Pope, or the Papacy.

VI. THE TEN KINGDOMS OF WESTERN EUROPE (476 A.D. – THE RETURN OF CHRIST)

The ten kingdoms of Western Europe are represented by the Ten Toes of the feet (Dan. 2:42). These kingdoms are England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths*.** The last three kingdoms are no longer visible on modern maps. More details about them will be provided in the study of Daniel 7. These ten nations were former Roman colonies. When Rome fell in 476 A.D., they gained independence and became sovereign. Later, when they were forcefully converted to Catholicism, they found themselves under the rule of the Pope, who called himself the King of kings from 538 A.D. onward.

VII. THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF CHRIST (HIS RETURN TO ETERNITY)

This kingdom is represented by the Stone cut out without hands (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45). The Stone is Christ (Luke 20:17, 18; Matt. 21:42, 44; Acts 4:10-12). He is the Prince of Peace who is coming very soon (Isa. 9:6; Rev. 22:12). When He returns, He will destroy all the kingdoms of the world (Rev. 11:15; 19:11-21). Read more about the 1,000-year period that will begin when Christ returns for the second time in Swahili books like Majibu kwa Mashaka Yako. After those 1,000 years, the wicked will be resurrected and destroyed in eternal fire along with Satan and his angels, turning into ashes. Then this

world, which will have been devastated at His second coming (Jer. 4:23-27; Rev. 6:14-17), will be made new along with its heavens (Revelation 20; Mal. 4:1-3; Ezek. 28:14-19; Rev. 21:1; Psalm 37).

Our sincere prayer should be this: "Lord Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The same promise will be given to us starting today if we make this request with a true intention to live for Him on this earth: "You will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). My dear friend, why would you waste this precious opportunity today? Decide now to make Jesus your Lord and Savior. Use today's chance wisely, just like the thief on the cross. Stop playing with sin. Today is the day of your salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND - 6

THREE YOUNG MEN PASS THE TEST OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (READ DANIEL 3 ENTIRELY)

Since heaven, Satan has been waging war against God's Law (The Ten Commandments). He is fiercely angry with anyone who keeps all Ten Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 12:17; 14:12; Ex. 20:3-17). A person who keeps nine out of the ten is just like someone who does not keep any because they are one unit. For example, the Ten Commandments are like a mirror with ten sections—if one part breaks, the entire mirror is broken. Satan has no problem with such a person because they are on his side; he will not fight against them at all (James 2:10-12). The Ten Commandments reveal sin, for "Sin is the transgression of the law [The Ten Commandments]" (1 John 3:4, KJV; Rom. 7:7). Breaking just one commandment makes one a sinner.

Therefore, any Christian, regardless of who they are or what position they hold, who disregards God's Law given at Mount Sinai (The Ten Commandments) is in great danger of losing eternal life (1 John 2:3-6; 5:1-5; Ps. 119:155). Jesus, our example and who is also God, kept His Father's Ten Commandments; how about you? (John 15:10). Do not let anyone deceive you, for "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). Avoid them. Be careful not to deceive yourself (Gal. 6:7-8), and do not allow a blind person to lead you, for both of you will fall into a ditch (Matt. 15:14). Eternal life is so precious that no one should be willing to lose it so easily (Matt. 22:29).

Here, we find the three Hebrew young men, but this time, Daniel is not present. In Daniel 1, we saw how the four young men passed the test of food. Eating or drinking anything that harms the body deliberately is a violation

of the Sixth Commandment, which states, “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20:13). Thus, they passed the test of the Sixth Commandment. Now they are faced with an even greater test concerning the Second Commandment, which states, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or 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: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them...” (Exodus 20:4-6).

After being told the meaning of the dream he had about a great image in Daniel 2 regarding the four great kingdoms, including his own, King Nebuchadnezzar became stubborn and defiant against God. He made a large image entirely of gold [gold represented the kingdom of Babylon], signifying that the Babylonian kingdom would last forever. He commanded that the image, which was set up in the plain of Dura, be worshiped by everyone present (Dan. 3:1-7). Everyone bowed down except the three Hebrew young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What great courage they displayed among the high-ranking officials of the Babylonian government!

God’s people are required to have such courage to defend God’s truth even if the heavens fall (Rom. 8:35-39; Heb. 11:32-40; Dan. 11:33). The king tried to persuade them to comply once more when the sound of the flute and other instruments played. He threatened to throw them into a furnace that was heated seven times hotter than usual. But they calmly responded, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:16-18).

Then the king became furious and ordered that they be tied up and thrown into the blazing furnace by his strongest soldiers. The soldiers who threw them in perished because of the intensity of the fire. Eventually, the young men were successfully thrown into the midst of the blazing furnace.

What happened next?

Lo! The king was astonished. “Did we not throw three men into the fire? Why do I see four, and one looks like the Son of God?” [Jesus was there to save them]. He has promised to be with His people until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20). Even if they pass through fire or deep waters, He will be there, ready to deliver them (Isaiah 43:1,2). He fulfilled His promise to them in that terrifying event. They walked inside the fire without being burned. When they were brought out of the furnace, “they saw that the fire had no power over their bodies, not a single hair on their heads was burned, their clothes were not scorched, and there was not even the smell of fire on them” (Dan. 3:27). Praise the Lord!!! He has the power to save completely!

God says, “For those who honor Me, I will honor, but those who despise Me will be regarded as nothing” (1 Sam. 2:30). My brother, will you stand firm to uphold God’s Ten Commandments? The king acknowledged, “There is no other god who can save like this.” Then he promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon (Dan. 3:29,30). He despised all those who had bowed to the idol and decreed that anyone who spoke against the God of these young men would be cut into pieces, and their houses would be turned into heaps of rubble. Was that not a great humiliation?

There is a reward for standing firm in defense of God’s truth. Joseph was imprisoned for refusing to commit adultery, that is, for rejecting the violation of the Seventh Commandment (Exod. 20:14). As a result, God was with him in prison, and eventually, he was released and honored by being made Prime Minister of Egypt (Gen. 39:21-23; 41:37-44). Babylon represents the forces of darkness [Satan] fighting against God’s Ten Commandments. Even the Great Babylon of Revelation shares the same character. Satan uses Babylon to carry out his destruction against God’s innocent people.

This final generation, the era of Science and Technology, will face the greatest test of all regarding the Fourth Commandment concerning the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8-11). John was shown that every living person at that time will be tested (Rev. 3:10). Those who will be protected by Christ are those who have kept the word of His patience (Rev. 14:12) — “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the [Ten] Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Will you stand under the Banner of Emmanuel, which bears those words (Rev. 14:12), or under the Banner of the Mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16,17) — which signifies the new-age day of rest for the coming generation?

By His grace, let us resolve that “we can do nothing against the Truth, but only for the Truth” (2 Cor. 13:8). But what is Truth? The Word of God is Truth; the Law of God (the Ten Commandments) is Truth (John 17:17; Ps. 119:142). His Word and His Law endure forever (Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23; Luke 16:17;

Ps. 119:44). His Law is perfect; thus, nothing can be added to or removed from it (Ps. 19:7; Deut. 4:2,10-13).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -8

STUBBORN PRIDE OF THE KING IS HUMBLED (READ DANIEL 4 IN ITS ENTIRETY)

Believe it or not, we all have pride to some degree. That pride stems from the self, that is, ego. The root of all sin is self (ego). You can either exalt yourself or unduly belittle yourself—both are forms of pride. The one who exalts himself says, "I am rich, I am educated, I… I…." He sees himself as superior to others because of what he has or what he does. On the other hand, the one who unduly belittles himself, when praised for a good job, says, "It was nothing! I did nothing significant!" But deep in his heart, he congratulates himself, thinking he has done very well. The One who searches hearts records it as pride.Pride led to Lucifer's fall in heaven, and he was given the dreadful name of Satan (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17). Our first parents in the Garden of Eden were deceived by Satan into believing that if they ate the forbidden fruit, they would be like God. They ate, realized they were naked, lost the glory with which they were created, and their descendants were left lacking that glory (Genesis 3:3-7; Romans 3:23). God despises pride because our self seeks to remove Him from His throne in our hearts and take that place itself (Proverbs 6:16-19).

We learned in the first lesson (Daniel 1) that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. A person who allows the self to rule their heart drives out the Spirit from within them. The greatest battle in this world is the battle against our own selves. The self never truly dies; it can only be suppressed so that it does not rise up. Therefore, we must always be watchful lest it rises above God or above others.

Paul faced this same battle. He said, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). In other words, "I put my self (ego) to death every day," or "I fight against the self that rises within me." The way to control the self is by allowing Christ to dwell in our hearts:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I [my ego] who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

The self will be completely removed from us at the last trumpet when we receive glorified, immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). That is why it is not right for a person to boast that they are saved, for they can fall at any moment due to their ego and lose their salvation (1 Corinthians 10:12;

Ezekiel 33:12-16; Matthew 24:13). The act of boasting itself is a sin that is unforgivable unless one repents and humbles themselves (Luke 18:9-14).

We are only permitted to boast in the cross of Christ, which brought redemption to us who were unworthy (Galatians 6:14). All praise belongs to God for whatever we achieve or accomplish (Jeremiah 9:23-24).Now, we see King Nebuchadnezzar, who had witnessed God's great power in saving the three young men from the fiery furnace and had acknowledged that "there is no other god who can deliver like this" (Daniel 3:29), exalting himself above that same God through his pride.

The city of Babylon was magnificent in glory (Isaiah 13:19a). No other kingdom on earth could match its splendor. God had given him a dream of a statue representing all the kingdoms that would rule from his time until Christ establishes His eternal kingdom (Daniel 2). However, in his pride, he opposed God's plan by erecting an entire statue made of gold (gold represented the Babylonian kingdom) in the plain of Dura and commanding people to worship it. In his arrogance, he despised the God of heaven, considering Him insignificant, and believed that he and his kingdom would last forever. He lived.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND - 9

And the people of God, so that he may learn about the God of Israel; those four young men were a great lesson for him. Yet he paid no attention to all that. In His love, God gave him a second dream to warn him to abandon his stubborn pride (Dan. 4:4-17).

In his dream, he saw a tall tree that grew up to the heavens; all people, animals, and birds found their food in that tree. Then he saw a holy watcher commanding that the tree be cut down, leaving only its stump to be drenched with the dew of heaven for seven periods (years). Why?"So that the living may know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and He gives it to whomever He wills, and sets over it the lowliest of men." (Dan. 4:17).

How many kings understand that it is God who has placed them on the thrones they occupy? (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6). The duty of all governments in the world is to oversee the implementation of the last six commandments of the Ten (Exod. 20:12-17). When they perform this duty well, with faithfulness and justice, their nations are blessed. However, when they interfere with matters concerning God (the first four commandments – Exod. 20:3-11), they overstep the authority given to them and deserve punishment from God.

The Bible is not a book of politics; however, the rise and fall of all the nations

of the world are recorded in it. It is God who rules over all the kingdoms of men. He evaluates the conduct of all nations on earth (Ps. 66:7-8; Ps. 2; 9:17). It is a very tragic reality that all the nations of the world, except for the saints within them, will be utterly destroyed on the last day for going against the authority entrusted to them by God (Rev. 19:11-21).

When Daniel was called to interpret the king's dream, "he was astonished for a moment, and his thoughts troubled him" (Dan. 4:19). Why was he troubled? Because the dream meant that the king would be driven away from men and eat grass like an ox for seven years. Why would this happen? Because of his stubborn pride.

"Seven periods [years] will pass over you until you acknowledge that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills, whoever they may be." (Dan. 4:25).Twelve months later, "he was walking in his royal palace in Babylon. The king spoke, saying, 'Is this not great Babylon, which I have built as a royal residence by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?'" (Dan. 4:29-30).

At that very moment, a voice from heaven declared that his kingdom had been taken from him and that he would live among the animals, eating grass like an ox for seven years until he learned to acknowledge the God of heaven. Seven years of lessons to humble stubborn pride! Think about that!

Thank God! Nebuchadnezzar learned in a very shameful way (by becoming insane) for a full seven years. But he emerged as a new person; he repented of his stubborn pride and from that moment on, he began to publicly glorify the God of heaven (Dan. 4:34-35). His kingdom was restored to him.His testimony before the people is given at the beginning of Chapter 4:

"King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and languages who dwell on the whole earth: May peace be multiplied to you. It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs! How mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endures from generation to generation." (Dan. 4:1-3).

One day, those who are saved will meet Nebuchadnezzar in heaven. He will tell them his story in full detail.How many people, when God speaks to them through His Word, harden their hearts in pride, elevate their thoughts above God's, and act contrary to His commands? Are they ready to be sent into the wilderness to eat grass so they may learn? That is a very severe lesson.How long will God be patient with me before He cuts down my tree? (Luke 13:6-9).

We must repent; otherwise, we will perish (Luke 13:1-5). We are neither greater than God nor better than others.

T<u>HE LAST NIGHT ON EARTH (READ DANIEL 5 IN FULL)</u>

The heart of man is full of foolishness. “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good” (Psalm 53:1). People who love sin choose to erase God from their thoughts, teachings, and lives. The Bible calls this foolishness because God truly exists, and such people will be held accountable for their evil deeds. But the saddest part is that we do not learn from what happened to those who came before us—we always want to experience things for ourselves.

One day, King Belshazzar (the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar) held a great feast of drunkenness for a thousand of his nobles. He did not know that this feast would be his last and that the God of heaven had seen it even before it happened (Jeremiah 51:37-40, 57-58). That night, the feast turned into something extraordinary, but those involved did not wake up the next morning—they were dead. Belshazzar did not learn from what had happened to his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:18-23). He knew all these things but arrogantly committed acts that angered the God of heaven.

His major mistakes were as follows:

His First Mistake: Using Holy Vessels to Drink Alcohol

(Daniel 5:1-3)He failed to distinguish between ordinary utensils and sacred vessels set apart for God’s holy work. Today, how many believers fail to teach their children or peers to make such distinctions?

“Her priests [pastors] have violated My law [the Ten Commandments] and have profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and the common, nor have they taught the people the difference between the unclean [such as pigs, rats, and so on] and the clean [such as cattle, goats, and sheep]. They have shut their eyes to My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (Ezekiel 22:26).Failing to recognize what is holy is a fatal mistake.

The Sabbath [Saturday] is holy (Genesis 2:2,3; Exodus 20:11; Isaiah 58:13-14). Sunday is not holy; it is a regular working day (Ezekiel 46:1). The day of worship that God appointed for all mankind is the Sabbath [Saturday], and it will remain so for eternity (Isaiah 66:22-23).

The tithe (a tenth of our income) is holy (Leviticus 27:30-33). Using it for personal needs is robbing God (Malachi 3:8-11). Thieves will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).Depending on your pastor instead of studying the Bible for yourself is a great danger!

His Second Mistake: Drinking Wine [Alcohol]

(Daniel 5:4a)In our first lesson about food and drink, we learned that alcohol severely harms the body, and those who destroy their bodies with alcohol or in any other way will themselves be destroyed (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Alcohol contains ethanol, a toxic substance that affects the nervous system, brain, heart, and muscles, among other body parts. The issue is not just about getting drunk; it is about the poison inside alcohol. Some people may not appear drunk even after drinking a lot, but the poison is still at work in their bodies, causing damage.

Those who say, "Drinking just a little alcohol is okay," would never say the same about rat poison. Even a small amount of poison is enough to kill or harm the body (Proverbs 23:29-35). The Bible compares the poison in alcohol to the venom of a snake called "fira" (Proverbs 23:31-32), which is extremely deadly.

The Bible states that drunkards—both those who get drunk and those who don't but still consume alcohol—will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

His Third Mistake: Praising Idols Instead of the God of Heaven

(Daniel 5:4b)The Word says: "This is what the Lord says: Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength, or the rich boast of their riches..."

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 11

"Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD" (Jer. 9:24).

It was not that Belshazzar did not know the God of heaven when he was praising his gods alongside his nobles. It was his hardened pride that made him act that way. Who do you praise? When the feast reached its climax, and they were drunk, praising women and their gods, a hand without a physical body began to write on the wall. A cold sweat broke out on them. All the alcohol evaporated from their minds. Great fear gripped them; they did not know what to do. Experts were summoned to read the writing, but they could not. Then the queen, the grandmother of Nebuchadnezzar, entered and told them about Daniel and how he had interpreted her grandfather's dreams. Daniel was called. He rebuked Belshazzar for his pride despite knowing full well what had happened to his grandfather.

He then read the writing on the wall:

“MENE (NUMBERED), MENE (NUMBERED), TEKEL (WEIGHED), AND PERES (DIVIDED).”

And the interpretation of these words was:

MENE – God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end.

TEKEL – You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

PERES – Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

It had already been prophesied that the city’s gates would be left open and the river’s waters would be dried up (Isa. 45:1; 44:27). This is exactly what Cyrus did when he led the armies of the Medes and Persians that night. The river gates were left open that night. They entered and killed the king and all the leaders inside. That was their last night.

God weighs nations on His scales and puts an end to their rule as He pleases. Likewise, He weighs individuals on the heavenly scales (The Ten Commandments) and records before their names either “lacking” or “complete in Him” (Col. 2:10). This is the work our High Priest, Jesus Christ, has been doing in heaven since the year 1844. Very soon, the case of each one of us will be decided forever. Once He completes His work of mediation or judgment, He will declare these solemn words:”Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy” (Rev. 22:11).This judgment will be concluded before the seven last plagues of Revelation 16 fall. During the final plague, He will come to take His people and destroy all the wicked.

The rich farmer who harvested abundantly and did not know where to store his crops thought he had many years of ease and pleasure ahead of him (Luke 12:16-21). That night, he told himself, “Soul, you have many good things stored up for many years; take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19). Poor man! That night, he did not wake up; he was taken. The unseen Holy Watcher who wrote on the wall in Babylon pronounced these words to that rich man:”This very night, your soul will be demanded from you! Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” (Luke 12:20).

My dear friend, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). Tomorrow is not yours (James 4:13-16). Decide today to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Turn away from drunkenness and all sin. If you accept Him, He will give you the power to overcome sin (1 Cor. 15:57; Jude 24,25).Your last night on earth and mine could be tonight.”Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face

of the whole earth" (Luke 21:34,35).

One day, the entire world, which indulges in sinful pleasures, will not see the morning; they will be corpses—unburied, unlamented (Jer. 25:32-37). It will be the final feast that God will prepare for the birds (Rev. 19:17,18).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -12

SUCCESSFULLY PASSING THE TEST OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

(READ DANIEL 6 IN ITS ENTIRELY)

In both ancient Babylon and the final Great Babylon, the same satanic attitude of hatred toward God's Law [the Ten Commandments] is evident, as well as the enforcement of actions contrary to that Law. They worshiped gods, idols, and kings. Nimrod was the founder of the city of Babylon (Genesis 10:8-12). He was worshiped as the god Bel (the sun). Bel (Isaiah 46:1) was the chief god of the Babylonians and the Persians, and his name is a shortened form of "Baal." History shows that pagans, from the days of Babylon, worshiped the sun on Sunday.We have seen how those four young men (Daniel 1) were tested regarding the Sixth Commandment, which says, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Eating foods and drinking beverages that harm the body is a form of slow self-destruction. They overcame that test.

We also saw how the three young men (Daniel 3) were tested concerning the Second Commandment, which forbids idolatry (Exodus 20:4-6). They overcame that difficult test even though they were thrown into the fire. God was pleased to deliver them.

Additionally, we touched on how Joseph was tested in Egypt regarding the Seventh Commandment, which states, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). He overcame.

Now we find Daniel (Daniel 6) being tested regarding the Eighth Commandment, which says, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). He overcame effortlessly (Daniel 6:4); he was faithful.

We also mentioned that the greatest test of the last days will be regarding the Fourth Commandment, which concerns God's Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). The generation of Science and Technology will establish a different day of rest instead of the Sabbath. The world will be divided into two groups—the ones who keep the [Ten] Commandments of God along with the faith of Jesus, and those who do not keep them, even though some among them will believe in Jesus. To keep the Ten Commandments of God, one must keep all of them (Exodus 20:3-17; James 2:10-12). "Sin is the transgression of the Law [the Ten

Commandments]" (1 John 3:4, KJV).

Returning to Babylon, we find King Darius, who loved Daniel, a man of God. Because of "an excellent spirit that was in him," Daniel was appointed as the Prime Minister of Babylon. This angered the ministers who were vying for that position. They sought to remove him from office by investigating his work performance and the management of the finances of the Medo-Persian Empire, but "they could find no fault or corruption in him" (Daniel 6:1-4).

They held a secret meeting. They searched for various ways but could not find any. Finally, they said, "We will not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the Law of his God [the Ten Commandments]."Yes, that idea seemed good and was accepted by all. The caution was to avoid issuing any decree that would alert the king because he loved Daniel. They went through the commandments one by one and saw that the First Commandment was suitable. But Daniel would never agree to worship a human being, for this commandment states, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).They hesitated, realizing that the king would soon figure out that their plan was targeting Daniel, his friend. One of them suggested involving the king in such a way that he would not suspect anything. They proposed that for just thirty days, all people should pray only to the king. This idea would please him, and he would not realize that their real target was Daniel.

They said, "We know that Daniel will not comply, and we will have trapped him completely. He will lose the position of Prime Minister, and it will be ours. Agreed?""Agreed!"

They went to the king deceitfully and pressured him to sign the decree. Read Daniel 6:5-9."So King Darius signed the document and the injunction." (Daniel 6:9).

The law of the Medes and the Persians could not be changed—it could not be revoked once enacted but had to be executed exactly as written.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 13

"

So when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows in his chamber were open toward Jerusalem)" (Daniel 6:10). Did he pray silently so that no one would hear whom he was praying to? "Then these men found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God" (Dan. 6:11). He was praying loudly, and they could hear the supplications he made to his God. What great courage in the face of a terrible death—being devoured by lions! Jesus has promised, "Whoever acknowledges Me before

men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). When Daniel openly acknowledged Christ even in the face of death, all of heaven watched everything closely and prepared to protect him.Many of us would have prayed silently so that no one could hear and so we would not endanger our lives. What were the results despite the king's efforts to prevent the execution of the decree? "Then they threw him into the den of lions" (Dan. 6:16). They congratulated themselves, believing their plot against Daniel had completely succeeded and that they would never see him again.The king had faith in the God of Israel, although he was deeply troubled about the safety of his friend Daniel when he saw him thrown into the lions' den. He said these words, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you" (Dan. 6:16). The king could not sleep all night, thinking about how the lions were tearing his friend to pieces, blaming himself for not having discovered the scheme of the jealous ministers who envied Daniel.

Did those starving lions devour Daniel, the witness of Jesus? The king went to the lions' den, crying out in sorrow, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" (Dan. 6:20). Daniel answered the king, "My God sent His angel, and he shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me" (Dan. 6:21-22). The lions remained still; their claws did not extend, nor did they show any desire to attack him.The king ordered Daniel to be brought out. The unchangeable decree of the Medes and Persians had been executed, but without the intended outcome. Then he issued another unchangeable decree to be carried out immediately. He ordered that those who had accused Daniel out of jealousy be thrown into the same den—"they, their children, and their wives" (Dan. 6:24). What happened? "The lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces before they even reached the bottom of the den" (Dan. 6:24).Jealousy has its consequences! Many seek to remove others from their positions by bringing false accusations or setting traps that are difficult to escape. But God sees all such wickedness. The wise have said, "He who digs a pit will fall into it himself." The Bible declares, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it" (Eccl. 10:8).In the days of Esther, Haman envied Mordecai. Secretly, he prepared a very tall, sharp pole on which to impale Mordecai, a man of God who was completely innocent, just like Daniel. What was the outcome? Haman himself was hanged on the very same gallows he had prepared with his own hands (Esther 7:9-10).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 14

King Darius loved Daniel's God, and God, in turn, loved that king. He sent Gabriel to confirm him in his reign (Dan. 11:1). Many kings should follow his example in helping and defending God's people when traps are set against them to bring them down. God will bless such rulers.Daniel overcame that great test of upholding the First Commandment. The king wrote to all the nations, commanding them to fear and tremble before Daniel's God. He declared, "He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Dan. 6:27).God says, "For those who honor Me, I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Daniel prospered under two kings (Dan. 2:28). Today's young people should follow Daniel's example.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -15

Kingdoms That Will Affect God's People (Part One)

(Read Daniel 7 in its entirety)

In Daniel 7, we find the same kingdoms that we encountered in Daniel 2, but additional details are provided in this chapter. We will divide this study into two parts for easier understanding. Part One will provide an overview of all the kingdoms from Babylon until the coming of the Lord Jesus to establish His eternal kingdom. Part Two will focus on the Kingdom of the Little Horn, which will significantly affect God's people in the final days of the world's history. God's people include Physical Israel (the Jews) and Spiritual Israel (Christians from all nations). Read Romans 2:28-29 and Galatians 3:26-29, and review the lesson in Daniel 9 regarding God's Holy Nation in these days. The book Daniel and Our Times provides a detailed explanation of this subject.

In Daniel 2, we examined these kingdoms from a political perspective. We looked only at their declining glory in relation to the different metals—gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay. Babylon had the greatest splendor of them all (Isaiah 13:19). However, in Daniel 7, we examine these kingdoms from a religious-political perspective. We see how these kingdoms affected God's people (both Physical Israel and Spiritual Israel).God warns that He will destroy all kingdoms that oppress and kill His people (Jeremiah 25:15-38; 46:28). God's people are like the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8). Fighting against God's people is equivalent to fighting against God Himself. The climax

of this battle is the War of Armageddon, which is a conflict between God and the kingdoms of the world that seek to destroy His people. In doing so, they wage war against God Himself (Revelation 16:13-16).

We will see how these nations, one by one, had their kingdoms completely destroyed. The kingdom of Pagan Rome and the kingdom of Papal Rome will be judged in the New Testament era through the Seven Trumpets of Revelation 8-11. It is truly tragic that the ultimate fate of all earthly kingdoms is total destruction simply because they aid the "Little Horn," also known as the "Beast" (Revelation 19:11-21).It is our duty to earnestly pray for kings, presidents, ministers, and all high-ranking leaders in governments worldwide so that they do not fall into the calamity that Satan has prepared (1 Timothy 2:1-6).Common words we use in daily life often have different meanings in various fields of study. For example, the word "spoon" refers to a utensil we use to eat food. However, for a Civil Engineer or a Road Engineer, a "spoon" is a type of bulldozer that scoops up soil and places it where needed.A wise person always asks, "What do you mean by that?" When an explanation is given, any misunderstanding disappears. Today, when people hear the word "Beast," their anger rises to the point where they might physically attack the person who says it or even take them to court. But in the language of prophecy, the word "Beast" means "King" or "Kingdom" (Daniel 7:17).Who would attack someone for saying "King"? That would be irrational. Why get so angry, my brother? First, ask for clarification, and you will understand its meaning.Therefore, the Little Horn represents a King or a Kingdom. We will use Part Two to explain it in detail so that everyone can recognize it. Because if he is not identified by all people worldwide, Jesus Christ will not return; we will continue suffering on this earth with chronic diseases, poverty, and oppression for an unknown period (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4). Paul has made it very easy for those unfamiliar with prophecy to recognize this king in verse 4.

Now, let us look at these kingdoms as a whole. All the animals mentioned are ferocious. This means that these kingdoms committed great atrocities. We will briefly go through them:

1. THE LION — THE KINGDOM OF BABYLON (606-538 or 605-539 B.C.)

The kingdom of Babylon is represented by the lion (Dan. 7:4; Jer. 4:5-7; Hab. 1:6-8). In Daniel 2, it is represented by the Head of Gold (Dan. 2:37,38). Regarding its cruelty, read 2 Chronicles 36:17-20 and Jeremiah 21:7. The "two wings" that the lion had symbolize the speed or swiftness in conquering in war (Hab. 1:6-10). History books show different dates.

2. THE BEAR — THE KINGDOM OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS (538 or 539-331 B.C.)

The kingdom of the Medes and Persians is represented by a bear, a very fierce

beast (Dan. 7:5). In Daniel 2, it is represented by the Chest and Arms of Silver (Dan. 2:39a; 5:25-31). The “three ribs” symbolize the three provinces that were brutally conquered by this kingdom—Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia (not Libya). Regarding its cruelty, read Isaiah 13:17-22 and Jeremiah 51:28-44.

3. THE LEOPARD — THE KINGDOM OF GREECE (331-168 B.C.)

The kingdom of Greece is represented by a leopard, a very aggressive animal (Dan. 7:6). In Daniel 2, it is represented by the Belly and Thighs of Bronze (Dan. 2:39b; 8:20,21). The “four wings” signify even greater speed in military conquests. The “four heads” represent the four rulers (Rev. 17:9,10) who took control after the death of Alexander the Great. These were his generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. In Daniel 8, Alexander the Great is symbolized as “the prominent horn between the eyes of the goat” (Dan. 8:5,21), and his four generals are “the four horns” of the goat (Dan. 8:8,22). For the cruelty of this kingdom, read Daniel 8:6,7.

4. THE DREADFUL BEAST — THE KINGDOM OF ROME (168 B.C. - 476 A.D.)

The Roman Empire is represented by a dreadful, unnamed beast with ten horns (Dan. 7:7). It ruled over ten European colonies. In Daniel 2, it is represented by the Legs of Iron (Dan. 2:40). Regarding its cruelty, read Daniel 7:7,23 and 2:40. It was a kingdom that crushed and shattered everything. Though not mentioned by name, history confirms that the power that overthrew Greece was Rome in 168 B.C. When Jesus was born, Rome was still in power (Luke 2:1-7; John 11:48).

5. THE TEN HORNS — THE TEN KINGDOMS OF WESTERN EUROPE (476 A.D. - THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS)

These kingdoms are represented by the ten horns (Dan. 7:8). “Horns” symbolize “kings” or “kingdoms” (Dan. 7:24). These ten kingdoms gained independence from Roman rule when the empire fell in 476 A.D. to the pagan tribes of Northern Europe. The ten kingdoms are England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. In Daniel 2, they are represented by the Ten Toes of the Feet (Dan. 2:41,42). For their cruelty, read history. They aided, and will again aid, the Pope in persecuting the saints (Rev. 17:12-14).

6. THE LITTLE HORN — THE KINGDOM OF THE PAPACY (538-1798 A.D.)

The Papal kingdom is represented here by the Little Horn (Dan. 7:8,20,24). This kingdom has many names in prophecy—The Abomination of Desolation, The Beast, and so on.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 17

It is represented by the Feet of Iron and Clay (Dan. 2:33,42). Its unparalleled cruelty was evident during the Dark Ages when it killed more than 50 million of God's people, whom it called "heretics." Read Daniel 7:21,25. How do we know this is referring to the Papacy? Read the Second Part of Daniel 7.

7. ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN — THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST (AT HIS SECOND COMING)

The eternal kingdom of Christ is represented by One Like the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13,14; Matt. 24:29-31). In Daniel 2, it is represented by the Stone (Dan. 2:34,35,44,45).

This kingdom has no cruelty; its citizens will experience eternal peace (Rev. 7:13-17; 21:1-7). But before this kingdom comes, judgment has been ongoing in heaven since 1844 to determine the fate of these oppressive kingdoms and the punishment of all the wicked; then He will return(Rev. 22:11,12).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -18

KINGDOMS THAT WILL AFFECT GOD'S PEOPLE (PART TWO)

(READ DANIEL 7:7-14,18,20-28)

In this second part, we have only one task—to confirm that the "Little Horn" represents the Papal Kingdom or the Papacy. Just as those who capture witches have their criteria to confirm whether someone is truly a witch, God has also set His own criteria to identify the "Little Horn" and remove any doubts people may have about this matter. We will use various Bible passages (Isa. 28:10) along with historical evidence.Why should we bother to identify this kingdom? Because it will cause all the people in the world who align with it to be destroyed along with it (Rev. 19:11-21). As I mentioned before, this kingdom is given many names in the books of Daniel and Revelation. We will try to build a bridge connecting Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 by examining just a few criteria among the many available.The judgment mentioned in Daniel 7 has determined to take away its kingdom and destroy it, but only after it has been granted its final phase of rule (Dan. 7:26; Rev. 19:1-3; 18:4-8; 16:1,2,10,19-21; 17:1-11). For more details, read the books Daniel and Our Time and The Great Controversy.

CRITERION 1: THE LITTLE HORN AROSE AFTER THE TEN KINGDOMS BECAME INDEPENDENT(Dan. 7:8)

The ten Western European kingdoms mentioned in the first part of this lesson gained independence in A.D. 476, immediately after the fall of the Roman Empire. After the fall of that empire, the Bishop of Rome, who was later called the Bishop of Bishops or the Pope, ruled only in the city of Rome until A.D. 538, when he took control over Western Europe. History confirms this.

CRITERION 2: THE LITTLE HORN UPROOTED THREE HORNS BEFORE IT COULD RULE

The three kingdoms that were uprooted by the Pope's command (Dan. 7:8,20,24) were:The Heruli, who were overthrown in A.D. 493The Vandals, who were overthrown in A.D. 534The Ostrogoths, who were overthrown in early A.D. 538

These three nations opposed the Pope. By A.D. 508, the remaining seven kingdoms had been forced to become Catholic under the influence of the King of France, Clovis, the Pope's beloved son. History confirms this.

CRITERION 3: THE LITTLE HORN WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE TEN HORNS(Dan. 7:24)

The ten horns represent the political kingdoms of Western Europe. The Little Horn represents the Papal Kingdom, which is both religious and political. History supports this. The Christian Church worldwide does not have political authority (John 18:33-38). Therefore, the Papal Kingdom obtained its power from somewhere else—not from God (Rev. 13:1,2; 12:9).This is why those who support it will perish along with it. All the political governments of the world have been given their authority by God (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6). For this reason, they punish criminals and commend good citizens. However, the Papal Kingdom kills righteous people (the saints) while allowing criminals to live (Dan. 7:21).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -19

CRITERION 4: THE LITTLE HORN RULED FOR 1260 YEARS (Dan. 7:25).

One prophetic time equals one literal year. Therefore, 1 time + 2 times + ½ time = 3½ times = 3½ years.One year has 12 months. Thus, 3½ years = 3½ × 12 months = 42 months.A biblical month has 30 days (Dan. 6:7; Gen. 7:24). Therefore, 42 months = 42 × 30 days = 1260 days.One prophetic day equals one literal year. Hence, 1260 days represent 1260 literal years.Look at this wonder! The beast in Revelation 13:1-10, 18 was given authority to operate for the same 42 months (Rev. 13:5). Even more astonishing is that the Great

Red Dragon of Revelation 12 represents Pagan Rome, which sought to kill Christ through Herod (Rev. 12:2-5; Matt. 2:16). It also represents Papal Rome (Rev. 12:6, 14), where we see the woman (God's true church) fleeing into the wilderness for 1260 days or 1260 years.This criterion builds a bridge identifying the Little Horn of Daniel 7 as the Beast like a Leopard in Revelation 13. Their characteristics match closely. Historically, the Papacy ruled from 538 AD to 1798 AD, a complete 1260-year period.

CRITERION 5: THE LITTLE HORN KILLED THE SAINTS (Dan. 7:21, 25).

More than 50 million saints were killed during the Papal rule of 1260 years for simply following biblical teachings. The Papacy called them "heretics," but the Bible calls them "saints." Indeed, the Papacy was drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6).How shocking it is for a church to kill another church! Compare this with Revelation 13:7—it is the same kingdom.

CRITERION 6: THE LITTLE HORN INTENDED TO CHANGE TIMES AND LAW (Dan. 7:25).

The law refers to the Ten Commandments of God (Ex. 20:3-17). The Papacy sought to completely remove the Second Commandment, which forbids idolatry. If you check the Catechisms of the Catholic Church and the Missal, you will be shocked.The Fourth Commandment, which concerns the Sabbath, was altered, replacing Saturday with Sunday. Thus, Sunday worship was established by the Pope in direct opposition to the Fourth Commandment.In Revelation, Sunday is referred to as the "mark" or "seal" of the Beast, meaning the mark of the Pope's authority (Rev. 13:16-17).The Catholic Record, London, Ontario, dated September 1, 1923, states:"Sunday is our mark of authority... The Church is above the Bible, and this transfer of Sabbath observance [from Saturday] is proof of that fact."As a result, only nine commandments remained instead of ten. To compensate for the missing second commandment, they divided the Tenth Commandment into two.

CRITERION 7: THE LITTLE HORN SPEAKS GREAT BLASPHEMIES (Dan. 7:8, 20).

Here, we will examine two key blasphemies.The first blasphemy is the claim that the Pope is God (John 10:30-33). How? Consider this quote:"The Pope has a very exalted position and has been so highly glorified that he is not just a man, but as it were, God, and the substitute of God."—Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica, Vol. VI, pp. 438, 442, under the article "Pope."The title "Holy Father" that the Pope has assumed belongs to God alone (John 17:11).The second blasphemy is the claim that he has the power to forgive sins, a role that belongs to God alone (Luke 5:20-21).God alone is to be worshiped (Matt. 4:10), yet the Pope seeks to be worshiped (2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:4, 7, 8, 12). Compare this with Revelation 13:1, 5, 6. It is the

same power.God does not want His people to remain in darkness about this kingdom, even though the world highly exalts it today. Eventually, when God allows it to rule fully, it will bring destruction upon the entire world, leading to its end (Rev. 17:8-11; 6:14-17; 19:11-21).The saints will go to heaven to reign with Jesus for 1000 years (1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 20:4). This world will be left in utter ruin.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 20

The entire period of 1000 years (Jer. 4:23-27). After the 1000 years are over, the saints will return here along with the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10). Then, the wicked will be resurrected and will attempt to attack the New Jerusalem or the Camp of the Saints. Fire will consume them(Rev. 20:7-10, 15). This is Gehenna, or the Lake of Fire, or the Second Death (Rev. 20:14). Gehenna is not burning now. It will burn after those 1000 years have ended. Those who enter it will be completely consumed and turned to ashes, along with Satan and his angels (Mal. 4:1-3; Ezek. 28:14-19). They will never be resurrected again! Then, the saints will inherit the new earth (Rev. 21:1; Matt. 5:5; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Psalm 37 in its entirety).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND – 21

THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 8 (READ THE WHOLE OF DANIEL 8)

The Little Horn of Daniel 7 represents the Papal Kingdom. However, the Little Horn of Daniel 8 represents two kingdoms—Pagan Rome and Papal Rome. It is the same as the Great Red Dragon of Revelation 12, which has seven heads and ten horns, symbolizing these two kingdoms. The distinction is made based only on their actions. God sees no difference between Pagan Rome and Papal Rome. Jesus referred to both as the "Abomination of Desolation," meaning authorities that destroy God's people (Matt. 24:15-22; Dan. 9:27). Daniel 8 and 9 are interconnected; Gabriel was unable to continue explaining to Daniel about the Little Horn, which would kill the saints in a shocking manner, because Daniel had fainted (Dan. 8:24, 27). After some time, Gabriel returned to Daniel and told him he wanted to help him understand the vision of Daniel 8, which he had previously interrupted (Dan. 9:20-22). However, for ease of understanding, we will examine each chapter separately.

Chapter 8 contains two visions—

1. The Ram with Two Horns (Dan. 8:3-4), which represents the kingdom of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 8:20).

2. The Goat with a Prominent Horn between its Eyes (Dan. 8:5-8), which represents the kingdom of Greece (Dan. 8:21)

The prominent horn symbolizes its first ruler, Alexander the Great (Dan. 8:21). The four horns represent his four generals who took over after his death (Dan. 8:22):

Cassander took the Western Province,

Lysimachus took the Northern Province,

Seleucus took the Eastern Province (Syria and beyond),

Ptolemy took the Southern Province (Egypt and the islands).

These Greek kingdoms fought among themselves until Seleucus eventually dominated the east, north, and west after defeating his rivals. It was from his territory that the Little Horn arose, representing Pagan Rome and later Papal Rome (Dan. 8:9). In other words, the Roman Empire emerged from the region once ruled by Seleucus. This is true both geographically and historically

Now, let us briefly examine the works of the Little Horn in Daniel 8. Through Moses, God had warned the Israelites that He would bring against them a nation whose language they did not understand, which would besiege them and lead them to eat their own children. This was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when Roman armies besieged and utterly destroyed Jerusalem, along with its temple (Deut. 28:49-57; Dan. 9:26-27; Matt. 24:15-20; Luke 21:20-24)The cruelty of these kingdoms, represented by a “fierce-looking king,” meaning a ruthless ruler, is mentioned (Dan. 8:23-24). The Jews understood Greek but not Latin. The New Testament was written in Greek, the language of the Greek Empire. Both Pagan Rome and Papal Rome used deception in their rule (Dan. 8:25). Read Ancient History.So far, we have discussed general aspects. Now, let us briefly examine the actions of these kingdoms:

PAGAN ROME:

The Little Horn grew significantly toward “the Beautiful Land,” meaning Palestine (Dan. 8:9). Palestine became part of the Roman Empire in 63 B.C. The “host of heaven” refers to God’s people, while “stars” symbolize religious leaders (Dan. 8:10; Rev. 1:20). “Casting them down and trampling them” means destroying or killing them. This kingdom fulfilled this prophecy in 70 A.D. when it destroyed Jerusalem. Then, in the second century, it killed many Christians under Emperor Diocletian of Rome. Even before him, during the reign of Nero, Christians were slaughtered. History estimates that Pagan Rome killed approximately three million people. “The sanctuary was cast down” refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. (Dan. 8:11).”The Prince of the Host” or “The Prince of princes” is Christ Himself (Dan. 12:1)

(Rev. 12:7,8; Joshua 5:13-15; Rev. 1:5). The word "angel" means "messenger." It can refer to Christ, to the heavenly beings we call angels (Heb. 1:14), or to "pastors" (Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7). "Michael" is the name of Jesus when He is the Chief of the Angelic Army (Commander of the Lord's Army). His voice will raise the dead (John 5:25,28,29; 1 Thess. 4:16), and He is called the Archangel.That Pilate, the governor of pagan Rome, faced Him directly, as foretold in (Dan. 8:11,25; John 18:33-37; 19:1-3,10,11,23,19-22). He was crucified on a Roman cross, scourged with Roman whips, nailed with Roman nails, and His tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers. That prophecy was fulfilled completely.

Papal Rome

We will consider only a few aspects, not all. Papal Rome "cast down the truth to the ground" (Dan. 8:12). What is truth? Truth is the Word of God. Truth is the Law of God (the Ten Commandments). Read (John 17:17; Ps. 119:142).The papacy has trampled upon the Ten Commandments by abolishing the Second Commandment, which forbids idolatry, and replacing the Sabbath (Saturday) with Sunday as the day of worship (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:16,17). In prophecy, Sunday is called the "Mark of the Beast," meaning the mark of the authority of the Pope. The Sabbath is called the Seal of God (Rev. 7:1-4) or the "Mark of God" (Ezek. 9:4-11).Martin Luther discovered 95 errors (false teachings). Now there are even more. "Trampling the Sanctuary and the host" does not mean destroying the temple building, but rather shifting believers' focus toward the Pope instead of Jesus Christ, the High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary, by introducing the priesthood and the Mass (Heb. 4:14-16; 3:1). Another error is using God's title, "Holy Father" (John 17:11).

Time is insufficient to list all the false doctrines referred to as "the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8; 17:2). It promotes traditions over the Bible (Matt. 15:3-9; Mark 7:5-13). It killed more than 50 million saints during its 1260-year reign (538-1798), known as the Dark Ages (Dan. 8:24,25; Matt. 24:21,22).Those within this system are commanded to leave (Rev. 18:4,5). From the Pope to the laypeople, all are called to depart immediately. Millions will leave with great tribulation, and those who remain in the system will face execution (Rev. 15:2; 20:4).In (Daniel 7:9,10), judgment followed after the papacy's 1260-year rule. This same judgment is repeated in these words: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14).The entire plan of salvation is revealed in both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries (Heb. 8:1,2; 9:6,7; Lev. 16; Lev. 23:27-32). From Sinai until Jesus' crucifixion, this service was conducted by priests and the high priest until it ended (Exod. 25:8; Matt. 27:50,51).

When Jesus ascended in 31 A.D., He entered directly into the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:11,12), where He began the work of judgment, purification, or atonement as the High Priest. The 2300 days of (Dan. 8:14) represent 2300 prophetic years (Ezek. 4:6). They began in 457 B.C., when the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued, and ended in 1844 A.D.The cleansing of the sanctuary refers to the work of 1844 in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:23-26; Rev. 11:19). Once completed, Christ will pronounce the solemn words that will determine everyone's eternal destiny—either for eternal life or eternal death (Rev. 22:11,12). Then He will return to take His people and destroy the wicked.The subject of the Sanctuary is vast. You are advised to read The Great Controversy, Chapters 24 and 25, for a comprehensive explanation.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -23

THE HOLY NATION OF ISRAEL REJECTED (READ DANIEL 9 ENTIRELY)

Gabriel came again to Daniel after some time had passed since the day he fainted, to give him further explanations about his vision in Daniel 8. You remember Daniel fainted (Dan. 8:27). Because of this, Gabriel was unable to continue with his explanation; now he returned to complete the interpretation of that vision (Dan. 9:20)."Seventy weeks have been determined [cut off, set apart from the 2300-year period] for your people [the Jews] and for your holy city [Jerusalem].... Know therefore and understand, that from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of the Messiah, the Prince, there shall be seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and a trench, but in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah shall be cut off.... Then he shall confirm a strong covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering..." (Dan. 9:24-27).

As it is, one week has seven days, and in prophetic interpretation, one day represents one regular year. Therefore, seventy weeks equal 70 × 7 = 490 days or 490 years. This period is cut off from the 2300 years in Daniel 8:14 and begins to be counted from the same year, 457 B.C., when the decree to successfully rebuild Jerusalem was issued. The 490 years from 457 B.C. end in A.D. 34. This period was given to the Holy Nation of ancient Israel to fulfill six specified tasks. They were expected to accept the Messiah as their Savior and receive His righteousness. But when He came to them, they did not accept Him as a nation (John 1:11).

The seven weeks represent 7 × 7 = 49 years from 457 B.C. to 408 B.C. The sixty-two weeks represent 62 × 7 = 434 years from 408 B.C. to A.D. 26½ or

27. The year 27 A.D. was when Jesus became known as the Messiah [the Anointed One] after being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:13-17; Acts 10:38). It was indeed the time that had "been fulfilled" according to the prophecy of Daniel 9 concerning the Messiah (Matt. 4:17).The seven weeks plus the sixty-two weeks equal sixty-nine weeks, or 49 + 434 = 483 years from 457 B.C., which ended in A.D. 27. Therefore, only one week or seven years remained to complete the 490-year period granted to the Nation of Israel to accept Jesus. The remaining years were 490 - 483 = 7 years, which would end in A.D. 34 (27 + 7 = 34).In the middle of the final week, that is, halfway through the seven years, or 3½ years, "the Messiah shall be cut off"—He would be killed brutally. Thus, 27 + 3½ = 30½, which rounds to A.D. 31. This was the year Christ (the Messiah) was crucified. This prophecy was fulfilled precisely.Although the Nation of Israel completely rejected the Messiah, refusing to acknowledge Him as their King (John 19:15), they still had 3½ years remaining, until A.D. 34, to be preached the Gospel. One day before His final Passover, as He was about to enter the city, He wept over it, deeply sorrowful for what would happen to it (Luke 19:41-44; Matt. 23:37-39). He foretold the destruction of the city by the Roman armies in A.D. 70 (Dan. 9:26b).

The Jews took pride in their temple, but Jesus told them plainly, "See! Your house is left to you desolate," meaning its glory had departed from it from that very day. His long discourse in Matthew 24 and 25 concerned end-time events."Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, 'You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to be crucified'" (Matt. 26:1-2). This was in A.D. 31.Shortly before this Passover, He had told them openly, "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing its fruits" (Matt. 21:43).

Which nation was this? Why did He speak these words to them? (Matt. 21:33-46).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -24

The Other Holy Nation of Israel

Which other Holy Nation of Israel exists? When was it given the Kingdom of God? Without a doubt, it was given when the 490 years or the 70 weeks allocated to the former Nation of Israel ended. They still had three and a half years left for the gospel to be preached to them (30 1/2 + 3 1/2 = 34). The founder of the New Nation of Israel is Christ Himself. He instructed His disciples to first preach the gospel to the "lost sheep of Israel" and forbade

them from going to the Gentiles (Matt. 10:6). Eventually, He told them, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

In A.D. 34, Stephen was stoned, and in that same year, the gospel was taken to the Gentiles. That same year, Paul declared to the Jews who had rejected the Messiah, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). The Nation of Israel was thus rejected. Since A.D. 34, it is no longer a holy nation; nor has it been assigned another special period of receiving the gospel as a privilege after the church is raptured (1 Thess. 4:16,17[18]). There will be no living human beings on earth when the church is raptured (Jer. 4:23-26). They squandered their time that God had set for them. They will be preached to together with all other nations in the same period, from A.D. 34 until the High Priest, Jesus Christ, concludes His work of intercession in the Heavenly Sanctuary (Rev. 14:6-12; 15:8; 22:11). What will follow are the seven last plagues (Rev. 16 in its entirety).

The same conditions that were given to the former Holy Nation of Israel are the very same ones given to the Holy Nation of Spiritual Israel or Christians (Exod. 19:5,6; 1 Pet. 2:9,10; Heb. 8:10). Obedience to the Ten Commandments is the foundation of both the Old and the New Covenant. This is why the “saints” of the last days, just like those of old, will be keeping the Ten Commandments of God along with the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12; 1 John 2:3-6). The faith of Jesus involves accepting Him as Savior and following all His teachings (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:16; 14:21-26).Christians from various nations are called “Jews” or “Spiritual Israelites” (Rom. 2:28,29; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:26-29).

The death of Jesus on the cross abolished the distinction that existed between Jews and Gentiles; all are now equal and have the same rights through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22). We should shout and say, “Praise the Lord!!!” There is no longer any difference. Under that Cross of Calvary, all human beings are equal. There is no need to set aside a special period to preach the gospel to the Jews. They must be evangelized now; the day of salvation for every human being is now, not after the church is raptured (2 Cor. 6:2). The rapture of the church will be accompanied by the destruction of the Abomination of Desolation and all who support it (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 19:11-21).

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -25

GREAT BATTLES ARE TAKING PLACE BEHIND THE SCENES

(READ DANIEL 10 IN ITS ENTIRETY)

It is truly terrifying to be made aware that great battles are taking place behind the scenes—battles that are invisible to our human eyes, though we can see their effects. Daniel was given a revelation, meaning he was shown these great unseen battles, and he came to understand what he had never comprehended before (Dan. 10:1). John, while on Patmos, was also shown these great battles, from the moment they began in heaven, their transition to earth, and their ultimate conclusion in the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 12:7-17; 16:13-16; 17:12-14; 19:11-21).Clearly, there are two great forces at war—Michael (Christ) and His angels against the Dragon (Satan) and his angels. This is indeed the Great Controversy! As the old saying goes, "When two bulls fight, the grass suffers." That is exactly the case here. Humanity is the most affected party in this great conflict. Paul states that we have become "a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings" (1 Cor. 4:9). Where can we run to, poor us? The astonishing thing is that this battle is fought within our minds and hearts, even though we see its results externally.

So how can we protect ourselves? Paul instructs us to put on the full armor of God so that we may stand against the forces of darkness—not by using physical force, but by wielding the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, along with faith and earnest prayer (Eph. 6:10-20). Job did not know what was happening behind the scenes as he endured successive calamities, but in the end, he understood. Likewise, we often do not understand why we face hardships despite our fervent prayers. Behind all the challenges we encounter, there is a great battle raging between the forces of good and evil. If God were to open our eyes, many of us would faint at the sight of how Satan and his angels manipulate humanity—or we might even lose all hope.

All the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12; the entire book of Revelation; and Matthew 24 are about this great conflict. But thanks be to God, for victory is assured for His people, even if they are beheaded or subjected to any form of persecution (Rev. 15:2; 20:4; 12:11; Heb. 11:35-38; Rom. 8:35-39). Does Satan rejoice when God's people succeed in doing His work? Not at all. He places many obstacles to hinder God's work from advancing. God's work takes away those whom Satan considers his captives, and he refuses to release them. "He does not let his captives go home" (Isa. 14:17b). Even those who have escaped into Christ's hands, he tries to snatch back (John 10:27-30). Therefore, this great battle continues behind the scenes until God Himself brings it to an end on the final day. He may reveal it to us, or He may not.

What is important for us now is to understand that we are in a battleground, that "this is not our resting place," and thus we should not deceive ourselves, become complacent, or indulge in pleasure as though we have arrived; the world is full of filth, and destruction is heavy (Mic. 2:10).

We find Daniel fasting for 21 days, praying for God to fulfill the work of rebuilding Jerusalem as King Cyrus had commanded the Jews to do (Ezra 1:2-5). However, the work did not proceed smoothly; there was great opposition from the Samaritans, who did not want the temple to be rebuilt (Ezra 4). Accusations were sent to Cyrus, urging him to issue a decree to halt the construction.At that very moment when Daniel was praying, King Cyrus was being influenced in his mind to stop the work. Thus, a great battle was underway between Michael (Christ) and Satan over this matter—Christ persuading Cyrus to support the work, while Satan urged him to forbid it entirely. The 21-day struggle slightly softened Cyrus's heart.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND -27

THE KING OF THE NORTH MOVING TO JERUSALEM (READ DANIEL 11 IN FULL)

God does not forget kings who do His will and help His people when they are attacked by Satan through human agents who accuse them. Whenever people seek to disrupt or put an end to God's work, know that Satan is behind it; he is using them. A great war [The Great Controversy] is raging behind the scenes. We cannot see it with our physical eyes.Cyrus, the Persian, was the one who led the armies that overthrew Babylon on Belshazzar's final night (Dan. 5:25-31). He handed over the rule of Babylon to his uncle, Darius the Mede. If you remember from previous lessons, Darius greatly loved Daniel and appointed him as Prime Minister. He also had a deep reverence for Daniel's God. Because of this, the angel Gabriel was sent to confirm him on his throne and strengthen him (Dan. 11:1). When he ruled Babylon, he was already 62 years old; after his death, Cyrus took over Babylon's rule (Dan. 10:1).

In Daniel 11, we examine the same kingdoms, from the Medo-Persian Empire until the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. The term "stand" means to reign. The Babylonian Empire had already been overthrown by the Medes and Persians. This chapter is written in plain language that is easy for everyone to understand. Therefore, we will not need to provide extensive explanations. This prophecy continues from Chapter 10; Gabriel continues explaining to Daniel what will happen to God's people in the last days (Dan. 10:1). The astonishing fact is that a significant portion of this prophecy has already been fulfilled. The key players in this conflict are clearly identified, with their actions having come to pass exactly as foretold. Our task here is to mention

a few key historical figures who fulfilled the passages indicated in brackets before their names. Now, let us go through them one by one.Key Figures in the Medo-Persian Empire:Darius (Dan. 11:1)Cyrus (Dan. 10:1)

The first three successive kings (Dan. 11:2), who were:

Cambyses, son of Cyrus

Smerdis

Darius Hystaspes

The fourth king, who was wealthier than all of them, was Ahasuerus. He was the one who provoked war against the small kingdom of Greece, which later overthrew the Medo-Persian Empire.

Key Figures in the Greek Empire:

Alexander the Great (Dan. 11:3,4) – He died young at the age of 32 and left no heir to inherit his kingdom. As a result, his four generals divided his empire into four regions (Dan. 11:4). Theirnames were:

Cassander

Lysimachus

Seleucus

Ptolemy

In the Seleucid dynasty, more than 20 kings ruled before the Greek Empire was overthrown by the Romans. One of them, who was not as renowned as his predecessors, was Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Some people mistakenly assume that he is the “Little Horn” of Daniel 7 and 8.Although he persecuted the Jews for three years and ten days and desecrated their Temple, he does not meet all the criteria for the “Little Horn.” He died in battle in 164 B.C. However, the “Little Horn” of Daniel 8 will be removed from power by God Himself (Dan. 8:25). Moreover, Antiochus never directly opposed Christ since he died before Christ was born, nor can he be a threat to the world in these last days like the “Little Horn” of Daniel 7 and 8.

The four Greek generals continued fighting among themselves until the end. Seleucus took control of the entire Eastern region (with its headquarters in Syria), the North, and Western Europe. Ptolemy retained control over the Southern region (Egypt).

Geographically, the two remaining kings were called “The King of the North” (Seleucus), who resided in Syria, and “The King of the South” (Ptolemy), who resided in Egypt. Each king’s dynasty continued to rule until the Romans intervened. The main figures in these two Greek kingdoms were:Ptolemy Philadelphus – the King of the South (Dan. 11:6), whose daughter, Bernice, was given in marriage to Antiochus Theus, the King of the North, who already had a first wife, Laodice (Dan. 11:6). Filled with jealousy, Laodice poisoned Bernice, her infant son, and her attendants, as well as her own husband. Bernice’s brother, Ptolemy Euergetes, “a shoot from her roots,” went to avenge his sister’s death against the King of the North (Dan. 11:7-13). Eventually, the Romans entered the scene of these revenge wars between the Greek kings.

Key Figures in the Roman Empire:

The Roman Empire comes into play from verses 14 to 16 of this chapter. Cleopatra, the daughter of “the people” [the king of Egypt], was given to Julius Caesar as a gift of fornication so that he would favor her in her struggle for power against her brother (Dan. 11:17-19).

Caesar Augustus, a tax-loving ruler who indulged in luxury (Dan. 11:20; Luke 2:1-6), issued a decree during those days:”In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered for taxation” (Luke 2:1, KJV).Jesus, the Prince of the Covenant, lived and was crucified under Emperor Tiberius (Dan. 11:21-22; Luke 3:1; John 18:15, under Emperor Tiberius). The Romans entered Palestine and slaughtered the Jews (Dan. 11:23-29).

The Rise of the Abomination of Desolation:

This marks the beginning of the Papal Kingdom (Dan. 11:31-39) during the 1260-year period of the Dark Ages. The mass killings of over 50 million saints are described in verses 32 and 33. The Reformation, initiated in 1517 by Martin Luther and continued by other Reformers, provided places of refuge for those being persecuted and killed by the Pope (Dan. 11:34; Rev. 12:16; Matt. 24:15, 21-22). Through this, the persecution and killings were “shortened” (Matt. 24:22). In Catholic-dominated countries, the killings continued until 1798. The fallen Roman political empire continues today under the Papacy.

The Final King of the North Moving to Jerusalem:

This King of the North is different from the Greek kings who were called “The King of the North” and “The King of the South” from verses 5 to 17. He is mentioned in verses 40 to 45. The matters concerning the “King of the South” in these last days, as described in these verses, remain unclear. There are

many speculations.Jesus said:"Now I have told you before it happens so that when it does happen, you may believe" (John 14:29).

When prophecy mentions "the south," it means south of this final King of the North. The nations that will be overthrown are mentioned, along with the countries that will provide him with wealth. The King of the North in the last days is the Papal Kingdom, or the Papacy, which will rule in its second and final phase (Dan. 11:45; Rev. 17:8-11).

That kingdom is destined for utter destruction by Michael [Christ] when He stands up—when He is crowned in heaven during the ceremony known as the Wedding of the Lamb. At that time, He will be given the New Jerusalem, ready to welcome His bride (the Church) when He raptures her at His Second Coming (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 19:6-9; 21:9-10).

Thus, when the Pope moves to Jerusalem—"he shall plant the tents of his royal palace between the seas [Mediterranean Sea] and the glorious holy mountain [Mount of Olives] in the beautiful land [Palestine]"—he will be fulfilling this prophecy.However, while there, "he shall come to his end, and no one will help him" (Dan. 11:45), and "he goes into destruction" (Rev. 17:11).

What kind of end will he face? What kind of destruction will he suffer?Read Revelation 19:11-21.

LET THE READER UNDERSTAND- 29

HOW WILL THE END OF THE WORLD BE? (READ DANIEL 12 IN ITS ENTIRETY)

There are many different opinions people have regarding the end of the world. Some say that the saints will be raptured to heaven, and all the wicked will be destroyed; the earth will remain empty. Others say that only the church will be raptured, while those left behind will continue living on earth, and the gospel will be preached to the Jews; then the Antichrist will come and carry out his works. Still, others believe that only the 144,000 will go to heaven, while all the remaining people will live on earth permanently and that this world cannot be destroyed. Because of this, some look at beautiful buildings and think in their hearts, "I will inherit this mansion."But what picture does the Bible give us about the end of the world? And when we say we are living in the last days, what do we mean? When did the countdown to the last days begin? Let Daniel explain to us in Chapter 12.

The Beginning of the Last Days (Daniel 12:5-7):

We see the same period mentioned in Daniel 7:25 being referenced here again. "The man clothed in linen" [Christ], who also appears in Revelation

10:1-7, speaks. (See also Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2-3.) He says, “It will be for a time, times, and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, then all these things shall be finished.” (Verse 7).

These words were spoken in response to a question from one who asked, “How long will it be until the fulfillment of these wonders?” (Verse 6). The “wonders” refer to the killings carried out by the Papacy during the Dark Ages, when more than 50 million saints were slaughtered—something that even shocked John (Revelation 17:6). A church killing another church is a great marvel! Who, then, will enter heaven?The three and a half times refer to 3 ½ years or 42 months, which equal 1,260 prophetic days—symbolizing the 1,260 years of the First Phase of Papal Rule (538–1798). This period is mentioned repeatedly in prophecy (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5; 11:2-3; Matthew 24:21-22). In Daniel 11:33-34, it is written, “... they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering, for many days [538–1798].”

The Papacy used the sword, fire, imprisonment, and plundering, just as the prophecy foretold, to kill the saints. The persecution was worse than that inflicted by those who did not know God. The Papal Kingdom, which ruled the world (Western Europe), was broken by the French in early 1798. From that point, Daniel 12:4 began to be fulfilled. Religious, scientific, and technological knowledge began to increase rapidly in a remarkable way. The Dark Ages had no development at all. Scientists and religious scholars who followed the Bible were being killed.

The year 1798 marks the beginning of the “Last Days.” Their end will come in the Second Phase of Papal Rule—”when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” (Daniel 12:7). History repeats itself. The persecution and killing of the saints will return when the Pope rules again (Revelation 6:9-11)—”They were told to rest a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants and brothers, who were to be killed as they had been, was completed.”

Many do not believe these words, but they will have to wait until they are fulfilled before they believe (John 14:29).The Establishment of the Abomination of Desolation or the Beginning of Papal Rule (The Papacy):Pagan Rome was overthrown by the pagan tribes of Northern Europe in 476 AD. Since the days of Emperor Constantine in 330 AD, the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) had been given authority to rule over the city of Rome. Therefore, when the Western Roman Empire fell, the Pope continued to govern that city. He took control of Western Europe starting from the year 538 AD, after uprooting three kingdoms—the Heruli (493 AD), the Vandals (534 AD), and the Ostrogoths (early 538 AD).

Other European nations accepted Catholicism through the sword of King Clovis of France. As a result, they once again found themselves under the authority of the Pope (538-1798). Clovis succeeded in converting them to Catholicism in the year 508 (Dan. 12:11,12). From that year, 508, the count of 1,290 and 1,335 days or years begins. The Abomination of Desolation was established [reigned] from 538 to 1798 (that is, 508 + 1,290 = exactly 1798). The year 1798 marked the beginning of the last days. Judgment was set in heaven to determine its penalty in the year 1844, that is, the end of the 2,300 years of Daniel 8:14 (that is, 508 + 1,335 = 1843-1844). A year that begins on January 2 ends in the following year.

What blessing is there for those who will reach the year 1844, the year when Judgment began in heaven? Those who are wise "will purify themselves and make themselves white" (Dan. 12:3,9,10); they will also stand like Daniel in their "lot," meaning their names will remain in the Book of Life in heaven along with all the saints who preceded them (Dan. 12:13). Furthermore, another blessing is that of being resurrected in the special resurrection (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 14:13) for all who faithfully participated in preaching the Everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6-12). That Gospel, known as the "Three Angels' Message," began to be preached from 1840 to 1844 and is still being preached. The resurrection of all saints will follow immediately after this mixed resurrection, which will include those who pierced Him and those who severely persecuted God's people (Rev. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:16,17[18]).What Will the End of the World Be Like?

We have seen how the Papal Kingdom ruled in its First Phase (538-1798) and that it is set to rule the world again. That will be its second and final phase. Its end will come through destruction. The sequence of events is as follows:

— The Pope will reign in the second phase, persecution and the killing of the saints will resume but for a very short period, Christ, our High Priest, will finish His work of intercession in the Heavenly Temple and will close the door of repentance or mercy by the decree of Rev. 22:11.

— God's people will have received His seal on their foreheads, while the followers of the Beast will have received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or their hands.

— The time of trouble will begin (Dan. 12:1) when Michael (Christ) is crowned (stands up) in the Heavenly Jerusalem; the winds of war that had been restrained will be released, and war will spread everywhere, bringing great disasters (Rev. 7:1-4).

— Storms and other calamities will occur, and then God's most terrifying

weapon will be used against those who have trampled on His Sabbath— the Seven Plagues of Revelation 16.

— All who follow the Pope will have their names removed from the Book of Life (Exod. 32:32,33; Rev. 13:8).

The final test will revolve around the Fourth Commandment [the Sabbath] (Rev. 3:10; 14:9,10). The act of replacing the Sabbath [Saturday] with Sunday will have dire consequences for the entire world (Isa. 24:1-6,19,20; Rev. 19:11-21). Woe to the kings of this world! Woe to anyone who does not stand on the side of Jesus Christ in this Great Controversy! The end is near.God's children are weary of this world; they long to rest in heaven for a thousand years. And Jesus says:"Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:11).Are you ready to meet the Lord? Will you stand firm even if the heavens fall, and lift high the Banner of Immanuel [Christ], inscribed with:"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).Very soon, this world will be left desolate, my brother. From today, choose to enter Paradise with Christ (Luke 23:42,43; 2 Cor. 6:2). You may not hear another call like this. Decide today!"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart!"

GOD'S STEWARD

We are all God's stewards; everything we have been given is a trust, and we will be accountable for five or six key things: time, talents, wealth, influence, relationships, health, and even our character. The greatest stewardship is representing God properly and walking in His footsteps. It means sharing the good news with others and living it out by dedicating our time and resources.

We cannot love without giving. Look at your friends and how your friendship works; often, you are happy with them, and you feel good about giving even without being asked. You laugh wholeheartedly, enjoying their company. Now, what about our Father, the God of love, who gives us all good things? Let us learn to live without selfishness and greed; this is the path to true happiness and health. Solomon said that a cheerful heart is better than medicine. We came into this world with nothing, and we will leave with nothing. The love for free things or the tendency to prefer receiving over giving is not a good trait.

Perhaps the greatest stewardship of all is emphasizing that stewardship is beyond what we listed in the paragraph above. The most crucial stewardship is the mystery of God's salvation—the Gospel—telling others about God's love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. In short, revealing God's nature and love and His desire to live with us forever. People will only recognize true stewards

of God when they see us and our children loving others, acting justly, being humble, and showing mercy.The widow who gave two small coins was praised not because of the small amount she gave but because of the zero she had left at home! Too often, we give our leftovers—what we do not need—to the poor, orphans, widows, and those in need. But when it comes to those we love, we give them things they may not even need while we "empty the whole pot." We should be cautious of this, as I, too, have been guilty of it. I pray for wisdom to avoid it. Jesus knew that there were corrupt politicians and greedy Pharisees, yet He did not tell the widow to withhold her offering. Instead, He praised her for giving, knowing full well that there were thieves in the temple! This shows us that it is our duty to return to God what belongs to Him.

Giving is for our own well-being and that of our children so that we do not become greedy or envious. The tenth commandment is the hardest to obey because it is not visible! It is easy to notice jealousy in others who have things we lack, as we try to dictate how they should spend their money to help people. But when it is our turn to receive from God, we hesitate, giving mere change to those in need while we spoil our children with things they do not even need, only for them to boast about it. Our children learn by example. John D. Rockefeller, a great American oil tycoon, was known to be stingy and miserly, filled with anger and misery. When he turned fifty, he fell gravely ill. A friend advised him to start giving generously to those in need, promising that he would find healing and a better life. He tried it, and miraculously, he lived to the age of ninety, giving selflessly! His Rockefeller Foundation continues to support schools, scholarships, and people with disabilities.

Do not assume that people give because they have excess! Not at all! That is only half the story. Jesus answered the eternal question of who our neighbor is by demonstrating that anyone in need—whether a relative, a stranger, a Chinese person, a Jew, or someone outside our community or tribe—is our neighbor.

Many times, I have been selfish, recalling a story I read in first grade about a very stingy woman. She had stepchildren who visited her home. She and her husband had set a trap for small game, and one night, she heard the trap snap shut. Assuming it had caught something, she worried that the stepchildren would want to share in the meat. Wanting to enjoy it alone with her husband and biological children, she hurriedly sent the stepchildren away as if driving them out. But when she went to check the trap, it had caught a leopard, which pounced on her and killed her because there was no one to help her.

Many times, I have wanted to keep things to myself when I could have invited others to share, only to end up with nothing. I have met people who hoard their possessions, even inheritance, only for them to be consumed by moths

or to bring sorrow in the end. Happiness does not come from what we own. True joy comes from knowing God, serving Him, and helping others.

I believe extraordinary joy is something that comes from God Himself. When you serve or give, you feel overwhelmed with a sudden, uncontrollable smile—even if you are wearing tattered clothes, you are happier than those living in mansions. Speaking of mansions, a new trend has emerged where people build big houses but do not welcome guests. Yet, in the past, a woman of faith expanded her home to accommodate visitors. We build today for prestige, but sometimes, a person living in a grass-thatched hut can be more generous than those with big houses.

Some of us started in very tough conditions, walking barefoot. When we saw those with many pairs of shoes, we assumed they were cruel and that if they had only thought of us, they would have gained a blessing. Today, we do not give meaningful things to others; we buy expensive clothes, and when we tire of them, that is when we donate them—just so that the recipient can be seen wearing something from us.

The things of the world lose value; today, I buy something new, and tomorrow I ask myself, "Why did I waste my money on this bad or defective item? Why is it not appealing?" Some claim that when they give to support God's work, their money will be misused in the church, temple, or mosque.

But think about this: If I give someone money to pass on to my parent, and they misuse it, should I stop giving my parent money because the person I entrusted it to stole it? If there are people misusing church funds, they should be taken to court and held accountable. Do not rob your God and miss out on blessings because of people who fade away like smoke. If you think you have given too much to God, have peace in your heart—He is not unjust; He will return to you what you believe you have overgiven. Your change will come back to you!

However, remember that the tithe—one-tenth of your income—belongs to the Lord. The Word says that if you take it, it is not just theft; you are robbing God like an armed bandit. A bandit is someone who takes another's property openly and forcefully. Return to God what is rightfully His so that you may be blessed—or rather, so that you may not be cursed. A thief steals by sneaking in when the owner is unaware, like a pickpocket. A believer who does not tithe is essentially committing robbery—plain and simple. He is forcefully taking from God, and God knows it.

It is often said, "Show me your daily schedule and your budget, and I will tell you where your stress lies." Similarly, "Show me how you use your time and your money, and I will tell you what your passion is." Another saying

goes, “Your checkbook is a theological document.” Theology is the study of knowing and loving God. Do not hoard possessions or exploit those without means, robbing them in various ways. When we die, we will not be buried with our wealth, but we can send it ahead by helping those in need and giving offerings to God, who loves us beyond measure.Ask yourself: How do you spend your time online? What is consuming your time? A woman recently admitted that she spends the entire day watching videos of extraordinary cats. What about you? What are you wasting your time on? This reveals who or what your god truly is.

Everyone has the talent of time—no one lacks it! Perhaps we do not all have wealth, but what about time? Use your time and spiritual gifts wisely! The gifts of the Spirit are meant to bless others. Read stewardship books like The Blessed Life. Pray over this matter as well. You will be amazed at the love and joy you will experience.

I was astonished to learn that a billionaire from a poor country like India owns the most expensive home in the world, valued at $2 billion! Meanwhile, Warren Buffet, the second-richest man in the U.S., has lived in the same three-bedroom house for over fifty years. He drives a regular car and lives a simple life. He has been interviewed many times, and his life story is available online. Many people in developing countries are like those who never expected to acquire wealth, and when they do, they squander it extravagantly.

Two types of people will never be rich: believers and Africans. I have taught this stewardship lesson in several countries across four continents. Africans and those who love God have responsibilities—to their families and to supporting the gospel. If they truly understand this duty, they will always feel like they do not have enough money, even if they are billionaires. Africans have many poor relatives, extended families, and communities with great needs. Even if I received a hundred billion dollars today, I would have plenty to do with it because we live in a global village.Albert Schweitzer, who worked as a physician in West Africa, once said that we are placed on this earth by God, and we must remember our needy brothers and sisters. This doctor dedicated many years to improving people’s health in these countries, and his life story is worth reading.When billionaire John D. Rockefeller died, his accountant was asked by a newspaper, “How much did he leave behind?” The response was, “He left it all!”—he took none of it with him. There was nowhere to carry it. He left it all here on earth.

Even if we accumulate a lot of possessions, we cannot use them all. I can only wear one pair of shoes at a time, sleep in one house at a time, or drive one car at a time. Even with vast wealth, we cannot eat tanzanite or gold. We will still eat rice, beans, ugali, or vegetables. We must teach our children to be generous and help those in need with their resources.

Our journey through life often goes like this:

As children, we say, “Let me finish school, and then I will be happy and satisfied.”

Then, “Let me get a job and earn money, and then I will be happy.”

Next, “Let me get married and have children, and then I will be happy.”

Later, “Let me retire, and then I will be happy.”

Then, “Let me have grandchildren, and then I will be happy.”

Finally, “Let my children be independent, and then I will be happy.”

But in the end, old age arrives, and we say, “I am not happy. Now, there are illnesses and weaknesses.” Dependence on others begins.

In 1969, when my maternal grandmother visited us in Arusha at the age of 48, I thought she was very old and said, “Grandma, you are so old!” She replied, “Grace, I just turned this way, and before I knew it, I was old! It didn’t take long. Even you will grow old and wonder where the time went.”She was right. I came to the U.S., saying I would stay for six years, but now I have lived abroad longer than I have lived at home. Today, I am older than my grandmother was in 1969, and I, too, wonder—where did the time go?We brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing with us. But we can send our treasures ahead to heaven in advance through acts of kindness, ensuring that moth and rust do not destroy them here on earth. Give until it hurts—not just what you were planning to throw away.“I was hungry, and you fed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was in prison, and you visited me.” The Word tells us that this is the passport to heaven—if we do it with a willing heart and not out of compulsion.Let us pray that we may be faithful stewards so that we do not hear the words:

“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

By the grace of God, I do not want to go to hell. What about you?

GOD will judge us not only for the wrongs we commit but also for the good we fail to do (commission and omission).

I know that in life, you will encounter people who are ungrateful and never satisfied, no matter how much good you do for them.

The Word of God says that the Kingdom of God is like a great pearl that, when a man discovered it, he sold everything and went to buy it. When we were young, we used to sing a song to the tune of Yankee Doodle:

“The farmer with a field planted potatoes,

He dug and dug and found a diamond.

Lo! Lo! The fortune of the landowner,

He threw his hoe aside and went to town,

Bought his car, now he's rich.

Lo! Lo! Fortune, Lo! Lo! The fortune of the landowner."

The Kingdom of God is something of great value. For you who love health, it is wise to sell everything and purchase it. Do not focus too much on storing up wealth on earth and becoming obsessed with money, for many have pierced themselves with great pain because of it. Many people have done unimaginable things for the sake of money.

"The root of all evil is the love of money."

Money will change your character—beware! Many people, when they have no money, are quick to judge others and see their weakness for wealth. But once they themselves have money, they forget that they have the same problem. Often, we have desires in our hearts, but they remain unseen simply because we are poor. A poor person also has greed, but they lack the opportunity for their hunger for wealth to be exposed. Never stop returning tithe (one-tenth). Teach your children to give tithe and offerings and to give to charity. Create projects and pay them, even if just a small amount, so they can give offerings from their own savings rather than their parents' money by the time they reach about eight years old.

Many of us tend to do good only to those we love, rather than to anyone who needs our help. Even wicked people do good to their relatives and friends. It is an African tradition to give to strangers. If we are caring for orphans, we take care of our relatives' orphans. If we are helping someone, we help our relatives.

This is where I greatly admire our Western brothers and sisters because they are able to give to people they do not know—even to organizations or institutions, such as orphanages or cancer research. I am not saying you should forget your relatives—far from it! Forgetting your relatives is like being an unbeliever. But in your generosity, if you are helping six orphaned relatives, also help at least one other person you do not know who is in need.

I met a preacher and his wife who told me that their income was too little, so they did not give tithe. I asked him, "What do you eat? What do you wear? Do you have a farm?" Then let him give from his produce! Many husbands or wives have forbidden their spouses from giving tithe—do not fall into this sin. Two people can see things better than one. Do not be the sole "committee" that decides how money should be used in your home.

Tithing is for our own benefit, not for God's. He owns everything. Whether I give Him my few cents or not, He will never be poor. It is like a parent teaching a young child not to be selfish by asking for a piece of the potato they were given. Moreover, if you think you have given God more than you were required to, He is not like a shopkeeper waiting for you to leave without your change so they can keep it. He is faithful, and if you gave more than expected, He will return it to you. No one has ever given to God and gone bankrupt. Hallelujah!When Moses wrote the Torah and led the Israelites, they were so prosperous that they gave up to 33%—a third of their income! There was no one in need. The community created opportunities to ensure everyone had a way to earn a living or at least meet their basic needs for shelter, clothing, and food. God's plan always leads to blessings and prosperity.

Give your children and others capital to grow and supervise them if you have the knowledge, or find someone to guide them. Many wealthy people either keep complaining or become con artists, making big promises and then disappearing. Some, when they had nothing, constantly followed those with wealth. But when they gained riches, they forgot about people—until they needed relationships or an audience to listen to how great and successful they had become.Westerners say you can never give God more than He gives you—it is impossible. "You cannot outgive God."Start serving God and loving Him with passion and courage. HE will provide the vision, mission, passion, and provision!

Your influence is very important. When people love and respect you, do not misuse that opportunity without wisdom. And if someone sacrifices for you so that you can harm them, do not accept.

Pastor Kulakov from Russia once shared that while he was teaching high school students, a girl deeply fell in love with him and privately told him, "Teacher, I love you very much," hoping they could be friends or even that he would marry her. Pastor Kulakov told his mother about the situation, and she advised him, "My dear son, when people under your authority love you and want to give themselves to you, do not misuse your authority. Even if this girl were an adult, do not accept her love unless you decide to marry her—do not ruin her life simply because she has fallen for you."

I knew Dwight Nelson, a preacher in Michigan. One day while I was present, he shared a story about his journey that week. He had driven from Michigan to California, a distance of about 4,000 kilometers, in an old Honda. He said his car broke down about seven times along the way. After his sermon, the following week, around ten people volunteered to buy him a new car! He had influence. He could have accepted the car, but instead, he asked them to donate that money to a ministry that helps those in need.

How many orphans, widows, the poor, or strangers are you helping today in

your life? I also ask myself this question! Please reflect on it, because this is where humanity and true religion lie. Evaluate and examine yourself today. Do you have multiple cars scattered around your yard, and when you die, will they be fought over by people who never even worked for them? Then start distributing them where there is need.

The wealthy Colgate loved God deeply. He gave more than 10% of his wealth to those in need and to support God's work so that many could reach heaven. However, when he died, he had not written a will. His children did not care about people or God, and they squandered all his wealth, forgetting what their father had stood for. Today, write a will—it does not mean you will die soon. Not at all. Give your children just enough to help them work hard and sustain themselves without extreme poverty. As you raise them, show them that you care for the poor, widows, and orphans and that you live with integrity.

In Israel, it was God's plan for every family to have land so that poverty would not exist. People with land never become poor as long as they work hard on it. Developed nations first ensured they were self-sufficient in food and stored it in warehouses. Then they became careless and started buying weapons—after all, they would never have purchased weapons on an empty stomach!

Not giving tithes is like visiting someone with a basket of groceries as a gift, and after you leave, they refuse to even return the basket. In African culture, they should not return the basket empty—they should try to put even a little something inside. What would you think of such a person? That they are completely ungrateful. That is exactly how we treat our God. After He generously provides for us, we hold onto even the basket! But when we give, we are blessed. He said we should test Him and see if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon us.

Some people have been blessed to give more than 10%. A Swiss pharmacist, for example, gave 90% as tithe because he had been blessed and had all his needs met. Do not be miserly over small things, counting every penny. If you have plenty, follow John the Baptist's message: "Whoever has two coats should give one to someone who has none." If your size has not changed, you don't need to keep buying clothes and other things.

Heavenly travelers, your money should win souls, not buy more material things. The Holy Spirit is not the 'Spirit of Wanting Things,' as our evangelist friend Mukangara says. Simplify your life—after all, they say "less is more." You may appear to have little, but your heart is full of joy and abundance, so much so that you feel richer than Bill Gates because God has given you a contented heart. And He has adorned you in such a way that even if you wear something inexpensive, people still ask, "Where did you get that? It looks

amazing on you!" You radiate beauty in a way that surprises people.

I believe heaven will be wonderful not because of material things but because of the joy in our hearts—where a river flows peacefully, refreshing your soul as you smile, and your loved ones rejoice with you. You share laughter, and angels stop by to sit with you. Then God Himself speaks with you. Even if you are given nothing, what trouble do you have? There is no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain—none of the things that make life miserable.It is not about material things! There, gold will be nothing more than pavement for the streets.

If you have talents, good looks, a charming personality, or writing skills, use them to win souls, not to develop pride and think, "I am the best." Be humble. Did you know a truly humble person is unaware of their humility?

There was once a man who was extremely humble, so much so that his village awarded him a medal for humility. But the next day, when he wore it, they took it away—because he had announced his own humility!

Plan your budget wisely so that you do not drown in debt. I am personally struggling with housing debt; I pray day and night for it to be lifted. Fear debt as you would fear leprosy. Strive only to owe love. If you are in debt, you rob God greatly because you must prioritize repaying your debts—even jail time is a possibility. And that is something many of us fear more than stealing from God.Some even say, "God understands that I have debts, so I cannot give tithe or offering."

Learn Budgeting and Live Within Your Means. Do not buy what you do not need or live in debt. Many men receive money and plan their expenses by themselves. A wife has many needs, especially if she does not work. But consider this: put yourself in her shoes, imagining she is the one earning the salary while you have not a single cent, and she does not involve you in financial decisions—only giving you minimal updates when necessary!Children in such a home eventually realize this dynamic. When they start working, they send money only to their mother and not their father. Many children take their mothers to the city, leaving behind stingy fathers with bitter hearts, fanning the fire and cooking porridge for themselves. These fathers get angry because they contributed to their children's education—though only when it suited them. Some men even witness their neighbors bringing their mothers abroad, leaving fathers behind to offer prayers that, while not affecting the mother, end up influencing the children instead.

Children must care for their parents, even if their parents did not care for them. It is a sin to abandon one's father or mother. A mother must stand up for her husband and co-parent. Sometimes, mothers paint a picture that they have suffered immensely, failing to honestly acknowledge the good things

their husbands have done. We must be careful, or we will accumulate sin before God

I remember once, after an argument with my husband, I was upset. My seven-year-old child asked me what had happened. When I explained, he responded, “Mom, don’t worry. When Dad comes back from work, my younger sibling and I will help you beat him up.” His younger sibling was only three years old. That was the moment I realized I was also at fault in this conflict. In fact, my husband was in the right. And now, here I was, dragging my little children into long-term hatred and enmity, setting them up for a curse for despising and neglecting their father? I prayed to God for mercy and forgiveness. I know He has forgiven me.In the past, when I had no debts, if I heard someone was in need, I would give. Nowadays, I constantly lament about debts! Debts! And I do not give. Let us pray for one another so that we may overcome this habit and for God to bless our income.“Shall I appear before the Lord with empty hands?”

That was a children’s song. Is it acceptable to say, “I have a mortgage” or “I have school loans,” and use that as an excuse? It is a shame if you are poor and have nothing substantial to show for it, but even more so if you are financially stable yet do not give. Teach your children to offer tithes and offerings. Let them see you giving every Sabbath during worship. Reduce electronic transactions sometimes and let them see you give real money! How else will they learn? Teach them how to handle money. I am trying to do that with my children so they do not repeat my mistakes.How will you help those in need if you keep borrowing unnecessarily? Orphans or mission work that brings people to the Lord?Do not forget to care for your family.”Anyone who does not provide for their relatives is worse than an unbeliever.”

Some people declare their wealth as “Korban,” meaning they cannot use it to support their parents because they have dedicated it elsewhere. A person who has resources but fails to take care of their parents or relatives is like a non-believer.

I understand that some relatives are impossible to help—they are full of greed and envy when you succeed in serving God. Sometimes, they want to control your life. Pray to God that you do not harbor resentment.Your relatives and even your spouse might pressure you not to help the needy. They will scrutinize who you give to and how much, claiming that you are making them poor. Yet, I have never seen anyone who helps the poor become poor themselves. God’s promises are true.Some people will see a couple living in harmony and serving God, while their own households are filled with strife, and they will say, “That man is under his wife’s control.”Their underlying message is often: if a wife is not loved or is physically abused, then the marriage is “normal.” Or, they might say, “They think they are Westerners.”But tell me,

were Westerners the first people in Eden? Do they truly love each other more than believers do? Do they possess more agape love than we do? Yet, they separate constantly, and their crime rates are higher than oursOr you might hear, “They’re just pretending. We’ll see—they’ll separate eventually!Are you really spending all your time hoping for others to fail? When will you ever pray for your own life? Will you keep cursing others until when, really? We are all sinners preparing for Judgment Day.One person laughed when someone else’s child went astray, saying, “He has joined our group. His children will be worse than mine!”And yet, that person never asked about your children or prayed for them.

A man once saw another man opening the car door for his wife and commented, “That must be either a new wife or a new car!”Do not be someone who wishes for others to fail—pray for them.God still has power. Remember, Saul became Paul, even though he never prayed for himself .Beware of Manipulative RelativesI once stayed with a friend and his wife in Michigan. They showed me a letter from their elder brother, who had paid for their high school education. It read: “Dear one, we educated you, and we told you to buy us a truck and a tractor. To this day, you have not bought them. You went to America, and now you have changed. We will pray that God cuts off your legs so that you will finally remember us and see our worth!”

These friends wept because they had come to study through their own efforts, working part-time to survive. One had to pay rent by doing odd jobs, another worked as a security guard in a cemetery, and another changed diapers for elderly white people—just to survive.You will encounter relatives like these. But do not let that discourage you from helping the genuinely needy when you have the means.Every morning when you wake up, surrender your plans to the Lord and ask Him to guide you.Carry books with you and read while waiting for something or traveling. Give people the gift of good books. Do not just smile and nod at them without offering something meaningful. Your influence should not be about elevating yourself, but rather, revealing God in your life.Even if you are blessed with a beautiful home, invite people in and lovingly remind them that judgment day is near.

Scripture says God has three books: one that records deeds. These books will be presented at the judgment, and every action—whether good or bad—will be revealed. The movie of our lives will play before us, showing everything we have done. Even the things we failed to do when we should have! Do you remember the secret things you do—things you do not want your spouse, children, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, or anyone else to know about?They will all be exposed.But the sins we confess will not be brought up. When God forgives, He wipes them out completely, burying them deep—like in the Pacific Ocean’s Mariana Trench, seven miles down.Even if our sins are as numerous and red as blood, they will become as white as the snow of

Mount Kilimanjaro—if we confess them.Dear reader, have you confessed your sins today and repented so you can start a new chapter in your life?Other examples of teaching your children include helping people so they can help themselves, rather than making them dependent. As the saying goes, teach a person how to fish rather than just giving them fish, so they do not rely on you forever. Provide children with education or land so they can be self-sufficient; help orphans and widows.In the book by Ron Sider, Rich Christians in a World of Hunger, he explains astonishing things! He states that research has shown that God has been incredibly faithful—I will make you the head and not the tail! He further explains that 80% of all the world's wealth is in the hands of believers who profess the name of God and the Messiah. However, he says the problem is extreme stinginess! God has blessed us with trillions, yet when we give to the poor, we only give loose change—just small change.

Instead of designing programs to uplift people so they do not depend on us, we only give temporary handouts. Instead of providing a pair of cows, goats, or projects that generate income, we hand out flour or something consumable that does not multiply, so that tomorrow they will ask us for help again! This is a form of cruelty. It is far better to provide education and small capital to help them become independent.

Let them not always be before you, flattering and bowing to you. The Chinese say: If you want to make a difference for a day, eat at a nice restaurant. If you want to make a difference for a month, get married (a bad example). If you want to make a difference for a year, plant a garden. But if you want to make a difference for a lifetime, invest in people—that is, help others gain education or send children to school. You will have changed a life.Many times, we assume that the poor are liars, that they do not really need help, or that they are lazy. But think about it—when we were struggling or poor, we never thought this way; we wanted to be helped, and we were grateful when we received assistance. Now that we are well-off, we scrutinize every request, saying, I must investigate thoroughly to see if they are truly in need, because these people are liars.

I have examined this issue many times and realized that I must be careful because it is God who examines people's hearts with His light. He has not entrusted me with that job—has He entrusted you? Some of us say, If I give them help, they might use it to buy alcohol. That may be true, but when will you ever help a widow, an orphan, or the poor if you keep making these endless examinations?The words I was hungry, thirsty, naked, in prison were not meant to imply that you must first investigate and expose people. God will judge. We are not saying you should help those who do not need it, but most of us are simply unwilling to give, so we find excuses to delay or avoid giving by hiding behind the investigation of whether someone is truly in need.

Sometimes, I have looked at images of people suffering—those affected by floods, those we see on TV or in real life—and we point and say, Look at that poor person! Yet we do not give even a cent, nor do we pray for them if we have no money to offer. Is this truly right? Do we turn people's suffering into entertainment, watching disaster videos without even feeling moved enough to donate a single dollar to help someone in distress?Do not let someone constantly beg from you and depend on you. Some believers are extremely stingy when they have plenty, yet when they lack, they suddenly become experts at directing those who have resources on how to serve God or how to do ministry.We wear expensive clothes—a friend from Tanzania once boasted to me that his suit cost $5,000! Yet, when we hear about people in need, we only give small amounts of loose change, thinking we are being generous, while in reality, we are shortchanging the poor.Now, I want to address those who ask for things in a rude and insulting manner, speaking harshly and attacking others with words. If your situation is bad and you need help, that does not give you the right to curse people or hurl insults at them. Be respectful when seeking assistance and show courtesy, even to your relatives. Let them make their own choice about whether to help you or not—you have no right to pressure or mistreat them.

I strive against selfishness and pray to God daily to keep me generous because we cannot truly reach the Creator without touching His creations. Many of us are just resounding gongs and clanging cymbals. Even if you own vast wealth, you cannot wear two pairs of shoes at the same time, drive three cars simultaneously, or sleep in two beds at once. Even if I visit you, you will not say, Today, we will eat gold and diamonds. No! You will eat the same regular food—ugali and vegetables—or common meals, because otherwise, your stomach will suffer! Give until it truly costs you something, not just throwing away loose change you would not even bother to pick up if it fell from your pocket. The widow with two small coins was praised not for what she gave, but for what she had left after giving.

Check if there are scattered items in your home, and remove them. My house is also full—secondhand items that I think I will send somewhere one day! One woman discovered that she had about 200 cassettes and DVDs that she had watched but no longer used. She decided to sell them and use the money for the Lord's work.Do not be someone who hoards things in storage, thinking that one day you might need them. Give to others, and the Lord will not let you lack tomorrow. It is not just a foreigner who gives to a stranger—an African does too, because they understand the pain of poverty.

A brother of mine from Mara had filled his closets with clothes, even occupying other rooms—old children's clothes. He held onto them, reminiscing about how his children used to wear this or that shoe when their feet were still small! I had the same problem until my friend, Grace Zuzo from South Africa,

told me, “If you have 20 or 30 outfits, that is enough for work. Any clothing you haven’t worn for over a year isn’t yours—give it to others.”

At times, we have brought containers full of clothes and goods for those in need, but we have encountered fraudsters or difficulties in clearing them at the port. However, this does not mean we should stop helping or fail to research better ways to do so. My friend Zuzo and I often pray that God will help us live near the Mexican or Sudanese border so we can easily send things to people in need. Where we live, people throw away clothes and even discard food wastefully. We have not lost hope—one day, God will open doors. We ask for your prayers.“I have realized that when I give away my clothes to others, sometimes it is not a genuine offering. Often, I donate them when they go out of fashion or when I get tired of them. Yes, the poor do benefit, but my giving has flaws. I buy expensive clothes but am not willing to contribute financially to the work of God, yet I am ready to donate my worn-out clothes to the poor.”

I have been reflecting on this. You, too, can ponder it. If you buy something just to own it and look fashionable before eventually giving it away, that might be acceptable when giving to people. But if it is for God, you need to reevaluate. If you attend the same church as those you donate to, or if they live in your village, you may humiliate them when everyone sees them wearing your secondhand clothes and knows you were the one who gave them. Some people have the habit of building houses in every city—not for rental income but simply to maintain them at great cost. They only visit once a year so that the poor locals can celebrate, “The rich man has arrived!” My friend from Korogwe made me laugh when he said his house had been unoccupied for years—so much so that monitor lizards had moved in!

Buying things without careful thought is problematic, though if it is an investment, it is understandable. Some have built massive houses like caves, only to struggle with cleaning the dust in unused rooms. Their children have moved out, and they are left struggling to mop floors and clear cobwebs instead of engaging in humanitarian work. Large homes were not part of African tradition, but now we are embracing them while Westerners are downsizing. Westerners need big homes for the winter, as they stay indoors all day. But we have good sunshine—we can live in smaller homes, spend time outside, and enjoy fresh air and sunlight! Our Maasai brothers go indoors only to sleep, not to stay inside all day—this is healthy.

Nowadays, wealth and time for maintenance are challenges. That is why we advise spiritual leaders not to have more than six children. This is not an era for having ten children as in the past. A friend once said, “I will keep having children until my eggs are finished. God created us to have children, so I will bear as many as He gives me.”But God also created natural cycles—safe days

when a woman does not conceive. Use those. Even if you can afford many children, how will you prepare yourself for God's impending judgment while raising young children for 30 years? Seek out natural family planning methods that do not terminate a conceived life.

Raising children today is a heavy responsibility. Be cautious not to be overwhelmed, because children are a lifelong commitment. Even if they quarrel with their spouse, they will return to you, and you will have to start over—this time with grandchildren—because a parent's love never fades.It is easy to be kind to strangers, but our words often wound those closest to us. We must practice humility everywhere. In our book on parenting, we highlight how many parents—especially mothers—use words that crush their children's spirits. We do not believe it, yet we utter them in anger:"You will never amount to anything in life!"—that is a heavy slap; you might as well beat the child instead.Or: "You are a dog, just like your father!"—Are these truly the words of a person created in the image of God? Think about it: a dog gives birth to a dog. If you married a dog, how did you make such a choice?

Our words bear witness against us. Do you enjoy cursing and using foul language with everyone inside and outside your home? Stop—it does not benefit your health at all. Get soap, bleach, and a toothbrush to cleanse your mouth every time you utter obscene words, and you will stop.Let us avoid the habit of swearing. Doug Batchelor from Amazing Facts encouraged me. He said that even after knowing God for years and preaching powerfully, he still struggled with cursing. Eventually, he knelt and prayed:"Lord, my mouth is filthy. I am trying not to curse, but when I get angry, I unleash any words that come to mind. Help me."He said that from that day on, he was delivered from foul language. This is my prayer too—that God may remove foul speech from me.And when you experience victory in any good thing, thank God and share your testimony. They say that testifying about God's goodness crushes the devil: "They overcame the devil by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb."

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."We made a vow to God that if He enabled us to complete our education, we would return 25% to Him as tithes and offerings and help those in need.When I completed my studies and started receiving $2,000 per month, I moved out of the place I had been living to make room for others to be helped by kind missionaries. Then I began giving between 25% and 50% of my income in tithes, offerings, and assistance to those in need. God blessed us, and we worked with pastors and laypeople from different backgrounds, building about 80 small churches (bush churches) and sending 350 lay workers to various training programs. Pastors and laypeople also partnered with us in organizing around 65 public evangelistic meetings.

It has been a journey of faith, and we have discovered that a Christian has no limits—whatever a believer does, just join in, and you will be blessed. We have never sat down to plan what to do because we are not the type of people who make detailed plans. However, many have blessed us by including us in their plans.Truly, we cannot do great things, but we can do small things with love. Even if our work is just a drop in the ocean, we must remember that it is individual drops that make up the ocean.

In the past, we thought that if we had money or time one day, we would do this or that in the Lord's vineyard. But we found that we never had money saved up; we would simply set aside a portion from each paycheck or give our time and resources as we earned them.The most important thing is to depend on the Lord and remain consistent, living one day at a time.One of my in-laws saw us building those small churches and laughed, saying, "These structures are not solid; they will collapse. I am waiting to build a grand church worth $50,000, complete with a youth center on the upper floor."

Ten years later, he came to me and said, "I have realized that there will never be such a perfect time because money comes into my hands and disappears. It's better to build these small church shelters like yours!"One day, a pastor invited us to build a church for needy people in Kigoma. We had no means to do so. He asked, "Don't you have even $100? That would be enough for the women to fetch water, mix mud, and bring wood, so I can build a house of mud and grass for these people."Before we set our eyes on the stars in the sky, let's focus on the little things that God enables us to do each day.Who knows? Perhaps one day, He will entrust us with bigger things.

Our greatest need is prayer. Please join us in praying that the Lord may use us in His vineyard.He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. That is a great encouragement in our stewardship. Our response should be, "Here I am, Lord, send me!"In short, let us remember that it is not only 10% of all we have that belongs to the Lord, but 100%.I have often wondered where I will get the strength.Since I had children later in life, giving birth when I was over 40, I have asked myself, "If I give to others, how will my children be educated?"

It is truly a challenge to provide for education, and we have embarked on a mission that is not easy. I am approaching retirement, my strength is decreasing, yet my children are still young.One day, while walking in the neighborhood where I used to live in Jersey City, New Jersey—about three miles from Manhattan, where the tall buildings were attacked by terrorists—I saw a man with an enormous, beautiful white dog.I ran up to him and asked how much the dog weighed. He said, "140 kilograms!"I was amazed. He went on to boast, "This dog eats a lot!"

I asked how much he spent feeding it each month, and he said, "I spend

$1,000 every month on food!”I was shocked because, in our household of six, we probably spent less than $500 per month, yet this one dog was consuming so much.Then the answer came to my heart: This man loves dogs, and he has asked his god to help him fulfill his desire of having a pet.If you love people, ask God to help you, and He will never abandon you.He will enable you to do the work of helping people and serving Him.Let us support one another in prayer so that we may be good stewards and completely overcome selfishness.May God open the windows of heaven for us because a house has more windows than doors!

If you were told today that you had only 24 hours left to live and that you would die tomorrow, what would you rush to do?John Wesley said he would live just as he lived every day.He then shared his daily schedule:“I will wake up in the morning to read the Bible and pray. Then I will take food to a widow and her children. After that, I will attend the morning worship service. Then I will work in my field for two hours. Later, I will visit people from house to house and talk to them about the Gospel…”King David asked, “What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?”He realized that God owns everything.What could a mere mortal possibly give to God?He concluded that the only thing left for him to do was to thank the Lord, tell others of His goodness, and personally obey His commandments and testimonies.

Rules Related to AUTHORITY in Our Family...

We love and obey our Lord, God, with humility and wholehearted devotion.

We read the Bible and pray about everything with sincerity of heart.

We respect and obey our parents in the Lord without showing any form of disrespect.

We accept correction and admonition with a humble heart.

Regarding RELATIONSHIPS in Our Family…

We love one another by treating each other with compassion, dignity, and respect.

We help each other, putting the needs of others before our own with gentleness.

We encourage one another by using only words that build good character and bless others.

We forgive one another, covering faults with love when we make mistakes or wrong others.

Regarding OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY in Our Family…

We thank God for what we have, whether little or much.

We are content with what we have and do not covet what others possess.

We are generous with what we have, sharing openly with others.

We take care of what we own, using it wisely and responsibly.

Regarding WORK in Our Family…

We diligently complete our tasks with integrity and excellence when asked to do so.

We take personal initiative to do our work without needing to be reminded.

We work with a spirit of cooperation, willingly giving and receiving help.

We make personal efforts to keep our home environment clean at all times.a

Regarding CHARACTER in Our Family…

We choose to be joyful, even when we feel we have a reason to complain.

We choose to be peacemakers, even when we feel we are in disagreement.

We decide to remain calm, even when we feel overwhelmed.

We choose to be gentle, even when we feel we should not be.

Regarding DECISIONS in Our Lives…

We do what we know is right, regardless of what others may say.

We ask before acting when we are unsure of the right thing to do.

We always strive for self-control in all circumstances.

We always tell the truth and never attempt to lie in any way.

13 Simple Ways to Build a Relationship with Your Children

1. **Take your child with you whenever you go somewhere by car**. This will give you time to talk together. Your children will learn from you as you shop, serve, and drive, and they will learn to work alongside you.

2. Work together. In the garden, in the kitchen, and around the house. Not only will this give you more time to talk and teach your children through the work you do, but it will also save time and give you more opportunities to be together in other activities.

3. **Read books and look at pictures together as a family.** Even the youngest child can enjoy looking at picture books and listening as you read aloud. Besides creating shared memories, this will cultivate a love for learning and create great opportunities for discussion. Looking at and discussing appropriate pictures together also helps your children develop critical thinking skills and spiritual discernment.

4. Talk to them—and listen! Take time when putting them to bed, ask about their day, or tell them a short story. Listen patiently when they want to share something with you. Start this early, and your children who love talking to you when they are young will still want to talk to you when they grow up.

5. Show hospitality and spend time together as a family. Reduce the amount of time your children spend with their peers and spend more time together as a family—doing activities together, hosting other families in your home, and welcoming your children's friends into your home.

6. Find projects to do as a family. Sharing common goals as you work and serve together will draw your family closer. Find ways to serve together through your church, help those in need or in nursing homes, start a small business together, host family events, assist grandparents, raise livestock, or play a musical instrument together! Provided freely by Pam Forster, © Doorposts - www.doorposts.com.

3.1 Start giving your child everything they want from infancy. This way, they will grow up believing the world owes them a living.

3.2 Laugh when they use foul language. This will make them think they are clever.

3.3 Do not give them any spiritual training. Wait until they turn 21, then let them "decide for themselves."

3.4 Avoid telling them, "That is wrong." They might feel guilty, which will later make them believe that when they get arrested, society hates them and is persecuting them.

3.5 Pick up everything they leave lying around. Do everything for them so they grow up expecting others to take responsibility for their mess.

3.6 Defend them against neighbors, teachers, and the police. Teach them that all these people dislike them.

3.7 Argue with your spouse frequently in front of your children. That way, they won't be shocked when your home breaks apart in the future.

3.8 Give your child all the spending money they want. Never let them earn their own.

3.9 Satisfy every craving they have for food, drinks, and pleasures. Make sure they always get whatever their body desires.

3.10 Let them read whatever is printed, listen to whatever music they come across, and watch whatever they want. Be careful to ensure that your dishes and glasses are clean, but don't mind if their minds are fed with garbage.

3.11 When they get into trouble, comfort yourself by saying, "There was nothing I could have done to help."

3.12 Prepare for a life of grief. You will surely have it.

Taken from a publication titled "12 Rules for Raising a Delinquent Child" distributed by the Houston Police.

11 RULES FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FRIENDS

2.1 Parents decide when, where, and with whom their children can play.

2.2 Friends are not allowed to visit anyone's home or go anywhere unless their parents have given permission.

2.3 Friends must always respect the house rules and standards of their peers,

at all times and in all places.

2.4 Friends must be kind to all members of each other's families.

2.5 Friends may only play with each other's toys if they first ask for permission, handle them carefully, and return them to their rightful place before leaving.

2.6 Friends may share or lend items to each other only if they have first obtained permission from their parents.

2.7 Friends should not take each other away from important family activities or schoolwork before completing them.

2.8 Friends should not cause their peers to miss church services or other important family commitments.

2.9 Family members are our most important friends. Therefore, brothers and sisters must remain loyal to one another.

2.10 Children who encourage disobedience or lead others astray will not be allowed to play together again until they have apologized to each other's parents.

2.11 Friends may be included in special activities if they have shown they can behave well in other situations.

By Greg and Josh Harris

THE BIBLE IS A MAP – The Bible says, I believe, and the problem is solved.

This book carries the thoughts of God, the condition of man, the way of salvation, the fate of sinners, and the joy of the righteous. Its teachings are holy, its principles endure forever, its history is true, and its solutions are reliable. Read it to gain wisdom, believe it to be safe, and apply it to become holy.It is a light to guide you, food to strengthen you, and comfort to fill you with joy. It is a map for the traveler, a staff for the pilgrim, a compass for the pilot, a sword for the soldier, and a covenant for the Christian. Here, paradise is restored, heaven is revealed, and the gates of hell are closed. Christ is the main character: His goodness is its structure, the glory of God is its purpose, and its ultimate goal is salvation. This book must fill the mind, rule the heart, and guide our paths.

Read it carefully, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of joy. It has been given to you in this life, it will be opened at judgment, and it will be remembered forever. It presents the highest standard of accountability, rewards every good worker, and condemns all who have treated holy things lightly. No other book elevates the mind and increases the capacity for thinking like the Bible.

Believe it to gain wisdom, read it to be safe, apply it to be holy. The Bible

is not just a book to inform you but a book to transform you. It is the voice of God speaking with supreme authority in heaven and on earth. The Lord has exalted His Word above His Name. Heaven and earth will pass away, but not the Bible. The Bible has overcome every kind of challenge throughout all ages.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PARENTS (Examples)

1. I am a mother of three young children. I have studied and could get a job, but many people tell me staying home with my children is better.

The best plan, which benefits children the most, is for the mother to stay home. If you can afford to live on one salary, make an effort for the mother to stay home. Children are happiest when they are with a loving and close caregiver, such as their mother. They also learn more easily. There is no one you can pay to take care of your children as well as their own mother! Research has shown that children who stay with their mothers have fewer illnesses than those who stay in group settings with other children and adults.

This includes infectious diseases, lack of sunlight, and lack of exercise, among others. Strong relationships are built, and you have the opportunity to teach your child obedience directly rather than relying on others. There are times when your child must be with others, but no one is better than a parent. Childcare centers that do not honor God do not teach children about their Creator, and abuse can be common.

Some mothers say they get bored staying home all day with children and would prefer a job to keep them engaged. The truth is, most jobs are boring in some way. Imagine a lab worker looking through a microscope all day or an athlete training nonstop. Often, what we think about is money, that we are not being paid. Try to see if you can start a home-based business so that you can stay with your children. Also, find other mothers and have meetings with them, at least once a week. This will help prevent boredom.

That being said, a mother already has plenty to do—waking up early, dressing the children, cooking for them, praying with them. If she works outside, she often returns home exhausted, and when the children ask for a bedtime story, she is too tired. Marital relationships also suffer nowadays because both parents are exhausted, and at the first sign of conflict, they are ready to separate. Children need you, their mother, to be home. If it is not possible, pray that one day you will have the opportunity to stay home and care for them.

A friend of mine, whom I studied with, decided to stay home with her children until they reached school age. When they started school, she worked only in

the mornings and was home in the afternoon to receive them. This woman was highly educated, with a PhD, but she prioritized raising her children first. People mocked her, calling her foolish despite her education. But today, she is reaping the rewards because her children are different—they have good behavior, unlike many of their peers.

2. We have a two-year-old son named Baraka, who constantly wants to be carried. When we tell him not to do something, he cries, throws things, and rolls on the floor (tantrums). If we tell him not to touch things like electrical appliances, he does not listen. Is two years old an appropriate age to start disciplining him?

With good intentions of making him happy and maintaining peace, you have made him a little king. It is impossible to carry him every moment! Let him cry sometimes—he won't die! If he has eaten, is not thirsty, and has used the toilet, feel free to carry on with your tasks while keeping an eye on him. When he screams, do not give him too much attention. Look away as if there is something else of concern, but do not pick him up.

If you have turned off the lights at night, let him cry. Discipline and teaching begin from infancy! Read and learn how to train even a few-month-old baby in discipline—it will be easier with a two-year-old. He knows you love him and see him as adorable, but he does not restrain himself. He wants the world to revolve around his wishes. He must have limits on what he can and cannot do. If you say "no," let it be "no."

Use consequences such as taking away things he likes. Spanking should be rare and only after several warnings. Because of his age, parents must be careful not to hurt him. Never punish in anger. The child must clearly understand his mistake. Parents need great patience. A child at this stage is naturally curious, but that does not mean he should destroy things. Let him touch safe items in your presence, but set clear boundaries on what is acceptable and what is not. Teach him that spilling, breaking, or harming things—including harmless creatures—is wrong. The early years can be challenging, but with love and proper guidance, children will develop obedience, and as they grow, you will be glad you took the time to train them well.

3. My children are still young, but I see that parents with teenagers (13 years and older) struggle more than I do. How can I avoid these future challenges?

Your thoughts are shared by many parents! We advise you to invest a lot of time in building a strong relationship with your children while they are still young, as discussed in this book. Also, surrender your fears to God, who knows the future, so that you do not borrow tomorrow's troubles and live in unnecessary worry. Keep learning and praying over your parenting journey.

4. Why do children find it hard to obey when we instruct them? Why do we have to punish or raise our voices for them to listen? Why don't they cooperate with us willingly in meaningful matters to reduce conflicts?

The struggle comes from human nature, which resists what is good and godly while being drawn to what is wrong. From the beginning of the world, human nature has been in a battle between these two forces: good and evil. Children want to appear as heroes and take control. Even among themselves, they compete to show who is the strongest. This happens at school, at home, and elsewhere. They think, "I don't think you can make me listen or do as you say." This rebellious spirit must be addressed early so that children recognize authority. Set clear rules, state your expectations, and follow through.

5. I had a child out of wedlock at 21. Now my child is three, and I know that one day he will ask about his father. How should I explain this, and when?

The time will come when you must tell your child the full truth about their father. However, not yet. He needs to be mature enough emotionally to handle it. Do not make it a big secret that weighs on your heart. Many mothers have kept this a secret, which is a mistake.

You will need to talk about it openly with your child when the right time comes. Avoid lies. Speak privately and with love. Begin by giving small pieces of information, such as:

"Your father left before you were born. He did not want us to live together. I don't know why—maybe it was impossible for him to marry me. I am not sure. But I believe if he saw you, he would love and care for you. However, he never got to see you. Maybe we should pray for God to bring another man into our lives to be my husband and your father. Would you like that?"

6. I Get Frustrated Because My Two-Year-Old Won't Sit Still in Worship Service

Honestly, children at this age cannot sit still. Since some services do not have separate children's programs, there is no need to punish them for this, but rather, work on it consistently. Bring engaging items such as coloring books and crayons or a doll to keep them occupied. However, do not leave your child with a nanny while you go to a place of worship. This child is growing and learning something from the service, no matter how small, and is developing reverence for the things of God.

Your child needs to know God even more than you do because they are just beginning their journey, so you are doing the right thing. Try to be patient and continue to pray so that your church can have a designated children's section. During the weekdays, practice with them how to sit in church so that by the time they go, they are accustomed to it. If children have a teacher

during worship service and you bring them from a young age, they will get used to sitting still and knowing what to do at that time. Do not go to worship service without your child, leaving them with someone else!

7. Why Do Some Children from Good, Well-Off Families Turn Out Bad, While Some from Struggling Families with Poor Parenting Turn Out Good?

It is not only environment and genetics that shape a child's character! Many parents congratulate themselves or even boast when they have well-behaved and successful children, and blame themselves when their children go astray. They ask, "Where did we go wrong?" It is true that parents have a strong influence on a child's behavior, but it is not the only factor. Other influences include the child's experiences, nutrition, friends, and personal choices—because God created us with free will.

Parenting is both a challenge and a gift. Just when you think you fully understand your children and have raised them well, they can surprise you with something unexpected. Stay prayerful, even when your children are adults—do not think that it is too late. They still have time to change, and even if they do not, you can still make a difference for your grandchildren. Even if, in your human weakness, you made clear mistakes in raising your children, you still have the opportunity to learn and help guide other children in your community and extended family with your experiences.

8. My Child Has Been Vaccinated, and Many People Have Warned Me to Be Cautious About Vaccines

The topic of vaccines is extensive. There is an organization called the National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC), which includes scientists from all over the world specializing in biology, medicine, neurology, bacteriology, and other fields. Many who speak on this subject feel they are risking their careers by doing so. Since 1997, vaccine debates have continued to grow.Parents need to educate themselves on this matter so that vaccine research can continue to advance.

There is no doubt that vaccines have helped many, and we believe that natural immunity can be strengthened through proper adherence to the ten laws of health for many diseases. However, the safety of vaccines needs ongoing research. It is important for patients to understand both the benefits and risks before receiving them. Vaccines should not be administered indiscriminately, as some children have suffered neurological damage due to vaccines.

How can you tell if your child has been affected by a vaccine? If a child was healthy before receiving the vaccine and then developed complications afterward, parents should recognize the reaction and know how to report it. It is also important to note the vaccine manufacturer and the batch number. In the March/April 2001 issue of Family Living (issue number 105), a parent

wrote about ordering a tetanus vaccine separately from a pharmacy to avoid combined vaccines.

Since our countries are still developing and some things are difficult to implement, parents should research more on the internet for factual information about vaccine risks and how to protect their families. Educate yourself as a consumer. It is true that vaccines have caused deaths, diabetes, and brain damage in some individuals (see the work of Dr. Walter Spitzer from McGill University in Canada). Like any medication, vaccine vials list both benefits and side effects. Some vaccines are preserved with mercury, which can be harmful to the body. Pregnant women are advised to avoid vaccines until after pregnancy. Do not take medical treatments lightly—do thorough research. I am not here to tell you yes or no, but I encourage you to seek more information.

9. Can You Cut the Cord With Your Grown Child Without Damaging the Relationship?

This is a common challenge, especially for mothers who are still emotionally attached to their children, particularly single mothers who raised their children alone. Some grown children still live at home, or their mothers move in with them even when they have no real need to do so, simply because it provides them with emotional comfort.

Parents must demonstrate—through actions and words—that their children are capable of living independently. Children learn from our behavior, not just our words. One parent asked their child for a loan to start a business, saying, “I want to be independent so that I don’t interfere in your marriage.” However, despite this, they continued to be overly involved in their child’s life, unknowingly damaging their marriage.

A child may turn 18 but still need help with school and other things. Understand your child well and find ways to help them become independent—whether through employment, education, resources like land, or startup capital. If a child moves out and then returns home, identify the underlying issue and provide support. Sometimes, a child living on their own may still be more dependent on their parents than one who lives at home, especially if the parents are still financially supporting them.

Have open discussions as parents—do not just complain when children do not contribute or take responsibility. The Times (May 20, 2013) discussed this issue; you are not alone! A grown child who lacks life experience or is struggling with loneliness may risk damaging their marriage. Parents should also avoid forcing their daughters to marry simply because society pressures them for grandchildren.

10. What Are the Benefits of My Grown Children Living With Me?

Some parents prefer to continue living with their grown children because they get along well. Nowadays, even finding a spouse is difficult! We live in a world where people have little patience—everyone wants to live alone, but when they do, they feel lonely and spend all their time on their phones or visiting others just to have company. When they find someone to talk to, they cling to them. But when they have someone at home, they often argue constantly.

Grown children living at home can be helpful with responsibilities, completing their education successfully, and engaging in the community. Many young people, both men and women, have fallen into risky sexual behaviors due to living alone—entertaining visitors of the opposite sex and forming unplanned relationships. If a daughter marries straight from her parents' home, this risk is significantly reduced unless she moves in with the man.

Living with parents also helps young people mature and receive guidance on their relationships before making serious commitments. Parents also get a chance to observe their child's future spouse more closely. Having family members around serves as a moral check, reducing the likelihood of reckless behavior. Additionally, living with parents can help ease financial burdens such as rent and utilities, allowing children to save money for their future.

11. How can we ensure that our grown children respect us?

A parent should be gentle, approachable, and loving. If your child, who once lived under your care, comes back home, perhaps to do laundry or enjoy their mother's cooking, allow them that space. Also, avoid using words that are confrontational, authoritative, or commanding, such as, "Give me money to buy a bicycle," or "Do this or that."

Recognize that they are human and that there is a respectful way to communicate without being aggressive or intrusive. It is better to sit down and discuss matters rather than catching them off guard. Should they use family belongings, like a car or bicycle, freely, or must they ask for permission? Set clear rules to foster mutual respect.

Many times, we overly control our children because we fear losing them, worrying that they will drift too far beyond our reach when we still want to hold onto them!

We see an example of the prodigal son in the Bible: He lived blaming his father, and his father did not want him to leave. But when the father let him go, the son eventually returned, and they respected each other. Discuss this with your child—remember the other son who stayed home complained that his father favored the one who left. But the father replied:

"Listen, my son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and

is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Engage your child in a conversation about these matters so that you can build mutual respect. Some issues cannot be avoided or left to solve themselves while you bury your face in the sand. Also, avoid praising one child's goodness while highlighting another's faults—this will cause you to lose both and diminish your respect. Every child wants to feel loved; do not take sides.

12. What should you do if your grown children return home after becoming independent?

I am unsure how many grown children live with their parents in our country, but in the U.S., there are sixteen million! Many return home due to financial struggles, job loss, or divorce. When they return, they often bring their families. Addressing this should happen immediately rather than later.

One mother complained about her daughter, who moved back home with young children but would leave them behind to go out looking for men, only to return late at night. The parents were afraid to confront her because if they asked her to leave, their grandchildren would suffer.

Others have found it helpful to divide household chores—cooking, laundry, and cleaning—so that an elderly mother does not bear the burden of managing a full house alone.

Do you have children who return home but do not take responsibility? Sit down with them and explain expectations. If your heart aches, let them know you are willing to care for the grandchildren, but not them. However, some children, realizing how much you love their children, may threaten to take them away just to hurt you.

Some grandparents show favoritism—some prefer their daughter's children over their son's. These grandparents are quick to say, "Go with your kids!" But do not deny anyone their rightful kindness if you are capable of providing it. Still, many grandparents are financially, emotionally, and physically exhausted and lack the space to accommodate everyone.

Ask yourself: Is it too late? Or is there a way to rebuild the bridge? Talk, listen, and respect each other. Do not be afraid—on the day of your fear, trust in God.

13. How much work should a child do in a day?

It is good for children to work, but there must be balance. They should not spend the entire day working without play.

An eight-year-old should learn to properly wash their clothes under supervision. They can also feed pets, sweep, clean their room, and do small kitchen chores. They should not spend all their time watching TV or chatting idly. You must

know where your child is.

Monitor the tasks you assign; if you do not follow up, the lesson will be lost. Do not say you are too busy. A child learns best under supervision. This will help them develop into responsible workers and good spouses. Many conflicts arise from laziness—"If a man will not work, neither shall he eat."For more information, visit doorposts.org, Pam Foster, or R.B. Bradley (No Greater Joy website).

14. Should a child be forced to eat if they refuse?

No! Do not force a child to eat unless they are sick

This issue often arises in households with an abundance of food, where children see food all the time and snack continuously. A child should not consume excessive sugary foods or eat randomly throughout the day. If there are structured mealtimes, they will develop an appetite.

A child's appetite may decrease during periods when they are not growing rapidly. Try learning different cooking techniques and offering foods they enjoy, as long as they align with a healthy diet.

15. Should you apologize to your child if you wrong them?

Yes.There have been times when I have had to apologize to my children for being too hasty, speaking harshly, making false promises, or blaming them for something they did not do.

Later, upon reflection, I have asked for forgiveness: "Yesterday, I made a mistake. You know, parents are just human too. Please forgive me."

Many times, my children have responded: "We knew you were wrong, and we're glad you apologized. We forgive you." Then we are all happy again.

16. What should I do if my older child still wets the bed?

First, do not punish them—no one does this on purpose. You will only create more problems.

Try waking them up at specific times during the night. You can use an alarm clock. Reduce their water intake several hours before bedtime. Natural remedies have also been used successfully.

Remember, this issue is common, especially among boys, and is rarely related to bad behavior. It will eventually stop, even if it feels like it is taking forever.

17. We have three children and are always busy. We struggle to find time—what should we do?

A child measures love by the time spent with them. Since you brought children into this world, make time for them.

It is ideal for a mother to stay home if possible. Find ways to bridge this gap. Many people create to-do lists but do not consider parenting important enough to include.

Develop traditions, such as eating meals together, attending worship, celebrating events, or taking vacations. Family is more than just living under the same roof.

A very busy father once had children who longed to spend time with him. One day, they sneaked into his diary to see if he had a free day. When they found one, they booked an appointment, writing: “Day to spend with the kids.”

Later, when they checked again, they saw that their father had crossed it out with a red pen and scheduled another appointment. Their hearts were crushed.

18. My eighteen-year-old ran away from home and has bad behavior. What should I do?

It is difficult to say exactly what to do if this happens.

Rather than scolding them or speaking harshly, invite them back and try to guide them. Visit them if possible. If they refuse, do not be a dictator; this will only fuel rebellion.

Since they are now an adult, help them as much as possible when they face difficulties. Talk to them about the consequences of their choices versus good behavior, and let them decide.

The prodigal son left his father, and the father gave him space. When he came to his senses, he returned on his own and was welcomed with joy.

19. You are writing a parenting book—does that mean your home and children are perfect?

Absolutely not! Parenting is a daily battle, and we must support each other by sharing what we learn.

No parent is perfect. Some days feel like a storm has passed through our home. But we rely on God’s grace.

Look to God, keep learning, and trust Him. Cry out like Jacob: “I will not let You go unless You bless me.”

20. We are struggling financially in raising children; what should we do?

Honestly, I am not an expert in entrepreneurship or business, but it is necessary to seek experts, learn, and then secure capital. If possible, consider going back to school to increase your chances of getting a job. If you have land, farm it. I have seen in many places, such as Tanzania, that there is plenty of

land; many could farm and sustain their lives, but laziness is rampant. Land is wealth. Work hard for at least eight hours a day and keep praying. “Everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Beware of greed and extravagance. Do you want to have things just like others, or are these basic needs? Can you cut down on your expenses by buying second-hand clothes, farming, or taking on small jobs? Do you know how to budget your household finances? Learn. Are there organizations that provide certain types of assistance, such as scholarships for children? Investigate, and you will find information and knowledge you didn’t have before.

Taking a loan should be the last resort, possibly for investment purposes. Avoid debt like a plague, and instead, owe people love. However, sometimes you may need a loan or a grant to boost your income. Do not get used to using credit cards! Live a simple life. I have seen even in poor countries, people building massive houses with many rooms, only for the children to leave and someone is left cleaning dust. Even those who love God have fallen into this trap of materialism.

21. What is the benefit of having children? Raising them nowadays is very difficult.

It is true that parenthood is costly and comes with many challenges. However, God commanded us to be fruitful and multiply. That is how we were created. Ask someone who longs to have a child, and you will get a clearer picture. Parenthood and raising children is not easy, but among societies that love having children, Africans stand out—even to the point of separating from a wife if she is unable to conceive (but not if the husband is infertile!).

There are very few people who regret having children. Most of you desired to have them and have enjoyed your children. Ask yourself: why did the Almighty God create us? Was it to help Him do His work? No. It was to demonstrate His love and glory.

Many have benefited from having children. Look at the good things your children do for you, even if they don’t give you material things. Children are an inheritance from the Lord; He gives them to us as a gift. In some countries, many have chosen not to have children, and in some cases, that is understandable—discuss it with your spouse if you both agree.

However, looking at the lives of prophets like Enoch, they were able to understand God more deeply after becoming parents and learning about the love of our Heavenly Father. As parents, we learn many things, such as patience, selflessness, and love. After I became a parent, my flaws became more apparent, and I pray that God helps me confess and abandon them

22. Is it necessary to teach children about faith? Wouldn't that be forcing them?

It is extremely important for parents to teach their children about faith, especially in their early childhood. They must be taught right from wrong and God's commandments. As they grow, they will make their own choices.

A child is born with selfishness and self-centeredness and is faced with the decision to follow God or follow Satan. They are born into a battle between good and evil. They are not born righteous but in a state of spiritual ignorance. Therefore, they must be taught to know God. Failing to teach them about their Creator is to inherit them into spiritual poverty.

During the first seven years of their life, teach them about God's love, His Word, prayer, the pillars of faith, the joy of knowing God, faith, and His goodness. Teach them to love God and their neighbors, to be self-disciplined, to obey (submission), to avoid greed, gossip, and bad habits. Teach them to obey their parents, respect and honor God with their possessions, worship, avoid pride, be honest, observe the Sabbath, and not be obsessed with material wealth.

23. What about TV? Should parents control what their children watch?

A large percentage of TV content is unhelpful. My opinion is that if you can eliminate it, it would be beneficial! Alternatively, you can choose appropriate programs for your children and monitor what they watch. Even advertisements nowadays are filled with half-dressed individuals, violence, immorality, and disrespect.

Studies have shown that increased violence in society stems from a lack of self-worth. For example, consider the history of Hitler in Germany—he wanted to oppress others to compensate for his inner frustrations. Satan has raised his horns, seeking to capture your children's minds, steal your family's time, and perhaps even affect your health.

If you want to manage television effectively, take a pen and paper and list the programs you want your children to watch. Be present to ensure they stick to those programs.

In some countries, there are up to 900 TV channels! Children wake up at night while parents are asleep and watch inappropriate content. Cartoons today include adult themes and profanities. Carefully evaluate this and have conversations with your children. Seek advice if needed. Do not be a dictator.

24. I am a 15-year-old boy, and I have been told I will experience physical changes, but I haven't seen them yet! What are they?

They will come, just be patient. Some bodily systems may have minor delays,

but the reproductive system rarely fails to function. There is a gland called the pituitary gland in your brain, which is about the size of a bean. This gland is the master gland that controls all other glands, including those responsible for reproduction.

For girls, breast development begins, and menstruation (monthly bleeding through the vagina) occurs, approximately every 28 days. This is the body's way of preparing for pregnancy, and if conception does not occur, the uterine lining sheds and resets for the next cycle. These changes usually begin around the age of 12 for girls and 14 for boys. However, due to hormones present in modern meat and dairy products, puberty can now occur as early as before age 10!

For boys, muscles develop, the voice deepens, wet dreams occur, and facial hair grows. Reproductive organs also mature. Sometimes, puberty can bring fatigue due to the many changes happening. Ensure you get at least eight hours of sleep and eat a balanced diet.

Maintaining purity in thoughts, actions, and words is crucial. Many young people fear being laughed at, especially girls, because they become self-conscious. But don't worry—no one is thinking about your changes as much as you do. Parents or guardians should educate you about hygiene, provide sanitary products for girls, and teach boys how to shave.

Many wonder if pregnancy can occur without intercourse. That is impossible unless in a medical setting where sperm is artificially implanted, like in modern cattle breeding.

There are concerns and anxieties about puberty. Parents and guardians should discuss these matters openly. Learn self-control—even though your body is maturing, it is not the right time for romantic relationships. Be cautious about friendships, choose godly companions, and avoid focusing on sexual thoughts.

Some feel embarrassed about medical checkups, but there is no need to be afraid. If necessary, take a parent with you for support. The greatest gift you can give your future spouse is your purity, whether you are a man or a woman. Over 70% of young people engage in sexual activity before marriage. However, God is merciful—He forgives when we repent. If you have made mistakes, start anew with purity and faithfulness in thoughts, words, and actions.

25. A parent who comes to my home and wants to control how I run my household and raise my children has become a burden on my heart. What should I do?

Every home has its own challenges. Try to talk to them and set boundaries.

You and your husband should discuss the matter and lovingly let them know that if they are living with you, it would be better to find a way to help them become independent.

26. I am 14 years old and love to dress like my peers, but my parents say that it is important to consider whether my clothing is modest and respectful to God and others. I feel like I've been left behind by fashion trends!

Often, we struggle with self-worth when we compare ourselves to others. You care about being laughed at. When you grow older, these concerns will fade as you realize that no one actually wants you to be exactly like them. You also need to develop a strong backbone for many things in life! You cannot simply copy what is wrong just because others are doing it! "Everybody is doing it." Let "everybody" do it—you are not "everybody."

Learn to be independent and to please people with good actions, not bad ones. Find wise friends—it is not necessary for them to be popular, but they should have good character. Even if they are few, or even if you have none at all, it is better than having bad friends.

28. My 17-year-old daughter wants to wear a bra, but she has no breasts. What should I do? (How to handle challenges children face).

She likely wants to fit in with others, feel more grown-up, or is anxious about changes that have not come as quickly as expected. There is no harm in buying her one. At this stage, children often struggle with self-confidence or feel inadequate. Some feel weak or rejected by their peers and may lose hope. As a parent, teach your child self-worth, as children can be cruel with words and laugh at others. Help her heal from a wounded heart by showing her that she is loved and valued at home. Also, help her understand that she cannot simply follow others in breaking rules or being disobedient.

Remember, as a parent, you cannot solve all their problems. They must learn to navigate their own challenges. A child must face some difficulties that they can solve on their own. You cannot remove every obstacle from their path!

The struggles they face help them mature, develop patience, compassion, courage, and resilience. A tree without roots falls easily in the wind or floods. Children who learn to solve problems develop security. Your role is not to remove all their problems but to encourage them, protect them from major harm, equip them with tools to overcome challenges, and show them that you are on their side.

29. How can I tell if my child is using drugs?

They may appear constantly tired and lack ambition, perform poorly in school, struggle with concentration, and withdraw from family and friends. They may

become emotionally indifferent, have changes in facial appearance (such as red eyes or twitching), neglect personal hygiene, and react aggressively to minor reprimands.

They might prefer to be alone all the time, have secretive friends they do not want you to know, overeat, get into frequent arguments, or have the smell of alcohol. Moral standards decline, they may have needle marks on their body, become overly secretive, disappear for long periods, and money or valuable items may go missing at home. They may also experience diarrhea.

Most children already know the dangers of drug use, but continue reminding them and finding solutions. Talk to them about peer pressure and teach them to be strong enough to stand alone one day. As a parent, be a role model and avoid peer pressure yourself—do not imitate others in wanting material things or dressing like them. Many adults still want to look like certain people. Let's instead follow the example of strong individuals who stood firm, because there are times when you must not go with the crowd.

30. My child loves collecting trees, plants, insects, and animals. What should I do?

If they store them neatly and without causing harm or creating a bad smell, let them continue. This is the age of collecting things. They will pick up everything they find on the road—bottles, wires, bottle caps, etc. Give them a box for storage or designate a place for them. Never throw away their collections.

31. My 16-year-old daughter, who is not married, has told me she is pregnant. What should I do?

Your daughter needs you now more than ever. Show her love; sit down and talk. This is not the time to say, "I told you so," or to scold her harshly. Sometimes, relationships strengthen after such difficulties, and you may become closer than before. Those who make mistakes often become more humble.

Help her, along with your spouse, in caring for the baby, and encourage her to return to school if possible so she can secure a better future. Have a deep conversation after she gives birth because this pattern is common among girls who end up having multiple children while still living at home.

When she is older, she will have the responsibility to choose a clean life and obey the rules, but she must also take responsibility for raising her children.

Many fathers argue with their wives, saying, "You hid things from me about our daughter! Were you planning her bride price?" Try to be open with your husband and show compassion.

32. You said that spanking a child over the age of 12 is not appropriate.

What kind of punishment should they receive instead?

Consider reducing privileges such as pocket money or other benefits. You can also ground them—restricting their movement, such as staying in their room or at home for a set period. This is an effective punishment for children at this stage.

Even younger children should be disciplined without damaging their spirit. Set clear boundaries. Avoid yelling in a way that shames them, such as saying, "Why are your grades worse than your younger sibling's?" or "You are useless!"

For more information, visit www.ngj.org or read the No Greater Joy magazine.

33. Our daughter has recently become shy; when she gets dressed, she asks her sisters to leave the room!

Physical changes are making her seek privacy. Give her space—it is usually just a temporary phase.

34. Do children mature earlier these days?

Yes, physically and in terms of body changes. In the U.S. in the 1850s, the average age for puberty was 17. By the 1950s, it was 13, and today it is around 12.

35. Our 13-year-old child feels embarrassed to be seen with us, the parents, despite us raising and caring for them all their life. They especially feel this way when around their friends! Should I accept or resist this?

Ages 13 to 14 are the most challenging. At this age, children desperately want to appear independent and grown-up, and they feel embarrassed to be seen with their parents. Consider this a normal phase—it will pass, unless there is another serious issue. Your relationship with your child will eventually return to normal, although it may never be exactly as it was in early childhood.

36. Should I dress and talk like my teenage child so they see that I understand them?

There is no greater foolishness than trying to imitate a child just to prove that you understand them. If a two-year-old falls down, should we all fall down too?

You can show understanding in many other ways. First, they want to be different from you and have their own identity. If you start copying them, they will simply change their style! Do not mimic them—they still need your authority, and you are their guide!

We do not follow children's examples; rather, children should follow the example of their parents, who in turn should follow the ULTIMATE PARENT—GOD. This means following His commands, laws, teachings, and testimonies.

37. My fourteen-year-old child has started openly defying us, breaking rules, and resenting the family. He dislikes us when we discipline him. He comes home late without asking for permission. What should we do?

It is good to take him aside on a different day when he is not acting out. Take him for a walk, to a park, or a restaurant. Tell him that you have an urgent matter to discuss. "I have noticed changes at home—you have become angry and rebellious, and your mother and I find ourselves frustrated and reprimanding you. This is not God's plan for us or for you. Is there a better way to resolve these issues? That is why we are here today." Explain that you understand the changes happening in his adolescent body and the impulses he is experiencing.

"You have tasted freedom and want to eat, go out, and dress as you wish. We understand that you want to be your own boss and not be interfered with. Soon, you will grow up, become independent, and get married. But for now, you are not there yet. For months, you have tried to show your mother and me that you are grown up and do not want to study, work, or come home on time. It would be easy for us to let you do as you please, but we know we would regret it, and you would, too. Your younger siblings are watching and following your example, which could ruin their lives if we let you do whatever you want. We are God's stewards—read 1 Samuel 12:22 and 25:27-34. God punished Eli and his sons for their bad behavior." (Look in the Bible for more examples.)

"God will not count us guiltless if we allow you to go astray. I want you to promise that you will be careful about these matters: 1, 2, 3. In return, we will also continue to be mindful of your well-being. When you need something and ask us, we will consider how well you have upheld these expectations. We know you are mature, and we cannot use corporal punishment, but there are things we cannot compromise on, even if you shout and rebel. You don't want us to stay up all night figuring out ways to make your life miserable—because we can!"

"I need to do my job well in these few years you have left at home. It is now up to you. We can have peace if you cooperate and make these last years with us peaceful. You need to come home early, work hard, and respect your mother and me. We love you more than you realize. We want to maintain friendship in this harsh world. You haven't yet faced many of life's struggles, but one day you will, and we need each other. We need you, and whether you believe it or not, you will need us too. Help us so we can help you—let's not drop the ball." Then ask, "Do you have anything to say?"

Give the child time to think. Even if your teenager is angry or does not respond, you have set the tone and made your expectations clear. It is possible to guide young people without being harsh. Be kind to them while still setting

boundaries.

42. At the funeral of my children's uncle, they asked me about death. How should I respond?

The Word of God teaches that when a person dies, they rest in the grave awaiting resurrection. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day, but by now he stinks." Try to explain the truth to your child, and if you do not know the answer, tell them you will look into it or admit you do not know. Martha was answered by the Lord, who said, "I am the resurrection and the life!" When the Lord returns and the trumpet sounds, graves will open, and the dead will rise—not from heaven, but from their graves—to meet Jesus in the clouds. The Word of God does not say Jesus will come with an army of those who have already died and gone to heaven, but rather that He will come with an army of angels.

The Lord is coming to resurrect the dead. If they were already in heaven, there would be no need for resurrection. This is the resurrection of the righteous. There is also a resurrection of the wicked, who will go to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. God has not promised eternal life to the wicked so they can burn forever—no! They will burn and be consumed completely.

It is important for a child to understand that there are consequences for sin and righteousness. Let the child cry and comfort them, but do not tell them, "Do not cry, be strong," as this can cause emotional wounds. They may cry for days or even months. It is difficult for a young child to understand death, as even many adults do not fully comprehend what the Bible says about it. That is why it is called a mystery.It is good for a child to see their parent's body before burial, although very young children may become fearful and have nightmares. As a parent, you must assess this. If possible, protect the child from excessive wailing and loud mourning, as it can cause distress. A child may feel abandoned by the deceased or develop guilt, thinking they caused the death, especially if they were ever angry with the person. Reassure them that they were not responsible for the death. Let them know that after death, there is no more opportunity to repent—it marks the end of one's choices.

43. My child comes home from school crying, saying they were beaten by other children. Should I tell them to fight back?

It is best to teach your child not to engage in fights during play. Children can be selfish and sometimes cruel, excluding others or making fun of their disabilities or physical differences. Children love to keep toys for themselves. Since your child is still young, teach them how to protect themselves in certain situations. If they are attacked or have their belongings taken, tell them to report it to the teacher so the bully can be dealt with.

If possible, bullies should be disciplined, even by their fellow students, to put

an end to their behavior! Then, the teacher should handle the situation. A child who enjoys fighting will eventually stop such foolishness! The important thing is for the parent to emphasize that fighting is bad and foolish, but they should not leave a young child defenseless or without seeking justice. Some children, due to bullying, have learned self-defense techniques like karate to prevent further harassment.

43. Do you think five-year-olds should listen to rap and rock music?

Honestly, this type of music is harmful to anyone—even adults should not listen to it. Look at the nature of the music and the behaviors it promotes. Many bad behaviors have stemmed from rap music and its related genres. Since Satan was a musician in heaven, he has influenced humans to love his corrupt music.

These styles of music did not originate in African traditions. Even traditional African dances were respectful, unlike today's dancing where men and women hold each other closely. Would anyone want their spouse to dance like that with someone else?

44. After what happened in Rwanda with the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic conflicts, how can I ensure my child does not become prejudiced?

Nothing will teach children better than the example you set in how you treat people from different ethnic backgrounds. Prejudice—whether racial, tribal, or economic—is often inherited from parents. Children carefully observe and imitate us.

A white mother once told me that when she took her children swimming, she later asked them, "How did you feel swimming with Black children?" Her children replied, "Were there Black children there?" In other words, they only saw friends and continued playing.

On the other hand, Black people sometimes assume all white people are prejudiced without even knowing them. Prejudging others is a sin.

Children pick up on discrimination at home. Even gender discrimination—such as telling an eight-year-old boy, "Your sisters will wash your clothes and clean the dishes because you are a man"—is a form of bias. Religious discrimination is another issue, where people believe only they hold the truth and others deserve to die. Age discrimination also exists when the elderly are mistreated. Let us not just think about racial discrimination—do we also exclude certain tribes? Do we speak ill of them? Rwanda's lesson was severe and has repeated itself. Let us learn that we are one family in God.

45. I am raising two sons alone as a mother. How can people of my faith help me?

Truly, anyone who loves God is a spiritual father or mother. Men can help these children learn work skills, sports, and other aspects of manhood. If they have uncles, they can also be a great support. It is the responsibility of every person in a God-loving community to assist in raising children—it takes a village to raise a child. A child does not belong to one person alone; their success benefits the nation, the community, and places of worship.

46. How does a child come to know God? What is my role as a parent in introducing God to them?

A child is born without knowledge of God. The prophet Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart." A child under the age of seven can easily be taught about God the Creator. In Ghana and many parts of Africa, even young children recognize God. The name for God, Onyame Kwame, means "God the Creator." Children begin to know God when parents teach them from infancy. Studies indicate that 75% of people come to know and believe in God before the age of 10, while only 3% do so after age 50.

The prophet Moses taught that "The Lord our God is one, and we should love Him with all our hearts, strength, soul, and mind." As parents, we are commanded to diligently teach our children about God's laws, speaking of them while walking, lying down, and rising. We should bind them as a sign on our hands, as frontlets before our eyes, and write them on our doorposts and gates.

It is crucial to teach children God's commandments and model them in our daily lives. Our lives serve as the greatest sermon for our children. We must not be like the Pharisees, who were told: "Follow everything they teach, but do not do as they do, for they are hypocrites." Children can recognize hypocrisy early, sometimes even more clearly than adults.

Young children get bored quickly, so prayer and worship should be engaging. For teenagers, provide challenges, discussions, and thought-provoking questions. By the age of nine, a child should read God's Word daily and pray independently. They should develop their own faith, not merely follow their parents' beliefs. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so pray for your child to love spiritual matters.

Television does not contribute to home worship. Instead, a child should understand that God is their Father. Catholics say, "Give us a child before the age of seven, and they will be ours for life." The first seven years are crucial for a child to learn that "Cursed is the one who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord... But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him."

It is also essential for a child to regularly attend a place of worship and to

learn to help orphans, the poor, widows, and those in need—true religion is loving God and one's neighbor. Give your child responsibilities in leading prayers as they grow, take them to religious camps or seminars for children and youth.

47. I want my wife to stay on the farm with the children while I work in the city. That way, she can take care of the farm and raise the children properly.

Your wife is not your mother. When you wanted to marry her, it was to live together, not to have her as a farm laborer. Why don't you also farm with her? Either stay together in the city or on the farm so you can raise your children as a team. Farming teaches essential life skills and good character, and raising children in the countryside is often ten times easier than in the city.

Even if you visit every weekend, it is not enough. Parenting requires daily involvement. Fathers play a critical role in shaping children's discipline. Living alone increases the risk of falling into immorality, poor eating habits, irresponsible decision-making, bad company, and questionable activities.

"Shall a man leave his father and mother to cling to his job or his farm?" That is not what God commands. Why marry if you will live apart? Some say, "I can't eat or sleep without thinking of you," but after marriage, they want their wives to live far away. Is this fair? Should she stay on the farm with your parents while you stay in the city?

48. My wife and I disagree—she wants to buy everything for our children, but I believe that spoiling them with material things is harmful. She also wants to buy them video games, which I oppose.

I agree—children should not be given everything they want. They should learn to value people and God, not possessions. Reducing their exposure to materialism helps them appreciate people and use objects wisely, rather than the other way around.

Sometimes parents buy excessive gifts to ease their guilt for being absent. However, in times of hardship, children who were raised with excess struggle the most. Advertisers target our children with tempting products, but while companies profit, our children develop materialistic desires and eventual dissatisfaction.

If parents themselves indulge in excessive shopping, it becomes harder to deny their children's demands. Teaching children contentment and self-discipline is crucial. A child should learn to make or build toys rather than receive everything pre-made, fostering creativity and long-term enjoyment.

Regarding food, excessive sweets reduce their appetite for nutritious meals. Some things should be denied so children can learn gratitude, while others

should be earned through effort—this teaches them not to constantly beg.

49. I've heard that buying toy guns or spears makes children violent.

Violence often stems from TV exposure, parental behavior, abuse, or a child's choice to follow evil. When children watch violent content, their heart rate increases, eyes widen, mouth dries, and palms sweat.However, playing with toy weapons is often just role-playing and does not necessarily lead to aggression—unless the child becomes excessively obsessed with such toys.

50. I feel guilty about disciplining my child, as I fear becoming a dictator or being too harsh.

It is true that some parents punish unfairly, but God has given us this responsibility, and our experience as adults guides us. While we are not always wise, we love our children and desire their best. Discipline and love must be balanced—if you have one liter of love, have one liter of discipline. Never discipline a child you do not love.

If you are overly harsh, they may become fearful and unable to think independently. If you are too lenient, they may embarrass you in public. Boundaries create security for a child.

A child sometimes "shakes the matchbox" to test authority. Educate yourself to use discipline wisely. Discipline now prevents greater consequences later—many criminals blame their parents for not correcting them early.

51. Is spanking a child abusive and damaging to their self-worth?

Not necessarily. Children differ—some are corrected with a stern look, while others need physical discipline. However, love and discipline must be equal. Never discipline in anger or without love. Many children have been injured or killed by excessive beatings.

Never use your hands to hit; they are for love. Use a small switch if necessary. Avoid slapping the face or hitting the head—it is dangerous. Spanking should cause discomfort but not harm. Explain the reason for discipline and do not act in anger. Some parents find it helpful to pray with the child afterward.

52. My two sons fight constantly. How do I stop their conflicts?

It is frustrating when children fight. Young children do not hold grudges, but they can be aggressive, taking things from each other or hitting. If left unchecked, this behavior can continue into adulthood. Cain and Abel fought long before television existed!

Jealousy is a major cause of sibling rivalry. Parents should avoid comparisons in intelligence, skills, appearance, or habits. Every child has unique strengths that should be acknowledged equally.

Sometimes children fight for attention—ignoring them can make them stop. You can say, “If you want to fight, do it outside, not in front of me.” This often discourages them.

Mothers should not feel powerless—handle the situation without waiting for the father. Establish rules: no name-calling, no teasing, and separate them if needed. Set firm boundaries and pray about it, as unresolved childhood conflicts can lead to lifelong feuds. Some grown siblings refuse to speak because of childhood disputes. If Satan cannot steal our joy one way, he will try another.

53. How Many Years Apart Should Our Children Be to Play Well Together?

Children who are two years apart often compete a lot but can develop a strong friendship and companionship over time. Those with a gap of more than four years rarely fight, except when the older one tends to dominate the younger one. However, family planning should not be based solely on this but rather on the mother’s health, financial stability, and the desire to have another child.

54. Our Older Child Is Jealous of the Newborn and Might Harm Them

When a child receives less attention, jealousy can arise. Talk to your older child about the new baby. Remind them that when they were little, they were also cuddled and celebrated. Assure them that your love for them has not diminished. Many children can’t express their jealousy directly, but older ones (above five years) may say things like, “I don’t even know why this baby is here. Why can’t they just go and stay with someone else?” Give your child time to express their thoughts. A newborn often shifts the family’s focus, leaving the older child feeling neglected. Engage them in activities they enjoy, like a trip to town, and say, “The baby can’t go to town yet.” Let them help with small tasks related to the baby to build a connection. Over time, they will learn that the world does not revolve around them alone and that others are important too. At the same time, take care to protect the newborn from potential harm.

55. My Child Is Not Disrespectful but Avoids Responsibilities—What Should I Do?

Behaviors like forgetting things, losing items, making a mess, not making their bed, skipping tooth brushing, or failing to organize their belongings are undesirable. Instead of calling your child names like “lazy” or “careless,” try reinforcing positive behavior. Praise them when they remember to do tasks like making their bed. Explain the consequences of their actions: if they forget their school bag, they won’t be able to study; if they arrive late for work, they might get fired; if they lose their bus fare, they’ll have to walk home. If they repeatedly spill water on the floor, determine whether it’s carelessness

or just playfulness. To help them remember tasks, write reminders on a wall, such as “Take your eraser, pen, and notebook to school.”

56. My Four-Year-Old Complains Constantly and Talks Only in a Whiny Voice

Your child might have gotten used to whining and may not realize how often they do it. Perhaps they’ve noticed that this tone of voice gets them attention. Tell them, “I can’t understand you because of the whining.” Encourage them to speak in a normal voice. Repeat this every time they whine, and you’ll see improvement. Ask other family members to follow the same approach.

57. Is Saying “Thank You” Important?

Yes, children should learn gratitude. They must understand that not everything given to them is their right—it is kindness. Gratitude fosters good manners. Words like “Sorry,” “Thank you,” “Please,” and “Excuse me” are golden. A grateful child will grow up to relate well with others. If they get married or have children, these values will bless their family and inspire others.

58. My Child Is Afraid of the Dark—What Should I Do?

Children often fear the dark because of adults’ words or stories. Avoid jokes about darkness, like saying, “A monster is coming.” Reassure your child that even in the dark, God is with them. If they fear wrongdoing in the dark, remind them that light and dark do not change what is right or wrong.

59. Can a Four-Year-Old Read?

Yes, if they are quick learners. Kiswahili is easier to read because its vowels (a, e, i, o, u) do not change sounds. However, few parents have the patience to teach young children without showing frustration. If you lack patience, let your child grow naturally—it’s better for their eyes and brain. Don’t rush just to compete with others who say, “My child could read at three.” Even if a child reads early, where will that take them immediately? Instead, teach them life skills that enhance cognitive development more than reading does. Teach them to cross the street safely, use the toilet properly, tie their shoes, count to 20, or answer the phone. Provide books or take them to the library and read to them. When they are ready, they will begin reading on their own.

60. Should First and Second Graders Receive Grades in School?

Giving grades can motivate a child, but for younger children, the focus should be on their effort rather than perfect results. Praise their attempts, even if their work isn’t excellent, to encourage them. Grades should be used to build motivation, not to discourage them. They may be more suitable for slightly older children.

61. I’ve Noticed That Children Prefer Strict Teachers—Why?

Yes, children tend to like teachers who bring structure to the classroom because it provides predictability. A structured classroom ensures order and fairness. When a teacher maintains discipline, children feel safe and learn better. In chaotic classes, children worry about their safety and bullying may increase. Some students do not treat their peers fairly, so without a strict teacher, some children may be mistreated. Children appreciate fairness. A teacher who follows rules ensures that all students are treated justly, rather than allowing disorder, noise, and bullying to prevail. A good teacher also monitors students' work and ensures discipline when needed.

62. Some Students Come to Class Without Pens or Paper, and When I Lend Them, They Don't Return Them

There should be consequences for this behavior. For instance, tell them that if they borrow a pencil and don't return it, they will have to stand and write for an hour next time. Over time, everyone will bring their own stationery. If a particular student keeps doing this, make them stand as a consequence, and their embarrassment will likely deter them from repeating the behavior.

63. What's the Point of School If Children Forget What They Learn?

Beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, school teaches discipline, perseverance, time management, obedience to rules, teamwork, and hard work. Even at home, children should be given tasks to reinforce these skills. Education shapes attitudes, emotions, and the ability to earn a living. If a child doesn't attend school, parents should consider homeschooling using an approved curriculum.

64. I'm 21, in My Second Year of University, and I Want to Get Married. My Fiancée and I Plan to Pursue Master's Degrees, Do Part-Time Jobs, and Start Building a Home

Many young couples fight too many battles at once—both parents studying, working part-time, and trying to build a home. On top of that, children can come unexpectedly. Who will have time for the children? Everyone is focused on high ambitions, wanting everything at once. I would advise waiting until you finish school before getting married, or if you do get married, delay having children. Many marriages break down because of the pressure to achieve everything at once, leaving couples with no time for each other. I once visited a major city in Africa and met a divorced couple—both were doctors. They worked hard to finish school, build a nice home, buy cars, and achieve financial success. However, they fought so much that they eventually separated. Now they fight over their children, even in school meetings, telling teachers, "If my husband comes, don't let him take the child! Wait for me." They spent years accumulating wealth, but now, all of it means nothing. True happiness is more than education and possessions. Live wisely—don't rely

on worldly intelligence alone. Westerners say, “Less is more.” Sometimes, having fewer material things leads to greater peace, patience, and joy.

65. Our 21-Year-Old Son Still Lives at Home but Disrespects Us. He Breaks Rules, Plays Loud Music, and Comes Home Late. His Younger Siblings Are Copying Him

Since he is already an adult and stubborn, this behavior will only get worse over time. Sit down with him and discuss both your household rules and his desire for independence. If he refuses to respect your home’s rules, help him move out—perhaps by renting a small place for him and providing essentials. You can’t force a grown adult to change.

In the Amish community in America, parents enforce strict rules, but when a child turns 16, they are given freedom to leave, drink, and live as they please. They receive money to start an independent life, but surprisingly, most of them choose to return home because they value their upbringing. I’m not saying you should rush to kick him out, but like the Amish, prepare children from an early age for independence. Over-restricting them leads to rebellion. However, if your child is willing to live harmoniously with you, that is even better.

66. Why do children from good homes sometimes turn out bad, while others from difficult backgrounds grow up to be virtuous?

It is true—another mother once prayed, “You transformed Saul into Paul by force, changing his evil ways into righteousness. Why don’t You force my son to change like You did with Saul?” This is a mystery. As parents, we must do our part with all our strength. Just as pirates demolished New York’s World Trade Center with evil intent, parents should have the same depth of purpose and determination in raising their children well. If those who intended evil succeeded, will God not answer our prayers when we seek goodness so our children may fear God and love others?

Do not lose hope—pray that the Spirit of God will help your child to love God deeply and to love others, showing compassion and offering help to those in need. God will give your child a vision, a mission, a passion, and the necessary provision to fulfill their purpose in life.

67. Universities today have male and female students living in close quarters, with no restrictions on visiting dorm rooms. What do you think about this practice concerning the morals of our children?

This situation compromises the purity of our children’s lives. Especially in this era of homosexuality, there is increasing confusion—some even advocate for shared bathrooms for men and women, which is something our ancestors never heard of.

One day, we visited a university in Nairobi and went to the dorms of some female students we knew. The rooms were very small, with only a curtain separating two girls. On one side, a girl was lying on her bed talking with a man, while we were visiting the girl on the other side! At night, they sleep like that too. Human beings are turning into animals—sleeping with a man here, while others are nearby. Bathrooms and toilets are shared, and the boys' and girls' dorms are next to each other.

In African traditions, children were protected. This setup only promotes immorality. Nearly 70% of students will have engaged in premarital sex before graduating. So, is it wrong for elders to say, "I don't want my daughter to go to university—she will become promiscuous, and I will lose the dowry cows"?

This situation has eroded faithfulness—to God, to others, and especially between husbands and wives. Young people experience strong sexual desires, yet they are put in environments that encourage temptation. Universities are becoming breeding grounds for immorality, and society is paying the price. If we have copied Western culture, we need to abandon such harmful aspects.

For some, academic life has led them into fornication and even homosexuality. If young people cannot control their desires, it would be better for them to marry before going to university. Some say, "I won't marry until I'm 30," yet they engage in sex and even have children. What's the difference? The only thing missing is a marriage certificate. Fornication has led to the decay of many aspects of society. Marry rather than claim you are waiting while living in sin.

67. At what age should a child be taught about sexual matters?

Children naturally become curious about their bodies and the opposite sex, asking questions. Don't be alarmed—listen to what they know and build upon it. For example, a six-year-old once asked his mother, "Where do we come from?" She spent 15 minutes explaining reproduction in detail, only for the child to respond, "I was asking what tribe we belong to and which town we come from!"Parents should answer children's questions; it is not good for them to learn from peers or schoolbooks alone. Do not hide information because the devil makes sexuality seem shameful, yet it is a gift.

Start with simple lessons—perhaps explaining plant reproduction, then moving on to animals like chickens and goats. A child may have seen these examples in nature, so begin there. Be open and honest.

Teach sexual purity—not just physical but also in thoughts, intentions, and speech. Explain that sex is God's gift for procreation. Your child should not go to boarding school and learn these things from others before hearing from you. If they do, you may not like what they learn. Unless their teachers are God-fearing and experienced, parents must take the lead.

By age 10, children should already understand, as government schools introduce them to many topics by then. Teach gradually and continue reinforcing the lessons. Some parents only talk about these matters when a child reaches puberty, but by 16, they are shocked at what has already happened. These lessons should be ongoing.

As your child nears puberty, continue guiding them. Pray for God's help because today, pornography and masturbation are rampant. These are not just sins—they can also damage a child's mind and future. Read and understand these issues deeply, and above all, pray.

68. What do you think about school uniforms?

They help instill discipline and equality among students. A child needs standards; without them, failure is easy, especially in today's fashion-driven world.

Look at athletes, sports teams, or choirs—discipline is key to success. Discipline requires self-control and order. Rules and expectations that are not oppressive are essential.

70. I have seven fifth-grade students who are undisciplined. What should I do?

First, analyze their behavior and what motivates it. Many children misbehave to seek attention. Create an environment where they won't gain attention from misbehavior.

Some children even enjoy being caned in front of others—it makes them feel like stars. Place their desks where they won't be noticed, perhaps behind a cupboard. After a month, they will realize they are not getting attention and will change.

Engage their parents and encourage them to reduce screen time at home. Praise even small improvements and build on them. Television teaches many things, both good and bad. Just because something is done in Western countries doesn't mean it's right.

71. During children's church, they are disruptive, and the teachers do not handle them properly.

Sunday school teachers are volunteers and may not have studied child psychology or classroom management. Some believe they should only teach God's Word and not discipline.

However, children must be trained—no learning can happen amid chaos. The house of God is not a zoo but a place of worship. Even Jesus said, "My house will be called a house of prayer." Order is important, and discipline, when necessary, should be enforced.

Before punishing, ask yourself:

Have I explained the rules clearly?

Do I love these children enough?

Am I setting a good example?

What is their maturity level?

Talk with parents so they can help. You don't want to be too harsh and drive children away from God's house.

72. We have a one-year-old child and heard that we can stimulate their brain to increase intelligence. Is this true?

Research by Dr. Burton White of Harvard showed that between 8 and 18 months, a child's brain development is greatly influenced by their experiences. Mothers play a key role in creating this environment. The language they hear is crucial—but not from TV!

Children who move around and explore learn more at this age. Take your child outside, to farms, and different places. Family conversations are very valuable.

Three key factors from the research:

1. A well-organized environment

2. Encouraging children to ask questions and explore, providing knowledge, humor, and comfort

3. Firm but loving discipline

73. My six-year-old is very hyperactive. A doctor suggested giving him medication to calm him down. What should I do?

In the West, children are often given medication for hyperactivity, but this is becoming common in Africa too. However, children are naturally active—they need to run and play.

Many mothers work full-time jobs and, when they return home, lack the patience to play with their children. Parenting is a full-time job with no pay. Even older children (10+) love coming home to a mother who listens to their day.

Some children develop at different rates. If your child is very playful, consider delaying school or allowing more time for unstructured play. Read Homegrown Kids by Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore.

Thomas Edison, who invented the lightbulb, was highly intelligent but seen as disruptive. His teacher gave up on him, but his mother taught him at home,

fostering his curiosity.

For children with special needs, seek help from teachers and work closely with them. Many children who were once considered incapable have succeeded with parental involvement. Pray—God created the eyes, ears, brain, and all things.

73. What should we do if a six-year-old child is struggling to learn in class?

The problem is that schools set age-based standards, making us believe that every child of a certain age should be in a particular grade and know a specific set of things! Using age as a benchmark for learning is more about convenience for parents and teachers than it is about truly helping the child. Children develop differently, and they will eventually reach where you want them to be—just give them time.

A major mistake is to show or tell a child that they are "stupid, incapable, or foolish." Instead, give them time, teach them simple things, and allow them some freedom. Avoid participating in competitions like, "My child is so smart; they learned to read at four years old!" A child may learn to read early, but another who was slower may surpass them by the time they reach seventh grade. You've probably noticed in farming that different plants grow at different rates, even when planted at the same time.

Since schools often use a one-size-fits-all approach, work closely with your child and give them room to breathe. If you study how the brain develops in the womb and after birth, you'll realize that children go through specific stages, and sometimes, developmental delays occur. If a child has a genuine intellectual disability (mentally retarded), which can be diagnosed by specialists, they should not be placed in regular academic competition. Instead, keep stimulating their mind.

A child's learning ability is influenced by heredity, environment, and physical development. Expose them to learning experiences—take them to the airport, a bus station, a library, a wildlife park, or even introduce them to pets. If a child has significant difficulty learning due to obesity or other conditions, don't place them in a regular class. This can cause frustration, behavioral issues like bullying, shouting, or disruptive behavior. Unfortunately, schools that cater to children with different learning speeds are rare in our region. If you can afford it, research such schools.

74. How should teachers handle students who struggle academically, even if they have a high IQ of 120? And what about those with an IQ above 70?

Some children struggle with exams despite being intelligent. In such cases, they should be taught exam-taking techniques to help them overcome test anxiety. They should also be guided on how to read efficiently, for instance,

studying early in the morning rather than late at night.

Never ridicule, hurt, or pressure a child who is trying their best. With a class of 100 students, an ordinary teacher may struggle to provide individualized support. Communicate with parents and ask for their assistance. Tell them what was taught each day so they can reinforce the lessons at home. Parents should sit with their children and help with schoolwork. Small rewards—such as 50 shillings for completing a math assignment—can serve as motivation.

Parents need to be disciplined and follow a schedule. Different strategies should be used to engage the child effectively. Just like a car moves more easily when driven than when pushed, children learn better when motivated. Find ways to inspire them.

75. My child has vision and hearing problems and understands things differently when reading.

This child should be taken to a specialist to determine whether their condition can be treated. Many children who struggle with learning may simply need glasses or medical assistance for hearing issues. After addressing the health concerns, place the child in an educational setting suited to their needs.

As a parent, work with your child at home, teaching and supporting them. In Western countries, parents of children with disabilities fight to change laws so that these children receive educational support. Although our countries are still developing, many people are advancing in their careers, owning cars and homes, just like in the West. So, why should improving education for children with special needs be impossible? If we set it as a priority and seek God's help, we can achieve it.

If a child has a physical disability, you wouldn't expect them to compete in a race with able-bodied children. However, when it comes to learning, we often expect struggling children to keep pace with everyone else! Sometimes, parents fail to recognize whether a child's struggles are due to a real disability or mere laziness and defiance.

I value education and recognize its impact on Africa. We've seen how schooling has changed lives for those who studied in the past. Discipline and obedience are important, but so is a child's self-esteem. Don't break a child's spirit over academics and later struggle to rebuild their confidence. Not every child will thrive academically. Some cases are exceptional, and parents must assess their child's abilities realistically.

Every child, whether highly intelligent or struggling, has dignity and human worth. They are still God's children. If formal education is not a viable path, consider vocational training to help them navigate life. Not everyone fits into the academic system. A degree should not be worshiped as an ultimate goal—

what matters is the ability to earn a livelihood and uphold good character.

76. My child has been expelled from school, and I don't know what to do. I am a teacher and pleaded with the school to let them finish the last two months, but they refused. When I went to pick up my child, I was told, "What kind of teacher are you if you can't discipline your own child?" We have tried everything but fear using too much force and harming them. We feel ashamed around friends who ask how our children are doing. My wife works in radiology and has seen many children with broken bones from parental punishment. We now understand what some parents go through. Our other three children are well-behaved, finished school, and are now married and living in different cities.

There are two sides to this situation. Perhaps the parents had difficulties that led teachers to make such statements. Maybe they never set clear expectations for the child, or they were too occupied with other matters—be it work, alcohol, infidelity, or selfish pursuits—rather than focusing on raising their children. Or perhaps they did not take charge of discipline early on.

However, I don't think this case is entirely the parents' fault. The teachers' words may have been spoken thoughtlessly or without compassion.

Parents today are quicker to blame themselves than in the past. Previously, if a child misbehaved, society would simply say they were a bad child, and parents wouldn't feel as much guilt. Nowadays, parents internalize the blame.

These parents should not be too hard on themselves. Parents are often blamed for everything—even by their grown children! If a child is smart, athletic, rebellious, attractive, short, overweight, disabled, lazy—people assume it's because of the parents.

No one truly understands the shame of having a wayward child. However, by age 17, children make their own choices. The Bible records that at 12 years old, children in biblical times entered adulthood. Parents should not take full responsibility for every action of a near-adult child.

Even in religious circles, a pastor once resigned after his teenage son impregnated a girl in the church, feeling that he had failed to lead his home well. But I believe such scriptures apply to young children. Even Adam and Eve chose sin, and that was not God's fault.

Time has passed—stop blaming yourselves. Pray with hope. Some rebellious children turn out well later in life, while those who start strong may falter.

Read Parents in Pain by Dr. John White or check online resources.

77. I had a child out of wedlock while my husband was at war. He resents the child, and this has made me dislike them too.

If you make the decision to love the child, you will love them, despite the circumstances. The child is innocent—you had the choice, not them.

If you struggle to give them love, seek support from others, perhaps your parents. However, stay involved in the child's life by sending gifts, calling, and checking on their well-being.Avoid letting your child hear negative things about you from others—it damages their character. Seek guidance from trustworthy relatives who share your values.Do not compare your child to others. Love them as they are. Every child is a gift from God, regardless of their circumstances.

78. Why do young children easily learn languages and accents, while adults can learn languages but struggle with accents?

This is due to phoneme contraction, where a child's vocal tract adapts to a particular accent at a young age, making it harder to change later. The same applies to parental authority—there is a short window in childhood to instill respect. If missed, it becomes difficult to restore.

79. We raised our children while living in darkness, surrounded by habits of alcoholism, theft, immorality, lies, and other vices. Now we have returned to God and love Him, but our children, whom we raised in darkness, continue in those ways, even worse than we did. When we try to advise them, they refuse to listen, just as we once did. We do not want them to suffer as we did, so why don't people learn from the experiences of others? They tell us, "Do you want us to be what you were not?" We are saddened, but what should we do? We struggle to forgive ourselves.

This situation is difficult and serves as a lesson for many of us: may God help us live exemplary lives for our children. Sometimes, a parent may abandon sin, but their child surpasses them in wrongdoing. However, we must remember that human beings are naturally drawn to evil, no matter how good their parents were. Truly, no parent exists who does not regret something they did with their children! No parent is perfect. When we look back, we all find many mistakes.

The important thing is to entrust ourselves to God for guidance. Learn to forgive yourself and also teach your child to forgive themselves and you. The world is full of hardships.

I once attended a meeting where a father named Steve Chapman shared that he accidentally reversed his car and hit his child. The world is harsh. Learn to let go of the past and move forward. "One thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me."

Surrender to God and ask for His mercy because He is compassionate: "All

have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." In the past, when people were ignorant, God overlooked it.

Take time to do things differently for your grandchildren or the children in your community, practicing the good you know will help them. Whatever was eaten away by locusts, God will restore to you according to His will because He hears your cry: "I will return your children to you."

However, do not be envious, argumentative, or bitter. I have seen parents in similar situations rejoice when other parents' well-raised children fail, thinking, "Now we are equal." This is wickedness. Even if those other children become "bad," it will not make yours "good"; it will only increase evil in the world.

When people talk about your children, do not be quick to respond with, "They mock my children, but theirs will end up just as bad, or worse." This is the spirit of the enemy, not of God. Do not wish for the downfall of others just because yours have struggled.

For God to hear your cry, be humble and pray for the well-being of others. "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways."

God is merciful, just, and compassionate. Even Samson, who was dedicated to God, wasted his time in sin, and King Manasseh changed his ways at the last moment. However, do not rely on another person's fortune—do not sleep with the door open. Today is the time to believe in God if given the chance. Also, if you have known God from a young age, you will save many from going to destruction.

80. Would you allow your son and his girlfriend, who are not married, to sleep in your house?

No. That would be disrespecting God and the principles that my wife and I have established as our foundation. I will deal with my children, but not to the extent of dishonoring God. Instead, I might find them a place to stay, such as a guest house.

81. Is there a time when parents do not love their children?

Yes, just as in marriage, certain behaviors and circumstances can make our love wane. Sometimes, children commit serious offenses. A mother once told me, "I no longer love my child." Her child, who was ten years old, had been caught in serious misbehavior at school.

However, love is a principle, not just an emotion that comes and goes. Find ways to rebuild the relationship. Advise them and work through issues depending on the severity of the problem. Many times, bad behaviors disappear as they

grow. Have patience; in the future, you will thank God for your endurance.

82. We have a 2-year-old son and daughters aged 4, 6, and 8. He beats them and causes trouble until they cry. What should we do?

Talk to him so that he understands. Since a child at that age knows what pain and hitting feel like, tell his sisters that if he hits them, they should hit him back—on his legs or thighs. This is called loving discipline.

83. What problems arise when parents become estranged from their adult children?

Many thought the issue was in-laws, but that is not the case—it is about parent-child relationships! Some children feel that their parents do not want them to be independent. They say, "My mother did not want me to be free; she did not realize that I no longer needed her in that way. She wanted to control my life."Others feel that their parents still treat them like children and expect the same level of dependence. Some say their parents do not appreciate their efforts in the community. A 54-year-old person shared that when they visit their mother, she does not allow them to peel potatoes or cook, saying, "You don't do things the way I want." She criticizes everything, even when visiting their home.

Another person said, "I was the lastborn of five children and the only girl. When I visit my parents, my mother says, 'I would have been better off raising four boys than one daughter.' I pray for strength to forgive her."

Some parents compare themselves with their children in looks or possessions, saying, "Your hair isn't like mine." Competing with one's child as if they were a rival is unwise.

84. What should you do when an adult child or parent speaks hurtful, insulting, or argumentative words?

This is unfortunate, but some people are simply like this. They lack inner peace and enjoy making others unhappy. Many of them like to control people, making everything about themselves.Have you encountered many such people, or are you one of them?

I attended a "Women of Faith" conference where counselors discussed this issue. One suggested avoiding such people, but how can you avoid someone who visits, calls, or writes frequently?

Toxic people exist everywhere, even in places of worship. Try to do good and forgive, because if you do not, you will suffer. They often do not even realize their behavior.

Holding onto resentment is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. You must forgive and move on. Abraham faced this issue with

his nephew, whom he raised like a son after his brother died. Their herdsmen argued constantly. Abraham said, “Let there be no strife between you and me... If you go left, I will go right; if you go right, I will go left.”

Sometimes, ignoring them is best. I used to respond to such people, but it never helped. Instead, it fueled their fire. If they persist in coming to your home, calmly set boundaries like Abraham did.

Dr. James Dobson discusses “Tough Love” principles—look them up. Some parents fail to set boundaries, and it backfires. A mother was stabbed by her 19-year-old son but still made excuses for him and continued living with him.

If someone repeatedly crosses the line, tell them, “You cannot use this phone,” or “You are not allowed to use my bicycle.” Tough love has its place.

Sometimes, the toxic person is the parent! If so, pray for God to help you control your temper.

85. I envy my neighbor’s child who is obedient and follows instructions.

It is true that we all wish for such a child. However, overly obedient children can become too dependent on their parents and may struggle to think for themselves.

Children who are strong-willed tend to be more independent and ready to leave home when the time comes. A child who always seeks to please others may suppress their anger, leading to future issues like ulcers, headaches, or high blood pressure.

Even the parable of the prodigal son shows that the son who remained at home harbored resentment.

Each child has their challenges; parenting is never easy.

86. Is repeating a grade beneficial for a child?

Sometimes, it is good for a child to repeat a grade, not just for academic reasons but also for intellectual and social maturity. If a child has been sick for a long time, repeating a grade can be helpful. However, for a child who struggles significantly with learning, repeating may not be the best solution. Some parents believe that enrolling their child in extra tuition classes during school breaks can help them catch up with their peers, but this may or may not be effective. A child benefits more from personalized support at home because one-on-one attention can make a big difference. It is good for a child to be taught how to read at home since classrooms have many children, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention. Parents, work closely with your children.

87. Do children with learning difficulties have the same needs as others?

Yes! All children need love and appreciation. Separating them into different classes and labeling them negatively has caused sadness and deep emotional scars. A teacher should strive to be loving and supportive of these children. Meanwhile, parents should take responsibility for supporting their child's learning at home, seek knowledge from experts, and utilize online resources, as there is now plenty of information available about special needs children. Many children who were once thought to have no future have successfully completed high school and even gone to college. It is not just those who excel academically who make a living—those who progress slowly can also be a blessing to many. Look for more information on websites and from experts about special needs children and how to support them.

88. My child, who is 7 years old, wants to assert authority and refuses to follow instructions.

This issue exists in all human beings. From birth, children desire control and can be manipulative. Adults have written many books about this behavior, such as Emotional Blackmail, which describes attitudes like:

"Do what I want, or shut up and obey."

"Do what I want, and I will be nice to your sweet mother."

"Don't upset me—can't you see I'm sick?"

"Do what I want, or I won't pay the bills."

The book Have a New Kid by Friday by Dr. Kevin Leman explains how to teach children that there are consequences to bad behavior and being controlling. For example, if a child comes home and says, "Mom, it's already 1 PM, and I haven't eaten yet," the mother can respond, "That's true, but when I asked you to sweep, you refused, and now even I don't feel like cooking today."

A one-year-old starts refusing to sleep when placed in bed, rejecting food given to them, demanding a different meal, refusing to wear clothes bought for them, avoiding chores, or even fighting over the car window seat. These controlling behaviors, if not managed early, continue into adulthood and can lead to a lack of self-discipline.

A child is under authority when young, but if they grow up without self-control, they may end up in trouble. For example, King Solomon lacked restraint—he married as he pleased, ate whatever he wanted, and traveled wherever he wished. Historical figures like Hitler and Stalin also misused authority; Stalin reportedly killed 25 million people and even ordered the execution of his former teachers.

Should a child be allowed to do whatever they want? Who holds authority in the home? When parents lose their authority to discipline, greater harm can

come to the child. A parent should never allow a child to insult them, even when they are young, as this is the child's way of taking control. If a child says something offensive and the parent gets upset, the child has won the game of control.

Too much praise and authority given too early can lead to arrogance and dictatorship—not just in national leadership but also in professions like medicine, music, religious leadership, law, and the military. Many who have been praised excessively become self-centered and think only of themselves. However, those who humble themselves after falling can become great servants to others. "The one who is least among you is the greatest in the Kingdom of God."

Chuck Colson, a U.S. government official involved in the Watergate scandal, misused power and went to prison. But in prison, he learned to live a life of service, helping other inmates.

A child given authority too early is at risk of rebellion and disrespect for authority—whether it be parents, teachers, police, or even God. Parents should not hand over control to a child at a young age but should gradually allow them independence as they grow.

89. What should parents do when they are exhausted from parenting?

Dr. Joseph Procaccini wrote a book called Parent Burnout. The parents who experience burnout the most are those who deeply care about their children and do everything to support them. Just like fire requires fuel to burn, exhaustion comes from overexertion. Such parents sacrifice everything for their children, neglecting friends, personal time, and even their relationship as husband and wife.

Some parents refuse to leave their children with anyone, not even someone as trustworthy as Mother Teresa! They never take a break and struggle to trust even their own parents, who have more experience in raising children. They isolate themselves, creating a lonely life.

In some cases, grandparents live far away or are uninterested in helping raise their grandchildren, as they are busy with work, exercise, travel, and social activities. Many grandparents today are not as involved in childcare as before.

Sometimes, mothers get so immersed in parenting that they neglect their husbands. In response, the husband may begin to resent the children, feeling neglected himself. Parenting is important, but it should not consume a parent's entire identity to the point of exhaustion and burnout.

Human energy is limited. Even Jesus took time away to rest and pray. Parents should manage their energy wisely and avoid unnecessary burdens. Schools,

churches, friends, relatives, and communities may have many demands, but parents must prioritize their own well-being. When parents are exhausted, their children suffer, and prolonged exhaustion can lead to physical ailments such as neck pain, high blood pressure, or depression.

Some parents hoped having children would fulfill their emotional needs, but instead, they end up feeling overwhelmed, angry, and resentful. Parents need to recognize these struggles. A burned-out parent might emotionally withdraw or feel like saying, "I just can't deal with the kids right now." A mother in this situation may feel guilty but not know how to seek help. She often feels isolated and lacks someone to advise her, which can lead to broken family relationships and troubled children.

Not all parents reach this extreme, but some do. Early signs of burnout should be addressed. Parenting should not be filled with constant yelling, threats, criticism, or exhaustion. Parents should avoid doing too much at once—studying, getting married, having children, working, building a home—all at the same time. It is often better to wait at least two years after marriage before having children to allow for adjustments.

The human body is not designed for excessive stress. Physical exhaustion also affects emotions and spiritual well-being. Without balance, a person can end up miserable or even mentally unstable. The key is to pace yourself. Parenting is a marathon, not a sprint—run steadily, as it takes 20 to 30 years to complete. Live a balanced life, seek God's grace, and remember that humans are not self-sufficient.

90. Many parents struggle with guilt over how they raise their children. What should they do?

It is true that every parent experiences guilt regarding their parenting decisions. Even with a young child, a parent might feel guilty about leaving them with a nanny instead of taking care of them personally.

Guilt arises when we believe we are doing something wrong. If we need to seek forgiveness, we should do so and believe that we have been forgiven. However, if something is beyond our control, there is no need for unnecessary guilt. It is important to recognize these feelings rather than suppress them until they explode.

Do not let guilt dictate your parenting. Some parents spoil their children out of guilt for being away at work, failing to discipline them, or giving excessive gifts. Instead of allowing guilt to control you, strive to live with joy, faith, and hope. No parent is perfect, and that is okay. Find ways to improve where possible, seek forgiveness when needed, and move forward.

91. What Should I Do About Stepchildren?

Raising stepchildren comes with many challenges, especially when they are older. When you married this person, you were aware of the situation and accepted that you would live with their children in love. Many children hold on to the hope that their biological parents will reunite, so when one remarries, the children may resent the new spouse.

Before getting married, it is important to have open conversations with the children and understand their expectations. Some parents have very close relationships with their children, even sharing a bedroom. It is important to talk to the child about the changes that will occur. For example:

“We have always been close, but now I am getting married. If my marriage is to be as God intends, I must be one with my husband. I love my husband, but my love for you will not change.”

“Sometimes, you may feel like you are being left out because I am married, but please do not think that way. I love you, and you are important in my life. If you ever feel like ‘they don’t need me, and I don’t need them,’ please tell me so we can talk about it. Many children feel this way, and it does not help the family build love and happiness. You must tell me anything that is on your heart so we can address it together.”

Sometimes, children do not want to share rooms or belongings with their step-siblings. It is important to have conversations and come to an agreement to avoid conflict. Strive to be kind and loving to both sides and remain fair. Do not neglect your biological child in an attempt to win the affection of your stepchildren, as this can also create problems.

Many children say things like, “Don’t tell me what to do; you’re not my parent.” In such cases, discuss discipline and household responsibilities with their biological parent so that you can work as a team. A united front is crucial.

Sometimes, older children of the opposite sex may feel uncomfortable living together or sharing bathrooms. It may be necessary to ensure privacy by locking doors or making other arrangements based on the children’s personalities and maturity levels.

Some children struggle with guilt if they grow fond of their stepparent, feeling that they are betraying their biological parent. Additionally, biological parents who are not part of the new marriage may cause conflict in an attempt to disrupt it.

Children may also compare their biological parents with their stepparents, saying things like, “My mom’s cooking is better than yours” or “My dad has a better job than you; he doesn’t carry sacks for a living.” Do not respond with

retaliatory words. Children are often angry because they feel their parent's place has been taken. Talk to them and acknowledge their feelings:

"I know it is difficult to have a stepparent. You would prefer to have your own mom or dad instead of a stranger like me, but I am trying my best so we can live happily together as a team."

Then add, "It also hurts me when you say negative things about me, but I truly want us to be friends and support each other."

If conflicts escalate, it is wise to walk away to a quiet place rather than engage in shouting and arguments. Reading Psalm 37 can provide comfort.

Although being a stepparent is not easy, open communication and family meetings to resolve issues can help. Ask the children:

"Do we want to continue living together and supporting one another in life, such as in education and other matters, or do we need to find other ways to manage this situation?"

If everyone is constantly attacking each other, progress will be difficult. I once saw a stepmother who kept provoking arguments. Even when the stepchild said, "Enough, let's stop and go to our rooms," she followed him, opened his door, and continued arguing.

If you and your spouse have decided to live together, be a team of love toward each other and the children. Be ready to love and care for all the children without favoritism.

Sometimes, children, relatives, or outsiders may be jealous and try to separate you. You need to talk to them, understand their intentions, and find solutions to maintain your relationship. Should the children go to boarding school? Should they live with their biological mother or another close relative?

Remember, even if you separate and remarry someone else, these issues will resurface. Children spend only a short time with their parents, but a husband and wife are together until death separates them.

Despite the challenges of step-parenting, many children appreciate their stepmothers or stepfathers. Some even value them more than their biological parents. One woman from Mombasa told me, "My biological mother was worse than my stepmother! She kept running off with different men and never cared for us."

God still has good step-parents who genuinely love the children in their care. I know that being a stepmother is often harder than being a stepfather, perhaps because mothers are the ones providing food and daily care. If you are struggling, ask God for daily strength.

92. When Children Talk About Their Siblings in a Playful Yet Negative Way, Is It Normal?

It is common for teenagers (aged 12 and above) to make fun of their siblings to bond with their friends. It may be an attempt to fit in with their peers or stem from sibling rivalry. However, this is not a good habit because each person should be their sibling's protector.

Teach your children that they are a team and should not expect outsiders to love them more if they show disunity.

Encourage them to avoid speaking negatively about family members at school, in places of worship, or within the community. If you catch a child saying something bad about their sibling, ask them to say two positive things about that person instead.

Never speak negatively about your spouse or children to others. Try to do things together as a family. Teach children to express gratitude and praise their siblings when they do something good. When someone makes a mistake, help them improve instead of blaming them.

Being a good team in the family helps children become good team members in their faith community and society.

As parents, we should fill our children's "cups" with love by listening to them and building a strong family team. Love them unconditionally—without strings attached. This will help them become responsible community members.

93. How Can I Teach Children to Respect Authority?

"And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to Him, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?"

Parents have a responsibility to teach their children to love God and respect His authority. Children learn to love and obey God by watching their parents.

Children can either fear authority or respect and love it. Teach them about worldly authorities, such as the police, judges, and teachers. Explain that authorities exist to serve and protect them. Ask your child, "How would life be without police or the military?" and discuss the importance of order.If not careful, parents can make children fear authority rather than respect it, or they may rebel and reject God's grace. Avoid using excessive force or dictatorship, such as saying, "I don't care what you think—just do as I say." Constantly scolding, punishing, or restricting a child without allowing them any choices can create resentment.

Some parents enforce strict rules they do not follow themselves, such as

saying, “Don’t watch TV for more than an hour” but then watching football for three hours.

Parents should maintain authority at home but use a democratic approach, allowing children to understand and participate in rule-making. For example, ask them why crossing the road recklessly is dangerous, then write down their answers so they remember.

For younger children, rules can be set without too much explanation. However, parents should also spend quality time playing and engaging with their children instead of always trying to escape and do their own things.

Sometimes, show mercy—not every mistake requires harsh punishment. If a child spills water by accident, for example, do not always issue a severe consequence. Over-punishing can make children fearful and dishonest, hiding things from you.

Guide your children to respect your authority with love, not fear.

94. I went to visit a friend with my children.

They started imitating the children in that house by making noise and mocking others. What should I do when their mother does not reprimand them?

When I visit other families, I try to ensure that my children behave properly—”Don’t touch this or that,” “Watch your feet, don’t step on that”—but sometimes, the host parent says, “It’s okay, let them touch or step on it!” I think it would be easier if the host set clear boundaries, so I wouldn’t have to second-guess myself when visiting.

When I remind my children about rules or correct the host’s children, I sometimes seem like the “strict parent.” I want my children to understand that our host does not like chaos either but does not want to spoil our visit. Many parents dislike it when others correct their children, as they see it as criticism of their parenting.

If, as a community, we supported each other when someone helps with our children, we would make great strides in raising them. Parents should understand that most of us have good intentions regarding children’s behavior. When a loving adult corrects our children, they can learn from them, and we can work together as a team.

For example, instead of saying, “Get down from my tree immediately, or you’ll regret it,” one could say, “That tree branch looks weak and dangerous for all of you to climb. Maybe one at a time would be safer.”

Children learn to love and respect other caregivers who are not their parents when they see kindness in them. They understand that the adult is not just being strict but genuinely cares about their well-being.For example, if you

see a child making noise in church, instead of waiting for their parent to reprimand them after the service, you could gently say with a smile, “I can’t hear the sermon because of the loud voices.” Or if a child is speaking badly about another, you might say, “Those words will hurt your friend; the loving thing to do is apologize.”

If you see my children damaging property, don’t wait until it’s already broken to tell me—warn them by saying, “This isn’t a good thing to do; it could get you into big trouble.”

I want my children to love and respect God and people, and I cannot always be everywhere. Sometimes, they may even listen to others better than they listen to me, so I ask you to correct them in love to help them. I do the same for other people’s children.

95. How can I help my child discover their talents?

Every child has a unique talent, and if nurtured properly, it can grow and be used to serve God and help others. Tell your child that their talent is not given to boast about but to glorify God.

Encourage them by giving them confidence, freedom, and self-assurance to express their talents. You know your child better than anyone—what do they enjoy? What are their natural abilities?

Avoid the mistake of pushing your own unfulfilled talents onto your child, especially if they do not share the same interests.

Expose your child to various activities that might reveal their talents, such as musical instruments, literature, sports, or academics. For example, buying a telescope might spark an interest in astronomy. Some tools are affordable—like a simple flute, which costs less than $10—yet a child can teach themselves songs and amaze you.

Cultivate their curiosity and enthusiasm for what they love. This can also keep them out of trouble!Set goals, as children thrive when they have targets to reach. Some things may seem impossible, but if God has given a talent, it will flourish.Beethoven, despite being deaf, composed beautiful music and played the piano. Who would have expected that? God gives gifts and does not want us to waste them or be lazy.

Fame does not mean being famous or having a title—it means using the gifts God has given you.

Thomas Edison once said that intelligence is “2% brains and 98% hard work.” Teach your child to set goals and work towards them, whether it’s woodworking, sewing, or playing an instrument for at least 20 minutes daily. Tell your child stories of great people who used their talents, such as Mzee

Morris with his ten drums, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrick Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, and others.Encourage them to reach for the stars—one star at a time. Some goals may be out of reach, but they should never give up. Celebrate their successes and encourage them to keep striving for those within reach.There are also talent-assessment questionnaires that can help identify their strengths. I sent some to my children, and it gave me valuable insights.

96. How can I motivate my children?

Encouraging children is extremely important.Sometimes, we scold children for playing with a kite or spinning top, yet people like Benjamin Franklin made electrical discoveries from such childhood play. Many scientific experiments and inventions began with childhood curiosity, supported by encouraging parents.Because of poverty, we might say, "Don't use my sewing machine or saw!" This is a mistake we often make.How do you rate yourself on the scale of encouraging your child? Ask them!Criticism, perfectionism, or negative comments can make children lose confidence and feel inadequate. Your encouragement builds their self-esteem and belief that they can achieve things.

Reassure your child that they have multiple talents, and guide them in utilizing them.

There was a man named Barnabas, whose name means "Son of Encouragement." This is a great trait we should all pray to have.

Practice this with children and even others by uplifting them.

For those with offices or businesses, involve your children in tasks—even at age eight, you'd be surprised at what they can learn. Nowadays, children who are taught computer skills can help with many things and build confidence to assist others.

If they fail, encourage them with, "Try again." Always uplift them—never say, "I knew you would fail."Children are naturally curious and ask "why" questions. Create a safe environment where they can explore without fear of getting dirty or being scolded.Allow them to experiment and create; they will value their discoveries more than things bought for them. Let them explore and learn through experience.

97. How can I teach my children to distinguish right from wrong?

When a child is young, it's easy to say, "This is bad, don't do it" and "This is good." However, as they grow, it becomes more complicated.

When children are small, they see right and wrong in black and white. But as they grow, they start understanding nuances—whether an act was intentional

or accidental.

Teach them from a young age, at all times—when they wake up, walk, and go to sleep—the Word of God.

Children often want to do good but find themselves making mistakes. Has this ever happened to you too?

The Apostle Paul spoke about this struggle in Romans 7.Explain how sin entered the world and how we are saved by grace through Christ. Teach them to ask God for strength to overcome temptation.As children grow, they need to understand principles and motives. Simply following rules without understanding them will not help in adulthood.

Don't just impose rules—help them think critically about right and wrong. They might not always show it, but they will uphold your values when among others.You don't want them to be hypocrites or Pharisees but to internalize moral values.

98. Should children attend worship services?

King David said, "Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker."

Worship should be a joyful experience.When you are in a place of worship, observe your children. Do they love and engage in worship, or are they distracted?Encourage them to enjoy worship, not through scolding or punishment but by making it meaningful.Prepare your children mentally before attending worship, arrive early, and discuss what they learned afterward.

99. What chores should I assign my six-year-old?

Children need to learn the value of work. A child who does not appreciate work becomes a burden to themselves and others101. How can I make my child understand that they need God and must know Him?

100. What does it mean to dedicate a house or a child?

Many people, when a child is born, invite those who love God to dedicate the child, setting them apart to serve God and care for others. This is a very important practice, and it is good to give an offering as well. Many people spend a lot of money celebrating birthdays but forget to give offerings to the poor, widows, or orphans. It is wise that during this ceremony of dedicating our child to God, we also consider those in need. Other believers should also make commitments to support children in the community. It takes a village to raise a child to be upright.

Some people also dedicate their homes. God has a special purpose for every house. A family can do many good things for both people and God, but the

enemy pushes them toward many evils. That is why it is important to have special prayers to dedicate a house so that the family can work together in joy and love.

One family decided to dedicate their home to serving the Lord. They invited their pastor and guests for a small gathering. They wrote on the wall:

“This house of Masaka Momadi has been dedicated on 20/11/2001 to serve the Lord and care for people.”

Why not start planning such a gathering today? You can write on your wall words that will be a testimony to your visitors and to yourself. When you forget your life’s goals, you will be reminded whenever you look at them, shining a light even on that glorious morning.

Or you can write:”Choose today whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”Take time to bless your children every day. Whenever you have the opportunity, place your hands on their heads and speak blessings over them.

101. How can I help my child understand that they need God and must know Him?

Knowing the rules of football won’t make someone a great player, but understanding them and applying them personally does. Similarly, knowing about God is important, but experiencing a relationship with Him requires practice. Share your testimony with your children and ask them questions at every stage of family worship. Write down your prayers, and when they are answered, give thanks together. Let your child see that you pray and strive to live a life dependent on God. Give children the opportunity to take turns leading family worship.

Personal responsibility is crucial. Every child, even a four-year-old, should be taught to pray on their own and build their faith. If you’re not around, who will help them? A child will not reach heaven just because you love God. God has no grandchildren—only children. Faith must come from them personally; it cannot be secondhand from you. Teach them to rely on, trust, and believe in God. Let them see the depth of God’s love that surpasses all understanding. Even you or they cannot love as profoundly as our heavenly Father does.

Teach them that we need God, even if we don’t realize it until we are helpless and all options are closed—just like Naaman, who had leprosy! A child should not think they can manage without God. Some concepts may be difficult for them to understand, but God’s love is one they grasp even better than adults. That’s why 75% of children accept Christ into their hearts before the age of ten.

Show your children that God is real in your life. From the moment they are

born, do not focus on unrealistic stories like Superman or mythical creatures. Teach them that salvation is a free gift. For example, give them a 100-shilling note as a gift and ask, “Do you have to return or pay for this?” The answer is no. A child’s greatest need is salvation, and God says, “Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other.”

Every child is born a pagan or unbeliever until they are taught faith, accept it, and make it their own.

102.How do we teach our children to pray?

We are instructed to pray without ceasing. Often, our children pray as a routine—before meals or bedtime—without much thought. A study identified the seven wonders of those who love God, including “praying for food more than for their entire lives” and “watching TV more than reading God’s Word.”Would we maintain friendships if we only spoke to our friends when we were in trouble? To build relationships, we must share, discuss, and talk about daily life. Teach your child to speak to God as a friend—telling Him about their day, saying things like: “This morning, I played hide-and-seek” or “Mom spanked me unfairly, and I was shocked. Father in heaven, what did You think about that?” or “I think my friend scored a great goal today!”Teach your children to pray for others. When they see the results of prayer, their faith will grow, and they will enjoy praying more. Prayer is simply talking to God as a friend—it brings comfort, draws us closer to Him, and fills us with joy.As a parent, I have realized that I love talking a lot—to friends and children—but I don’t take the same time to pray. When it comes to talking to God, my words run dry! Have you experienced this too? Let us ask God for mercy because spiritual matters require effort. We must wake up and go to our knees—morning, noon, and night, and even more. Let’s learn to “chatter with God” just as we do with our friends.

103.How can we motivate our children to see heaven as the most important destination?

The Scriptures describe heaven, paradise, or the afterlife as a beautiful place—beyond what humans can describe: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Heaven is described as a place with no pain, no sorrow, and no death. Its buildings are made of precious stones, its streets of gold, with delightful food and refreshing rivers. The heart will find peace and satisfaction, with friendships, playing with animals like lions, and peace beyond understanding.

It is a must-reach place! A wonderful place. Heaven is not just a state of being—it is a real, joyful place for children. There will be games and much more. Do not make your child think heaven is just living in big mansions without loved

ones, feeling lonely, or floating in the clouds playing harps 24/7.Take heart in parenting—do not fear or worry, for the battle is the Lord's.Heaven will fully satisfy every child and every person. Each one will have the freedom they love—without sin.

Keep talking to your children about heaven. It is a blessed hope. You will never regret being there. Everyone will have something to do and enjoy. Show them that heaven is much better than our world, which has become like a worn-out rag. Set your dreams and those of your children on heaven and prepare for the day you will meet at God's throne. Imagine the joy of meeting at the river of life or the tree of life.

If we focus on heaven, we will gain heaven. But if we focus on nothing, we will get nothing. Is there really anything on this earth worth comparing? Let our obedience and that of our children begin here because in heaven, sin will never rise again (Nahum 1:9).

After all, no one wants to rest in heaven only for someone to come and punch them or steal their shoes!

104 .Which school should I take my 6-year-old to?

In the past, we sent our children to public schools without much thought. But society's morals continue to deteriorate. What is most important to you in life?For me, if a child can stay home and be taught by their mother until fourth grade, it would be a great blessing. Books can be purchased, and one-on-one learning is highly effective. However, since many mothers now work, or are not aware they can teach at home, selecting the right school is crucial.

For me, faith-based education is a priority. If a family can afford it, they should choose a school that nurtures faith in God. I do not want my child to attend just any school. Competitive schools are good to ensure children are not lazy. Children should care about their academic results.

Parents should thoroughly research good schools—through the ministry of education, other parents, and so on—to find institutions that uphold both good morals and academics.I have seen classes with 100 students. I also heard of a school in Mvomero years ago that had 700 students with only one teacher!Can parents buy books and start teaching their children reading and math from first and second grade? Many parents know how to read. A book to teach reading this year costs about two or three dollars. Many people spend more on phone credit—aren't books more important?

No child should reach second grade without knowing how to read or do simple math. A bright child can learn to read in just three months!

105. My children fight too much—what should I do?

Sibling rivalry has existed since Cain and Abel—even before television! The main cause is competition and jealousy, which stem from selfishness (me, myself, and I).Avoid comparisons and favoritism—do not compare their personalities, appearances, academic abilities, or talents. Many parents struggle with this. Keep teaching them principles for living together. As they grow, their rivalry will lessen, and their love will grow. Studies show that children close in age often experience more jealousy.

Romans 7 explains why we do wrong: “What I want to do, I do not do. But what I hate, I do! Oh, wretched man that I am! Who will save me from this body of death?”Remind your child that the devil loves conflict. Teach them to resist it. It requires daily lessons and prayer for God’s grace.

I have seen that only prayer is truly powerful. Preacher Charles Spurgeon, who started preaching at 16 and led a congregation of over 2,000 by 20, said, “I would rather teach one person to pray than ten to preach.Prayer is a mighty tool in parenting—pray for your children.

106. Is It Good for a Child to Be Praised for Their Physical Beauty?

In today’s world, where many children struggle with self-esteem and self-worth, receiving compliments about their beauty can help them develop self-acceptance. Physical attractiveness has become a form of power, especially in television and other forms of entertainment. However, this can be dangerous, particularly for a 14-year-old girl who is admired for her beauty and figure. She may attract excessive attention from boys, leading her into temptations such as prostitution, ultimately damaging her life.Therefore, parents should teach their children that, despite being admired, their identity and purpose in life matter more. They should focus on cultivating a pure heart and prioritizing education because these qualities will remain valuable over time. A study on beautiful men and women found that by age 25, many had unhappy marriages. This was likely due to attracting partners who valued their looks rather than their true character. Meanwhile, people with average appearances often find spouses who love them for who they are, not for their looks or talents.

Moreover, when beauty fades with age, those who overly prioritize their looks may struggle with feelings of loss and insignificance. This can be distressing. Therefore, the most valuable beauty is the beauty of fearing God. Actress Marilyn Monroe is an example of someone who suffered due to the burden of physical attractiveness. Prioritizing beauty over all else often leads to destruction. Judging a person based on their physical appearance or talent is a mistake. This is evident in the entertainment industry, where musicians attract fans but struggle in their personal lives.

107.. What Do You Think About Barbie Dolls?

I personally do not like my child to play with such dolls. In some way, they

promote physical beauty, promiscuity, and materialism. A child begins to compare themselves to these dolls. When playing, a child needs dolls that resemble children, not adults. These are young children who should not be exposed to adult concerns prematurely, as this can accelerate their awareness of maturity in unintended ways.Carefully choose the dolls your child plays with. Some feature frightening monstrous figures like Ninjas, with snake-like eyes, which can shape a child's interests in certain ways. Young children should play with simple, wholesome toys that do not influence their minds negatively in terms of morality, social values, or spirituality. They should not seek to imitate the clothing, colors, music, or speech of these dolls.A girl with an average appearance who compares herself to such dolls may feel left behind, which is untrue. Her value is not in looking like those dolls. God values her as she is. God created people differently for His glory.

108.Do Middle Children Feel Overlooked in Families?

Yes, it is true. The firstborn, lastborn, firstborn girl, or lastborn boy often feel they have a special place in the family compared to, for example, the third or fourth child in a family of five. They are born into a situation where they find older siblings ahead of them, and later, younger siblings following behind. This can make them feel like they are stuck in the middle.Parents should take time to show all their children that they are valued, especially middle children. One way to do this is by spending one-on-one time with them, such as taking them on errands, even just to the market. This helps them feel like individuals rather than just a number in the family. Allowing them to make decisions, such as choosing a place to visit first, also affirms their worth.Dr. Kevin Leman has written extensively about birth order and its effects, although these are general insights rather than unchangeable rules.

109. How Can I Let My Grown Children Live Independently?

This is a very difficult thing for parents. We often feel they are not ready, that they will struggle in the world, and that others will not treat them as kindly as we do. We worry that they are in some danger.The best thing you can do for your child is to teach them how to live without you! Preparing them for independence means teaching them responsibility. We have loved them and done our job; now, that job is complete! Now we stand at the edge, uncertain whether to cry, rejoice, or deal with loneliness. Should we let go of the crown (tiara) we've been holding?Sometimes, we struggle to let go because our identity has become too tied to our children, and we fear losing influence over them. Or, we may have neglected our relationships with our spouses, and now we have nothing to talk about (empty nest syndrome).

There is a time for everything—a time to throw a stone and a time to gather it. The time has come to let the tiara go. You have done your part. Release it with grace so that your relationship can evolve into a new kind of friendship,

one filled with different blessings. If you don't let go, the tiara will eventually slip away on its own. But it is better to release it gracefully when the time comes so that it happens in a good way.Part ways with your children in love and peace, not in conflict and arguments.

110.Should I Pay My Children for Doing Household Chores?

Absolutely not! They should make their own beds because they sleep in them. They should wash the dishes because they eat from them. Do not make it a habit to pay children for regular chores. However, you can give them small incentives for extra tasks beyond their daily responsibilities, such as washing their father's bicycle or gardening beyond the usual schedule.Teach them that money is for needs, not just desires. Children, like adults, love to buy things. However, money is limited, even for parents. If you can afford to give them a small allowance once a month, that's fine, but encourage them to start small businesses. They could sell boiled eggs, newspapers, or bottled water. Help them brainstorm and provide a little startup capital so they can work a few hours a week.Most importantly, parents should focus on helping their children pursue education, acquire land, build businesses, or develop skills for independence. That is their true inheritance. However, they should not expect that you will simply give them wealth. Instead, if you have extra, help those in need—orphans, widows, the poor, and support the work of God. Even when writing your will, ensure you allocate a portion for God's work. Many nations seek God's blessings, and in Africa, we know that God is our shield and greatest blessing.

111. How Can I Recognize If My Child Is Discouraged or Depressed?

Signs of a discouraged or depressed child include:Restlessness, unable to stay in one place for long Withdrawing from others and preferring to be aloneSluggishness and deviation from normal routines

Defiance and impatience ,Constantly comparing themselves to their peers and feeling inadequate

Developing aggressive tendencies and breaking rules ,First, examine your own behavior as a parent. Do you yell and criticize their efforts? Do you speak to your spouse with respect in front of the child?Sometimes, professional help is necessary. A doctor may need to check for medical issues such as thyroid problems. Also, ensure your child has a structured schedule at home and avoids excessive consumption of sugar, processed foods, or salty snacks.

Engage your child in meaningful activities, such as volunteering in the community or helping the sick. A healthy diet and a supportive environment are also crucial. Seek advice from experts when needed.

109.. How Can I Help My Child With Disabilities Develop Skills?

In many African countries, children with disabilities are often left to learn and grow on their own. What they need most is love. Research their condition and learn how to support them. Whether they are blind, deaf, mute, or have learning difficulties, they may struggle in one area but have talents in another. God loves them even more than we do.Parents should work with them systematically, using a structured routine. Some excel in music, gardening, or basket weaving. Do not allow them to be mocked or called names.

Expose them to nature, trees, and flowers. Those with hearing abilities should be read to daily, even if you have only one book, such as the Bible. Be patient and loving.

Teach them values such as compassion, responsibility, and integrity. More importantly, pray and sing with them from a young age so they understand that God is their friend.Nick Vujicic's story is a powerful reminder that no disability can limit a person's potential when they have love, faith, and support. Parents of children with disabilities should focus on their child's abilities rather than limitations. Encouraging independence, exposing them to opportunities, and teaching them to trust in God can make a significant difference in their lives.Every child, regardless of their physical or mental condition, is valuable and has a purpose. By fostering resilience, patience, and self-confidence, parents can help their children grow into fulfilled individuals who contribute positively to society.At the heart of it all, the most important thing parents can give their children—whether they are beautiful, average-looking, firstborn, middle children, or have disabilities—is unconditional love, guidance, and faith in God. These values will shape them far more than material success or physical appearance ever could.

Parenting Challenges and Responsibilities

111. Being Sweet but Firm with Your Child

I dislike repeating things over and over and appearing as if I am constantly following up on my child. I want to be sweet (Moema) to my child.However, a child needs to be monitored and corrected when they do something wrong. You must internalize this. If you stop following up, their progress will be minimal. Strive to control your tone so that you don't sound like you're shouting. Be patient, and let your child see that you are on their side and have their best interests at heart.If you choose to let things slide, especially when you see that things are getting out of hand, you will eventually lose control and get consumed by uncontrollable anger. I have seen this happen, especially with fathers. Mothers tend to be more strict with their children, giving them little room to breathe, which sometimes makes the child perceive the father as the more lenient parent. However, later, when the father—who had distanced himself—realizes that things have gone terribly wrong and that he had no clue about it, he loses control, lashes out, and imposes severe punishments. If he

had been involved all along, he wouldn't have reached the point of doing something he might later regret.

Above all, a child should understand that every action has consequences. For example, if they don't weed the garden today, then you will not take them to town. When the time comes to go to town, simply leave them behind. Try to set consequences related to what they enjoy. For example, tell them, "Finish mopping the floor first, then you can have lunch." I don't like using food as a punishment, but if the child has already had breakfast, they can endure a little longer and mop the floor before eating lunch.My friends who teach children how to play musical instruments have noticed that kids who dislike practice respond better when their parents switch roles with other parents. This way, they can maintain a friendly relationship with their own children. May God grant you wisdom. I am still learning in this area, so let's pray for each other! However, I must emphasize: for your own good and that of your child, your love for them should match the discipline you give. If you hate your child, don't discipline them at all.

112. A Child Who Threatens Suicide

A child once threatened to commit suicide, and I thought it was just words—until they actually did it. Now my conscience is troubled, wondering if there was something I could have done to prevent it.This is truly a difficult issue, and no one can answer it definitively because we do not know what the child is thinking, how much they are hurting, who they interact with, or what exactly has happened in their life.A certain pastor and his wife traveled to the U.S. for studies, leaving their child in Form 3 at a boarding school, with caregivers to look after them. The child threatened to commit suicide if they were not taken along. The father called the child and said, "If you take your life, we will be deeply saddened because we love you so much. But the decision is yours. We are going away for three years, and we are looking for ways to get you a visa to join us. However, nothing is certain yet because even our tickets were funded by donors. Please be patient."

The child continued making threats, but the parents went ahead with their studies. A year later, they returned to Tanzania to preach, and the child was still making threats. They sat him down again and said, "You are now 17. We love you dearly." They explained his worth to them and to God but added, "If you choose to take your life, we cannot stop you. However, we will ask Bishop X to conduct your funeral because we are leaving and cannot return soon. We will mourn deeply, but your life is in your hands."That child did not commit suicide. He waited until his parents completed their three-year studies.

However, be very careful! Some children, when told such things, may still go ahead and harm themselves. Mental health experts advise that any suicide threat should be taken seriously. Ask the child how they plan to do it, why

they feel that way, and seek professional psychological help. This issue is heavy, and you cannot handle it alone.

Above all, pray and ask God for guidance. Even psychologists sometimes miss crucial details, and they, too, face overwhelming cases. Only God can pull you out of such a deep pit. Be a prayerful person who stays vigilant.

113. Constantly Reminding My 11-Year-Old Child

I have to keep reminding my 11-year-old child: “Brush your teeth, apply lotion, remember your choir notebook,” etc. When will I get to rest from constantly talking? He is well-mannered but lazy and sluggish in certain things.The truth is, most children need constant reminders! However, it seems they never forget the things they enjoy. I once asked my kids, “How come you forget to brush your teeth but never forget to eat?”Parenting is a continuous learning process, sometimes involving trial and error. You try different methods until you find what works best for your child. If one approach fails, you try another to ensure they remember.

In the past, by the time a child was 12, they were given significant responsibilities based on God’s teachings. However, as long as your child still lives with you, you have a duty to remind them—even about brushing their teeth.You can write down a schedule and place it in their room. Tell them they represent your family, so if they go out with food stains on their clothes, it embarrasses you. Sometimes, you have to abandon democracy and give firm instructions that certain things must be done. Children are still learning to be adults; they have not yet developed deep roots.When we look at Ezekiel and even Jesus, they stayed at home until they were 30 years old. Many mistakes happen before that age. Experience shows that when a person reaches around 30, they gain better judgment—sometimes earlier for women. That’s why those who marry after 30 tend to be more patient compared to those who marry young.

A child should also learn the consequences of neglecting responsibilities. For example, tell them, “We will not have dinner until your clothes are washed,” or “You won’t receive your monthly allowance until you plant the mango seedlings I brought.”

114. How Many Hours Should a Child Sleep?

A newborn: about 18 hours

A two-year-old: 12–13 hours

A child aged 2–6 years: about 12 hours

A first- to fifth-grade child: 10–11 hours

A 12-year-old and older: 9–10 hours

Children around ten who stay up late should be encouraged to sleep early and should not sleep past 10 a.m. Oversleeping, even in adults, can be problematic. An adult who sleeps more than 9 hours daily may develop certain health issues.It is advisable to sleep at least two hours before midnight. Young children who sleep after 9 p.m. have a higher risk of developing diabetes. Losing even one hour of sleep daily for a week is equivalent to losing a whole night's sleep, increasing accident risks. Sleep debt is exhausting and cannot be repaid!

116. Visiting My Children Studying in America

I sent my children to study in America when they were young, and now they want me to visit, but I don't have the time. I work for the government and also keep livestock, with no one to take care of them in my absence.Visiting your children is crucial. Children who leave for studies at a young age (10–20 years old) often experience loneliness. They lack parental guidance, advice, and caring friendships. Many fail to complete their studies, and if parents knew this, they would prioritize visiting regardless of financial constraints.

Some parents go abroad for long periods for studies or work and neglect their children. They may write letters, call, and send gifts, but none of these can replace their presence. Many children develop resentment toward their parents, and some make poor life choices due to a lack of guidance. Sometimes, there is no better option than to live with your children—through both struggles and joys. If they are yours, live with them.

117. I deeply dislike it when a child speaks harsh words to me, such as "I don't love you, what kind of parent are you?" or "I hate you, Mom."

Truly, these words are heavy for a parent, and no parent can endure them easily. As the elders say, "A parent is a garbage dump," meaning they bear everything. However, it is important to consider where the child is picking up such words and what they truly mean. Try to understand their heart—ask them, "My child, give me your heart." Talk to them to understand the reason behind their anger and why they speak without thinking. If left unaddressed, these words can continue into adulthood, affecting how they talk to teachers, bosses, spouses, or even their own children.A child must be taught how to express themselves, even when they are displeased with something. Likewise, a parent should avoid provoking or upsetting a child without reason. A parent must refrain from reacting with anger or harshness when a child speaks such words. Instead, they should calm down before addressing the child, as responding in anger could harm them with words or even curses. A child is just a child, and just as an elephant never tires of its trunk, so must a parent not grow weary of guiding their child. Pray to God and understand that now is the time to shape the child while they are still young.

As parents, this is the right moment to recognize that anger is a sin and does not help shape a child's character. Anger is like a demon, just as seen when James and John, the Sons of Thunder, asked for the power to call down fire to destroy those who did not welcome them (Luke 9:51-56). Anger is an abomination, a spirit of destruction. We forbid our children from watching inappropriate programs, from worshiping idols, lying, or engaging in immorality, yet we allow anger into our homes. One parent boasted that they did not allow bad TV programs at home and that they closely monitored their children. However, whenever they became angry, the children would flee. When they expressed surprise at their children's bad behavior to a counselor, they were asked, "Do you have anger issues?" They replied, "Once every two months." The counselor then asked, "If you lived near a volcano that erupts every two months, would you stay there?" Or, "If you had a dog that bites people once every two months, would you still keep it?"

Anger, foul language, theft, lies, witchcraft, and other sins are all the same. No one who harbors anger can truly do the will of God. It cost Moses dearly—his anger led him into many troubles. Some people believe in "righteous indignation," but I think only God can handle such an emotion with holiness. We, as humans, cannot be both holy and angry.

The Bible mentions anger 585 times, with 470 of those referring to God's anger, such as against Achan, Uzzah, Joram, Manasseh, and others. Parents, let us pray to God to rid us of anger. I have fallen into this trap many times and continually ask for God's help. Anger is closely linked to vengeance. If you are angry with your child, take time to cool down so that even if you discipline them, it is not out of revenge. Otherwise, your child may inherit your anger, and I have personally seen this passed down from generation to generation.

There is a difference between being firm and being angry. Many preachers have delivered sermons in anger, mistaking it for emphasis or moral correction, but it is just anger. A child who frequently bursts out in anger and speaks recklessly needs help because the spirit of anger has caused great harm and destruction.

These questions have been answered based on the thoughts and opinions of the writer, who believes that fearing God is the foundation of wisdom. The writer believes that raising a child without God's help is impossible. We cannot live without Almighty God, and we must teach our children to worship and honor Him in their lives so that they may receive His blessings. The best children, parents, and teachers are those who take the time to seek God. Everything else will pass away, but He is eternal. He is the one who solves our problems daily. Humans can only help a little, but entrust everything to God, and He will take care of it all, giving you comfort and, ultimately, eternal

life.

118. What are the differences between Western and African parenting styles?

Many aspects depend on the household or family, but in the West, a child is often left alone after misbehaving—neighbors or others do not intervene. Perhaps the difference lies in modern lifestyles versus traditional ones. In the West, the community is not involved. Government laws often protect children so much that sometimes parents feel powerless. However, if a child misbehaves after turning 18, the police can intervene.On the other hand, the Western education system helps children progress at their own pace, even if they have low grades. They can take up to ten years to complete a degree if needed. Western education involves more practical projects and hands-on learning relevant to daily life, whereas our education system has been more focused on rote memorization and theory.In some places, if you discipline a child, they may claim they are being abused. In the West, physical punishment is rare compared to Africa. In Africa, you cannot threaten to take away a child's toys as punishment because they often make their own. Likewise, telling a child to stand in a corner as punishment may not be effective since some homes do not even have defined corners.

African children do not get asked what they want to eat; they eat whatever is available. Sleeping over at a non-relative's house is uncommon. Additionally, praising children and rewarding them is more common in the West.

In Africa, children play together freely without needing formal agreements like "Are you my friend? Can I play with you?" They simply play together without rigid rules. In Africa, when parents go to the store, they take their children with them, but in the West, children are often sent home. Meals are usually eaten at home rather than with neighbors.

Teaching children about anatomy and sexuality is not openly discussed in Africa, except during initiation rites like "jando" and "unyago." In African languages, mentioning private parts is often considered vulgar, whereas in English, such terms are part of the science curriculum.

In Africa, if you live with female relatives, they are expected to help with household chores and return home early. Modern lifestyles have weakened spiritual values but increased physical comfort. However, children worldwide share common traits in playfulness and creativity.

119. Why are children rarely invited to weddings nowadays, even though weddings used to be for everyone?

Children learn through observation. If they do not attend weddings, will they ever have one themselves? Just like attending graduation ceremonies is

important for inspiring students, weddings used to be significant for all.

First, let's discuss the types of weddings. Many weddings today, even those involving religious people, are better off without children because of what happens at these events. Weddings now end at midnight, unlike before when they were held in the morning and wrapped up by early evening. Many modern weddings have lost their sacred nature, turning into competitions, displays of wealth, and sometimes even immoral gatherings.

Many wedding venues are entertainment halls where children are not allowed due to age restrictions. Bringing them exposes them to things beyond their understanding. The sacredness of the wedding remains in the church, but in the reception hall, it is all about festivities, cheering, and even inappropriate music.

Children are often not allowed to run around or enjoy themselves but are instead scolded for moving around. Many have read wedding invitations saying, "We love children, but please don't bring them," leaving them confused about what kind of love that is.Weddings today are like debts—if you don't contribute financially, you are not invited. A set amount must be paid, or you and your child will be excluded. If you fail to contribute, even greetings become strained. Weddings have taken on a different face, even within churches. They lack moderation and have shifted from church ceremonies to extravagant receptions.

Let's either keep children safe at home or return to simpler, daytime weddings. Wedding receptions should glorify God, and the Master of Ceremonies (MC) should be a person of integrity. The event should reflect the sanctity of marriage.

If modern wedding customs are problematic, then they are outdated. Children should not be excluded from weddings. Instead, we should restore the old ways—morning ceremonies with modest celebrations, where children are welcomed and not left behind.

1. In many families, children are often placed last in everything that needs to be done. You may see a parent wearing an expensive and elegant suit, while the children wear second-hand clothes.

2. Nowadays, celebrations have become full-fledged businesses, making it difficult for many children to afford participation in these commercialized events.

3. Modern celebrations are sinful:

There must be music that does not uplift or that excites people.

There must be alcohol.

They must take place at midnight so that people feel no shame.

They must be held in entertainment venues so that all kinds of people can attend.

4. Many parents, being immoral—especially in matters of adultery—see children as a burden and deny them the freedom to do what they want.

5. Today, children are valued highly when they are absent, but when present, they are deemed insignificant. That is why you will find children given strange names like Sikutumaini (I did not expect you), Matatizo (Problems), Shida (Trouble), Masumbuko (Hardships). Names like these strip children of their worth. If you ask a parent why they named their child that way, they might respond, "I had them by accident!"

These views are the thoughts and opinions of the writer, who believes that fearing God is the foundation of wisdom. The writer also believes that raising a child without God's help is impossible. We cannot live without Almighty God, and it is necessary to teach our children to worship and honor Him in their lives so that they may receive His blessings. Good children and good parents or teachers are those who take the time to seek God. Everything else will pass away, but He is eternal. He is the one who solves our problems daily. Human beings can help only to a limited extent, but if you entrust everything to God, He will take care of it all, give you comfort, and ultimately grant you eternal life.

Technology in Our Places of Worship Today Where I live, even six-year-old children bring technological devices such as tablets, smartphones, iPods, and Nintendo consoles to church. They use these gadgets to listen to music even while the service is ongoing or while the preacher is delivering a sermon. The good thing is that it keeps them quiet and reduces disruptions. However, I am unsure whether this is right. Many children are generous in sharing these devices with their peers. You would be surprised at what even a two-year-old can do with these gadgets. I understand that the days of giving children crayons, coloring books, and paper are long gone. These changes have come so rapidly.

As a mother of two, I would like my children to grow up understanding the sanctity of the house of worship through their own eyes rather than just being told about it. Opinions are divided on whether to bring a Bible to church along with a few things for children and instruct them to listen to the preacher or to give them modern gadgets to keep them occupied.

(Responses from various individuals) (a) I think this is a challenge for all of us who have children. If there is a place to offer loving guidance, it is here. Peer pressure and heart conditioning are the real issues. As a parent, you are the one who makes decisions. If things go wrong, no one else will help you, so it is

wise to decide carefully. Technology is just an excuse, but the real issue is the condition of the heart and the lack of desire for spiritual matters—something that affects all of us as human beings.

Our church elder once said, “If only five out of a hundred adults in the house of worship will go to heaven, then only five out of a thousand children will make it.” Even Noah surprised me—did he not have grandchildren? All three of his sons, yet not a single grandchild! Solomon said that a child is full of folly. Children face many temptations—far too many.

Now, iPods have become an addiction. And we are the ones buying them! I’ve noticed that many conservative Westerners avoid these devices. If we saw a drunk person with alcohol in church, we would be shocked and rush to condemn them. But we, both adults and children, are utterly helpless before these gadgets. We carry them everywhere, even losing basic manners. These days, when you talk to someone, their phone rings, and even if it’s not an important call, they won’t even say “excuse me”—they just abandon the conversation.

One day, my six-year-old child told me, “Mom, you love this phone more than anything in the world. Even if the house were burning, you’d still be on it.” That is addiction! Nothing terrible will happen if I don’t answer my phone during worship. Am I pretending to be a lifesaver? Or on duty 24/7 on some gadget? I am fooling myself. It is God and those close to a person who will truly help them. If someone has an emergency, they will call an ambulance to take them to the hospital.

Even adults no longer bring their Bibles to church—just their phones, and they text each other during the service. I believe that children should not use these devices on the Sabbath. Or will this make them hate worship? Even on weekdays, young children, especially those in elementary school, should use them for only about an hour under supervision. We have started using these gadgets as babysitters, yet most of the time, we have no idea what the children are watching.Even if what they watch is not necessarily bad, the enemy uses distractions. They say the enemy of the best is not the worst but the slightly good. The enemy ensures that they stay occupied with something—anything—so that we adults also remain distracted.Even before reading God’s Word in the morning, I find myself online. Is that right? It is addiction! If I, as a mother, am doing this, how will the child, to whom I gave an iPod, ever read the Bible? When a child is on their iPod and I call them for prayer, they get annoyed and are mentally absent. We have struggled with this.

By the way, the 144,000 in Revelation 7:14—doesn’t that seem like a big number? We must pray day and night because our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the forces we already know that constantly attack our

frontal lobe 24/7. If there are children who use these devices for spiritual growth, they must be about 1%.

We should drastically limit the use of these gadgets. I am making an effort in my household because I see no reason for them. Someone else introduced them, and one night, I heard my young elementary-aged child laughing at 2 a.m. It turned out they were on the iPod. Another morning, my 11-year-old woke up feeling sick. His father suggested taking him to the hospital, but it turned out he had stayed up all night on his iPod.

Beloved, if these devices have any benefits, I am waiting to see them. Perhaps I am old-fashioned and ignorant. All I know is that we must cry out to God. If you give a child a task, they resent it, preferring to be on their gadget. Many church members I visit are facing the same issue. What should we do about these gadgets?

Parents may appear devout, but no one is managing these devices wisely. Perhaps we should not have them at all. But if we do, who truly knows what the children are watching? Even Sodom and Gomorrah were advanced and modern, yet they perished. We should not assume that we are different or wiser than the people of Sodom. They were powerful and intelligent beyond us. Their sin was neglecting the poor, living in idleness, and being overly indulgent. They had abundant food and nothing meaningful to do, so they busied themselves with distractions.

Likewise, our children do not have enough responsibilities. We shield them from farm work, cooking, and laundry. So what else will they do except immerse themselves in these gadgets? Let us support each other with ideas and prayers.

(b) Elder Mukangara: It is certain that we all need to be enlightened.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” — Romans 13:12

The technology being introduced into churches today is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 12:4, which states that “knowledge shall increase.” This is happening right before our eyes.

Every three months, there are changes. We will reach a point where new technology emerges every half-hour!

The increase in knowledge is a sign that the end is near. This means—stay alert. Be ready.

For the children of light, this increase in knowledge is for the glory of God.

Habakkuk 2:14 says: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

We should not fear technology. It has brought us books and phones that we use, airplanes that we board, printing presses that produce our Bibles, clothes that we wear, vehicles that take us to church and work, houses we live in, money, ATMs, and much more.

Those who walk in the light are not shaken by technology.

The things that Satan inserts into it—children of light will avoid.

Satan will introduce pornography (sexual immorality through images), but the children of light will not engage in it. He will bring all sorts of deceptions, but the Spirit of God will enable believers to recognize his schemes and traps.

Satan should not be given credit for technology. It does not belong to him. The glory belongs to Almighty God. Satan is merely a deceiver, knowing that his time before being cast into hell is short. He seeks to take our children and their parents to hell with him.

Satan should not be given glory when humans disobey God. Human beings were created by God. Satan did not create even a single fly. He is not a creator—he is a creature. According to Jesus, his role has always been that of a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44).

We should resist and reject the evil that Satan introduces into technology, but we should not reject technology itself. It is for God's glory.

It is parents who buy these gadgets for their children.

If Satan corrupts the minds of these children, the consequences will be severe. The children will learn to worship other gods.

Their parents will pay before the One who will judge all flesh.

Bringing these things into worship services is what we call—

"The snares of Satan."

Children follow what they are given by their parents. If they are denied something, they will stop. If they are given something, they will accept it.

Parents who give their children these things will not escape God's wrath if they do not realize this early and take action.

The day of worship belongs to your God! Obey, and you will live; disobey, and you will die. It is not a day for worldly games and music. If necessary, it should be a day to use all gadgets for learning the Bible so that children may know God and His purpose in bringing them into the world. At the end of the day, parents have the responsibility to ask their children:

"What did you learn today? What scripture have you memorized?"

Even if children seem calm and quiet, there is still a problem if they are not doing what they should in that sacred place.

1. If a child cries for a razor blade, and you give it to them, have you really calmed them? I remember hearing the laws of God from the Father of the Nation, Mwalimu Nyerere, during his lifetime. He said:

“The laws of Almighty God are as follows: If a child plays with fire, they will be burned immediately. If they play on a slippery surface, they will fall right there. If they play with a razor blade, they will be cut right there.”

What has happened today? Parents have found that the way to “calm” a child who insists on trouble as if asking for something good is to give in to their demands.

Is that a positive approach when a child gets burned, cut, or falls and breaks an arm or leg?

2. The prophet Habakkuk tells the entire world:

“But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.” — Habakkuk 2:20

QUESTION:

(a) If the LORD is in His temple, why should only parents be present there while their children are elsewhere, instead of being taught to be silent before the LORD?

(b) If parents are in the temple and children are engaged with “gadgets,” do these gadgets now become the temple of God?

(c) If so, why shouldn’t the parents also be in that “temple”?

(d) If not, then what god dwells in those gadgets?

These are rhetorical questions. Each person should answer them in their own heart.

That they may be generous to others:

There is a trustworthy saying from the mouth of Jesus in Matthew 5:46-47:

“For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

Generosity is demonstrated by those who seek God’s righteousness and by those who love their enemies.

Ask drug users, and they will tell you how they share “rolls” of marijuana.

Ask smokers, and they will tell you how they share even “filters.”

Ask “Chibuku” drinkers, and they will tell you how they shake the jug and drink from it—one after another.

This is how Satan can use our children, turning generosity towards things that are not truly good.

(c) Professor Bisanda: The problem is not the children but the parents who buy these things for them.

Remember, we are dealing with Generation Y—the digital generation—while the parents are analogue!

The technology we see today cannot be compared to what we will find in heaven.

Just imagine—Almighty God will review the records of the actions of four billion people, both past and present, in a second or even less than that!

How vast will His archive be?

I believe the records in heaven will be far superior to these DVDs, USBs, and other earthly storage devices.

124.HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD HAVE MANY FLAWS! – BONUS!

12 RULES FOR RAISING CHILDREN TO BE UNRULY

1. Start from infancy by giving your child everything they want. This way, they will believe they are entitled to everything in life.

2. When they learn bad words, laugh at them. This will make them think they are clever.

3. Do not give them any spiritual teachings. Wait until they turn 21, then let them “decide for themselves.”

4. Avoid using the phrase “that is wrong,” as it may make them feel guilty. Later, they will believe that when they are arrested, society does not love them and is only punishing them.

5. Pick up everything they leave lying around. Do everything for them so they become accustomed to throwing responsibilities onto others.

6. Defend them against neighbors, teachers, and the police. Convince them that all these people dislike them.

7. Argue frequently in front of your children. This way, they will not be shocked when your home falls apart later.

8. Give them all the money they ask for. Do not let them earn their own.

9. Fulfill all their bodily desires—food, drinks, and pleasures. Make sure they get everything their body craves.

10. Let them read whatever is published and listen to whatever music they come across. Be careful to ensure that dishes and glasses are clean, but let their minds be filled with garbage.

11. When they get into trouble, comfort yourself by thinking, "There was nothing I could have done to help."

12. Prepare for a life of sorrow. You will surely have it.

Taken from the article '12 Rules for Raising a Rebellious Child' distributed by the Houston, Texas Police Department.

My husband travels frequently, which makes things difficult for us and the children.

It is a significant challenge when a parent, whether the father or mother, travels frequently. We have very little time with our children, so if possible, the parent should seek a job closer to home, even if it does not pay as well. However, there are some jobs that simply must be done.

A traveling parent can still improve their connection with their children. For example, when they return, the children can meet them at the bus station or airport and spend time talking. Frequent phone calls and even writing letters help maintain the bond. The parent should also try to meet their children's teachers, even if only a few times a year. Taking time off for vacations and planning trips together as a family is important.

There are many things a parent can do even when they are far away. Books have been written on this subject, and online resources offer ideas from other parents facing the same challenge.

126. What are good ways to build a relationship with my children?

13 Simple Ways to Build a Strong Relationship with Your Children

1. Take your child with you whenever you go somewhere by car. This gives you time to talk together. Your children will learn from you as you shop, run errands, or drive. They will also learn to work alongside you.

2. Work together. In the garden, the kitchen, and around the house. Not only will this give you more time to talk and teach your children important skills, but it will also save you time and allow you to enjoy other activities together.

3. Read books and look at pictures together as a family. Even the youngest child can enjoy looking at pictures in a book while listening to you read aloud. This not only creates shared memories but also fosters a love of learning and provides opportunities for discussion. Looking at and discussing appropriate

pictures together also helps children develop critical thinking and spiritual awareness.

4. Talk to them—and listen! Take time when putting them to bed to ask about their day or tell them a short story. Listen patiently when they want to share something with you. Start this habit early, and your children will continue to enjoy talking to you even as they grow older.

5. Show hospitality and spend time together as a family. Reduce the time your children spend with their peers and increase the time spent together as a family—whether hosting other families in your home, welcoming your children's friends, or engaging in activities together.

6. Find family projects to do together. Sharing common goals while working and serving together strengthens family bonds. Look for ways to serve together—through your church, helping the less fortunate, or volunteering at a nursing home. Start a small family business, host events for other families, help grandparents, raise animals, or play a musical instrument together!

Provided free of charge by Pam Forster, © Doorposts – www.doorposts.com

7. Show interest in what excites your children.

My father was very good at this. The security I found in his love and the direction of my life have both been deeply rooted in this great gift that only my father could give me! Sit and listen when your daughter plays the piano, go to a football game with your son, build a playhouse together, draw pictures together, enjoy constructing a large building, and, most importantly, truly listen to them.

8. Show your children physical affection.

Hold their hands, hug them, say, "I love you," and hug them again! The world has changed—if you don't bring them close, someone else will.

9. Schedule one-on-one time with each child.

Pray together! Talk about struggles and sins, let them know you are on their side, and pray for each other. Study the Bible together. Teach your children how to study the Bible by exploring relevant topics together. Read books and discuss them (some examples of books we have read together include Conversations for Girls, God at Work, Future Men, Breaking Strongholds, and Thoughts for Young Men). We also read books purely for entertainment. Go for walks together—this has been particularly helpful with our sons! They tend to talk more while walking than when sitting on a couch. Go out for meals together—it doesn't have to be fancy; even just ice cream can create a special moment, just like an expensive meal would. Go camping! When each child was younger, we had family "campouts" in the living room every

Friday night! We also camped outdoors on the floor with the kids and had spontaneous summer campouts on the deck. It's surprising how much children open up when you're lying together in the dark!

Have a monthly "girls' day out" or "boys' day out." I was encouraged to do this after reading Carolyn Mahaney's wonderful book, Girl Talk. Once a month, the girls and I would spend an afternoon (or sometimes a whole day) enjoying time together. We visited tulip gardens, iris gardens, rose gardens, tea houses, bookstores, parks, and more, always having a wonderful time. Always take time to reflect and set goals. We tried to do this at least once a year. It was an incredibly helpful practice, and we were always encouraged when we looked back and saw how many goals had been accomplished over the past year.

(See article by Pam Foster, © Doorposts – www.doorposts.com)

10. Discipline your children.

One of the most profound ways to show love to our children is to discipline them firmly, lovingly, and consistently. Proverbs 13:24 says, "Whoever spares the rod hates their child, but the one who loves their child is careful to discipline them." A child who is allowed to do whatever they please will not feel secure in their parents' love. Left to themselves, they may struggle to show love as well.

Welcome discipline as an opportunity to draw closer to your children. When we humbly confront our sinful hearts, rejoice in God's grace and the gospel that covers our sins, ask for forgiveness, and forgive—these experiences draw children and parents closer together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Discipline should always be seen as a teaching moment. We have only a few years to instill wisdom in our children while they are in our homes. Every bad habit and every sin is an additional opportunity to teach them from God's Word.

11. Speak openly about the work you see God doing in your children's lives.

One word of encouragement is worth more than a pound of correction. Expect growth and tell your children when you see God working in their lives. You may not realize how much this will encourage them.

12. Do not withdraw too much.

When your children graduate from college or reach the age of 18, it is possible to pull away too much. However, children often face major life transitions at this stage—jobs, marriage, and other big decisions. Stay connected with your adult children. Know their friends. Encourage them to stay at home until God leads them into marriage. Continue offering guidance and counsel, recognizing that as they mature, your role will shift from being an authority

figure to being a trusted mentor and advisor.

Thank God for your children and pray for them every day.

131. What advice would you give to your child who has completed school and is becoming independent?

Dear Daudi,

Now that you are finishing school, this brings us great joy and blessings as parents. Few people complete secondary school, and only a small percentage go on to earn a degree. The most important thing in life is understanding who you are, why you are here, and where you are going. Ask yourself this question often! For example: I am Daudi. I am here on earth because I was created by God, though things went wrong in Eden due to sin, and now restoration is underway. I am on my way to heaven. This perspective will guide you through many aspects of life, helping you not to waste valuable opportunities.

Life and stewardship go hand in hand! (Stewardship is how we use our lives.) May the Almighty give you a vision, mission, passion, and provision as you work. The Chinese say:

If you want to make a difference for a day, eat at a fine restaurant.

If you want to make a difference for a month, get married (a bad example!).

If you want to make a difference for a year, plant a garden.

If you want to make a difference for a lifetime, invest in people—help children get an education or support them in school. You will have changed someone's life.

When I arrived in America more than 26 years ago, I prayed to God, saying that if He blessed me with a job, I would set aside a portion of my income, beyond my tithe, to make a difference in the lives of people—both those I am related to and those I am not. I realized that problems always arise, money comes and goes, but if you pray for God to help you with this commitment, over many years, it will make a real difference. It is wise to start this habit early in your career because once you begin earning a monthly salary, if you do not plan, many things will come up and prevent you from doing what is truly important. (Differentiate between the urgent and the important.)

Do not forget your relatives on both your father's and mother's side. Even your grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins—sending money or gifts, even if it's just $30 every six months, will make a lasting impression and lead them to pray for you. Consider how you can uplift their lives. However, this does not mean neglecting yourself—certainly not! Plan for these things and write them down in a notebook, and after many years, when you read it, you will smile.

Many children born and raised here in the U.S. do not know their extended families, and that is a kind of poverty because they miss the chance to make a difference for their relatives. You are fortunate because you know many of your family members back home. In your life, remember them—not out of obligation, but out of love, as your name suggests, Daudi ("the beloved"). In doing so, you will be blessed and also help others improve their lives.

Albert Schweitzer, a missionary, once said that we must always remember—we do not live in this world alone. We have brothers and sisters, including people in this country, who also need our help, whether materially or otherwise. I pray that God will show you where to prioritize your efforts.Remember:Life is a great battle, and each day has its own struggles.

Acknowledge God in all your ways, and He will guide your path.

The author of Ecclesiastes reflected on his youth, seeking fulfillment in things, animals, gardens,wealth, food, and luxury. He concluded: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." He mentioned 38 times that everything else is merely chasing after the wind.

Finding balance requires wisdom—pray for wisdom at every step.

If you get the book Do Hard Things by Harris or I Kissed Dating Goodbye, they are great books for a young man. However, start with Messages to Young People. The difference between David and Joseph is that Joseph ran away, while David stared. Running away does not mean one is a coward, but you cannot start reasoning with the devil. There are things that make a man of God fall: women, power, and money. If anyone thinks they cannot fall, they must be wiser than Solomon, stronger than Samson, or love God more than David.

In our lives, when we are born, we say, "Let me go to school, and I will be happy and satisfied." Then we say, "Let me get a job or earn money, and I will be happy." Then, "Let me get married and have children, and I will be happy." Then, "Let me retire, and I will be happy." Then, "Let me have grandchildren, and I will be happy." Then, "Let my children be independent, and I will be happy." Finally, old age comes, and we say, "I am not happy; these days, it's all about sickness and weakness." Then comes the dependency on others.

In 1969, my maternal grandmother visited us in Arusha. She was 48 years old, and I thought she was very old. I told her, "Grandmother, you are so old!" She replied, "Grace, I just looked this way, then turned around and found myself old! It didn't take long. Even you will grow old and wonder where the years went!"

Pray that God makes you a faithful steward so that one day, He will tell you, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over little; enter

into My eternal joy."

RAISING A SON TO BE A PRIEST AND LEAD HIS HOME

(Or raising a son as a layman – directed to parents raising sons)

Many have written books about raising sons for believers. Raising daughters is not very different from raising sons, except where gender roles differ, as God has commanded us. God is the ultimate parent, and Scripture is the primary parenting manual; everything else is supplementary.The greatest help we can give our children is teaching them to live without us—to be able to face life in their relationships with God, in their communities (whether at school or work), in fellowship, and in their families.

1.Heaven and earth are a boy's first textbooks before he learns to read and write, as Psalm 19 states. Psalm 144:12–15 says:

"May our sons be like well-nurtured plants in their youth, our daughters like pillars carved to adorn a palace. May our barns be filled with every kind of provision. May our sheep increase by thousands, by tens of thousands in our fields; may our oxen draw heavy loads. May there be no breach in our walls, no exile, no cry of distress in our streets. Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord."

God's definition of a man is more than just outward appearance. Ezekiel 22:30 tells us that a man is one who stands in the gap to repair what is broken. To be a man according to God's Word involves spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth. A child is raised at home, in the community, at school, and in the church.

After having children, we must have a plan, for God has given us sons as stewards. They are our garden to cultivate until they grow and mature. We cannot just sit and assume things will work out on their own. Food and clothing are not enough to complete a child's upbringing.

Our sons will be leaders in their communities, priests in their homes, and our brothers in heaven one day. We are preparing our sons to be husbands, fathers, and believers in God's house. This journey takes a lot of time and is centered on God's Word.

God's Word is the beginning and the end of parenting (the Alpha and Omega). God's Word is the only security for us and our children. May you reap the fruits of your labor, of faithfulness to God; may you help your children become warriors who take responsibility and bear much fruit in righteousness.

Luke 2:52 says, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The teenage years do not have to be about rebellion but about productivity for the child, the parents, and the community.

Let us not grow weary in doing good. One day, “your father and mother will rejoice, and she who gave you birth will be joyful.”

As parents, we should take our children to gospel or lay ministry seminars and not leave them behind. Let’s take them along in our service to the Lord so they learn through action and love God’s work.

Raising a son who loves God requires commitment because boys today struggle to be diligent in academics and manual work. In Africa, 90% of farms are cultivated by older women. In many countries, 80% of churchgoers are women, and they also lead in education and reading.

In the past, subjects like mathematics and physics were considered “boys’ subjects,” and they topped the charts. However, research by Dr. Nedley in the U.S. shows that boys’ academic performance now matches that of girls. He adds that boys see no need to strive hard because finding a wife is easy, and dowry is no longer required as before.

Girls today pursue boys, which makes boys less responsible and less motivated. Dr. Nedley also states that many boys live off their parents or wives well into old age. If their wives leave them, these men return to their parents for support.

A boy was created in God’s image, and he was created before the woman. His purpose was not first to “be fruitful and multiply” but to have dominion and subdue the earth. Our sons must understand this. A boy was given work in the garden even before mankind’s fall.

Obedience to God and parents is the first lesson for our sons, followed by planning, skill, discipline, and work. These help him deny himself, control his desires, and provide for his family.

In the past, a boy was the one who took care of his parents and was relied on by his sisters and younger siblings as the provider, advisor, and leader. This is declining today.

Although this is U.S. data, when you see someone else getting shaved, start wetting your own head. The U.S. often sets trends, both good and bad, like homosexuality, and people easily follow them.

Today, what children see in the media, especially television, shapes them more than their parents. This is dangerous because most media content has little that is good. Even in advertisements, the way people talk and dress is problematic.

When I was young, calling a boy “a girl” was an insult. Today, even strong and intelligent boys are engaging in immoral behaviors like homosexuality, which was once a taboo even among non-believers.

In countries like the Philippines, statistics show that men lead in gender-transition surgeries to "make life easier." This is ignorance of creation, where the man was made first and is the head. He should be honored by the woman. Moreover, the woman was the first to sin, and I doubt that is attractive to anyone.

Herod killed male children. Pharaoh did the same, knowing that eliminating the sons meant ending a nation. Balaam caused 24,000 men of Israel to fall, knowing that by eliminating them, the nation was finished.

God has given men gifts and responsibilities that women do not have. When raising boys, we must recognize this. Fathers must spend time with their sons and teach them through action. Studies show that many fathers spend less than four minutes daily talking to their children.

We must make careful choices regarding friendships, the music we listen to, the books we read, the education we receive, the church we attend, the clothes we wear, and much more. Parents must study God's Word to find answers and proper standards.

Even parents who struggle spiritually can raise children who love God. We see Timothy, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice helping him become a warrior who ministered as a layman and later as a pastor.

Have annual goals. You cannot do everything at once. Make a roadmap for what you want to achieve before your children leave home.

When young, children are like sponges that absorb knowledge. Use this time to teach them from nature and the world around them.

Teach children about God's creation, not evolution. This should be a priority (1 Corinthians 3:19).

We should also seek help from grandparents in raising our children.

Children should be taught to build houses, sew, cook, farm, and develop other skills. Teach them to speak publicly, manage their time, and evaluate their progress. Rejoice with them in their achievements. Teach them about biblical heroes such as David, Noah, or Abraham. Ask your child who their heroes are—are they movie characters or video game figures? How can they be a light in their home?

Read books like 10 Boys Who Changed the World by Irene Howard. Does your child admire people who do not love God, like Samson? What kind of books do they read?

A man's life is full of decisions, and he must act based on them. We must prepare our young men to take responsibility by making the right decisions. Prepare them well, then give them space to make choices, and when they

fail, teach them how to correct their mistakes. Learn even from small creatures like ants and from figures like young Joseph, Jethro, Abigail, the Good Samaritan, Boaz, and others.

When you're not around, does he do good things? Does he greet people? Does he do household chores? Observe if he uses his time well, keeps his things organized and clean. Does he know how to solve problems, or does he forget his responsibilities? Does he understand that time is valuable and avoid procrastination?

Take him to a police station or court, depending on his age, and discuss common cases. Read about figures like Achan and Samson and discuss them. Does he make excuses or exaggerate? Does he make promises he cannot keep? Does he take things without permission? Does he enjoy gossip and false witnessing? We should not shield our children too much from pain or failure. Sometimes they must fail to learn, but they should not fear trying again. Read about David's 30 mighty men (1 Chronicles 11) and reformers like Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, Knox, and Huss. Can he accept correction and learn? Does he have the courage to admit his sins, repent, and forsake them? Can he say, "I was wrong" and confess? Does he fear people more than God? A man is the head of the family, just as Christ is the head of the church. Look at the character of men like Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, and David. Abraham was praised: "For I have known him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." A son should know the core teachings of faith and distinguish between true and false doctrines. He will be a priest in his home and possibly in a place of worship. He should question pastors and spiritual leaders about their beliefs. What is the gospel? How does it affect their lives? Teach children to memorize Deuteronomy 6:7-8. Parents should help their sons become teachers.

Learning leadership is important. 1 Kings 3:9 says, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" Solomon asked for wisdom and leadership. We set examples for our sons to be just judges. When we discipline them, we uphold God's law and guide them in His instruction. Teach them to speak with their friends when conflicts arise so they can restore relationships and help their own children when they make mistakes. Ensure that discipline is balanced with love. If discipline exceeds love, something is wrong. We acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes in parenting, but discipline should be given in love, not anger. Do not punish a child while angry; wait until you have calmed down, then talk to them before giving discipline.

Can he lead others with humility, delegate tasks, and review and evaluate them? Look up "Brother Offender Checklist" and "21 Rules of This House"

online. Have a household rulebook to decide what deserves discipline and what requires warnings. Study biblical punishments given by prophets, people, and apostles. List the sins your child struggles with, plan consequences, and outline the results of ignoring warnings. What are the responsibilities of authority? How should we treat those in authority? Does your son accept the role of teaching others, such as a children's class or youth group in church?

A son must be taught not to covet others' belongings and to be grateful for what he has. Godliness with contentment is a great blessing, for we came into the world with nothing and will leave with nothing. When he makes a mistake, he should learn to ask for forgiveness. Since he will be a leader, he must exercise authority wisely. Pharisees abused their power, while Noah, Job, and Elijah used it well. He must understand that leadership is about serving people, not oppressing them. He should work with his hands to meet his needs and those of others. By age twelve, he should begin fasting and praying, for some things cannot be achieved without prayer and fasting. He must understand that his future wife and children will need clothing, food, and shelter, which are reasons enough to learn how to pray and fast.

Backsliding happens gradually, like a rising thermometer. If he is not careful, he will find himself far from God. He should learn from wise and godly men, for they have experienced victories and failures. Temptations appear attractive but do not reveal the whole truth. He should not fight temptations alone but ask God for strength to obey and avoid invitations to sin, for the battle belongs to the Lord when we choose to obey His commands.Why should a young man avoid much of rock and dance music? Because many of these songs promote rebellion against God's laws, idol worship, substance abuse, and darkness without knowing it. They also reduce spiritual focus, increasing anxiety and restlessness.

Education is good, but one should start reading books early before situations become difficult. Explain this to a young man. He should not read a book about a good marriage only after divorcing his wife, but before. Being educated and being knowledgeable are different things. One can have a high degree but lack wisdom. Likewise, earning money and working are two different things. God's Word is tested and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that a person may be fully equipped for every good work.

A child should learn to obey authority because one day he may also be in leadership. One cannot lead if he does not know how to follow. Scripture instructs us to respect and obey our leaders so that their work may be a joy, not a burden, for they will give an account. Consider the services that governments provide to citizens. Though some leaders are corrupt, leadership is generally beneficial, and we cannot live without it. If parents make leadership difficult or show disrespect for leaders, children will imitate them.

Forgiveness is crucial for a son. Holding grudges is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die. We must remember that we, too, have wronged others and been forgiven. A son should learn to forgive and take his pain to God, asking Him to remove bitterness. He should be honest with God about his struggles, for the Lord can remove all bitterness and hatred, making his heart light. His wife, children, and parents may wrong him, but he must learn how to resolve conflicts with wisdom.

Harboring grudges and hatred is destructive. How can one get rid of impure thoughts? Everyone experiences them, but how do we remove them? Many people fail because they do not practice self-denial. Does he struggle with anger or impure thoughts? Psalm 119:110 says we should store God's Word in our hearts to remove sinful thoughts. Like Joshua, we must choose daily whom we will serve. We must bring every thought into captivity to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) and focus on things that are true, honorable, and praiseworthy.

Encourage curiosity in a child so he can invent and discover things. Provide materials and time; do not worry too much about him breaking things or wasting time. Great inventors needed time, belief from others, and freedom from excessive pressure. Innovation requires knowledge from different subjects. God is the greatest inventor—use your creativity for good, not to destroy like those who invented nuclear bombs!

A key to invention is perseverance. Thomas Edison failed 1,000 times before inventing the light bulb but saw it as discovering 1,000 ways not to do it. Do not give up when you fail; learn from mistakes and move forward.

A young man is created to invent songs, programs, devices, methods, art, books, tools, and more. Be a creator as God intended. However, maintain physical health with exercise, fresh air, and sunlight.A young man should endure, maintain friendships, and not be quick to anger. Life is about working, learning, building, and investing—do not be lazy. God created men to be doers, not just observers.

The goal of reading God's Word when you wake up is not about how many pages you read but about your relationship with Him. God wants to speak to you about what truly matters in your life—your concerns. He wants to hear your dreams. God has the power to wake up even the weakest man or boy from his bed to read His Word. Ask Him to help you wake up and read. The Creator desires to be close to you—allow Him in.

Many times in life, people will fail to understand us. When misunderstood or falsely accused, learn to guard your tongue and speak only the truth until the false accusations pass. Being falsely accused is an opportunity for God to teach us patience, humility, and forgiveness. Even the Lord Himself was

falsely accused and spoken against. Instead of being angry and shocked, stay calm and pray for God's strength. Have peace in your heart, knowing that God understands and sees your true intentions. Doing good is a weapon—God uses it to overcome false accusations and labels placed upon us.

Sometimes, you may feel weary and frustrated from being misunderstood, but remember, we are in a great battle between good and evil. Satan has falsely accused God of being unjust, and many have believed this lie. However, one day soon, God's character will be cleared of all false accusations.

Do not have the attitude of working just to play. Many men view work as a means to earn money for entertainment on their days off. Men often have expensive "adult toys" such as luxury cars, motorcycles, boats, and more. While working to earn a living is important, there is also work to be done in helping others—widows, the poor, orphans. This kind of work brings healing to others. Use your gifts and skills to make the world a better place.

Parents work to provide for their children. A good son does not seek to take his parents' wealth and spend it on his own pleasures. When you inherit wealth, be careful to use it to help others and to support the next generation. We are saved by grace, not by our deeds, so we should think about others and the generations to come.

Does a boy fear the dark, dogs, high mountains, or spiders? Overcoming fear is part of growing into manhood. You may not eliminate all fear, but you will thrive and conquer your surroundings despite having some fears.

Moses experienced fear (Exodus 3-4). Joshua was told, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." A person conquers fear by knowing that God is present and that He is capable. God knows what you need and will give you courage and confidence—but not arrogance. Victory is sweeter when you have fought for it. "I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and you have overcome the evil one."Every man experiences fear at some point. You cannot claim victory without having enemies to fight. Every man faces challenges. The key is to overcome the small battles within your heart daily. Some days, you won't feel like working, but you will have to. Victory comes when you fight against anger, greed, and the desires of your heart as if they were your enemies.90% of the fears we have are about things that will never happen. The remaining 10%—you will face them. You may lose some battles, but if you keep fighting with determination, you will win.

Selfishness should be avoided. If you struggle with it, you do not have to remain that way for life. A boy will grow to be the leader of his household and even his nation. If he is selfish and self-centered, he will harm many. Many of those who help meet national social needs are men. Therefore, a young man

must learn to reject selfishness.

Women often give generously by sharing food or small household items, but men handle large-scale planning that helps entire communities and even nations. In times of disasters, men often step in to save many lives. We must teach our young men not to be self-centered.

A young man should pray openly, saying, “Almighty God, I am selfish. I think about myself more than others. I know You do not want me to be this way. Please open my eyes to see the needs of others so I can be of help. I ask to have a heart like Yours.”

Imagine how your father feels when he comes home—can you help him with something? Can you ease your mother’s burden? When you visit someone, look for ways to help instead of just sitting and watching. Using your time to serve others will help eliminate fear and selfishness.

Do not be ashamed of your struggles, pain, or sorrow—start helping others.

Every visionary leader must think about serving people. Selfish people lack courage. Brave people do not wait for big opportunities to be heroes or saviors; they seize small opportunities that arise daily. These small acts give you a chance to be courageous or cowardly.

Many young men complain, saying, “I don’t like the rain. I don’t like my job. I don’t like the hot sun. I don’t like this city. I don’t like this village. I don’t like, I don’t like, I don’t like!”

If you want to experience the greatness and goodness of God, learn to love what He has placed before you. You have a choice—to complain and grumble with a sour face or to appreciate what you have. However, there is no need to wear a bitter expression all day.

A man once said that as a child, he did not like tomatoes. But after getting married, his wife cooked with tomatoes. He asked, “Why are there tomatoes in my food?” However, his wife did not change anything, and he gradually began to enjoy them. Now, he loves tomatoes and even misses them when they are not in his meals.

This does not mean you should love evil or unhealthy things. However, there are many things you can learn to tolerate, and eventually, you may come to appreciate them.

Many people have grown to love mushrooms or avocados, even though they refused to eat them as children. Attitude is key—maturity and growth mean embracing both the bitter and the sweet things in life. Don’t just force yourself to “eat the tomatoes”; learn to genuinely appreciate them.

God’s kingdom is full of goodness—let us not live with our noses turned up,

saying, “I don’t like the taste of this.” Since God has permitted us to enjoy His provisions, let us embrace them with gratitude.

To be a man, every boy must learn to endure pain. It is part of life, a means to gain wisdom, strength, and skill. A child who is not self-disciplined screams at the slightest pain; they think their happiness is more important than their responsibilities. Instead of working in the field, they complain about the harsh sun or their tiredness. Instead of offering a seat to an elderly mother, they focus on their comfort or entertainment. When they scratch their hand a little, they refuse to wash the dishes. Life has far greater pains than small scratches. The entire creation groans with some form of pain, whether spiritual, physical, or mental. Many experience pain from harsh words, not just because they are the target! Therefore, do not pity yourself when you are in pain, because every creature experiences pain. A man must learn how to handle pain; he cannot hide from it. Sometimes, without pain, there is no fruit or progress.

Pain is universal, and often, it is short-lived. However, there is no pain in heaven; those pains that hurt us today may end tomorrow, so do not dwell on your pain. Pain also has an end, although there are times when it feels unbearable. Pain does not come to us freely to do as it wishes, for the Almighty owns and knows the limit of our endurance. He only allows what we can bear. God knows the length and weight of every pain, and He permits it to come to us, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 10:13. As the story of Job shows, God did not allow Job to reach a point where he could not endure. Pain has some beauty in it; God never allows it without a reason.

When someone close to us hurts our hearts by not understanding us or by not fulfilling our expectations, it hurts more than usual. David said, “For the one who insults me is not my enemy; if that were the case, I could endure it. It is not one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; if that were the case, I would hide myself from him. But it is you, a man of my own rank, my companion and close friend. We used to enjoy sweet fellowship together, and walk with the throng at the house of God.”

How you respond to people who upset you and say things that hurt you shows whether you are maturing into a man of God or only thinking about yourself and your pain. Cry out to God for comfort, and do not scream for long over minor pains or become angry when things do not go your way.

Many people like to avoid pain, but only a few of them are fit for God’s kingdom. If you have physical pain or wounds, go to the hospital to get stitched or have a broken bone set, but do not show your wounds to everyone. A man must be brave, not seeking pity from everyone. Instead of constantly focusing on your own wound, look at the people who need help, and shift your thoughts away from yourself and your pain. For emotional pain, do not be like a dog licking

its wounds all day long, but “overcome evil with good.” Even the Lord, “for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

There is a time to cry and a time to laugh. I do not believe in the saying “a man does not cry,” for even the Lord wept; He did not cry for His own sorrow but for the sorrow of others. Crying alleviates emotional pain. Therefore, there is a time to toughen up, and a time to cry, and God will enable you to distinguish between the two, so that you are not someone who cries unnecessarily or cries out in emotional distress.

How can you prepare to live well with a wife now? You may think you are still too young, and laugh at this idea, and it is true that it is not yet time for marriage, but you can still prepare now. You can prepare in your thoughts, so that later, you will be a joyful man with a happy marriage. It is not about rushing into marriage, but rather being prepared, even if you do not marry or if you are called to be single. Learn the tasks that men do to assist their sisters or mothers, such as changing tires, repairing the house, unblocking the toilet, applying fertilizer, beekeeping, herding livestock, trimming trees, or using a hammer and chisel.

How you serve your sisters and your mother now is the greatest class in marriage. Your younger siblings will be happy to have an older brother who loves them, and you must love them as well. The way you build good relationships with your sister or mother is the way you will build a good relationship with your wife. Do not be arrogant, so that your sisters fear you and do not open up to you. Be gentle, so that they trust you and share their problems with you. Take on the challenge of solving their issues without boasting or self-praise.

Do you know what they like or dislike? Do you understand their dreams, fears, or concerns? Do they have hopes or expectations for today or tomorrow? If you are harsh and cruel, they will hide from you. If your sister wanted to get a musical instrument to learn, take up the challenge and help her get it. Your sister is your class for teaching you how to provide for your future family.

David’s courage in defeating Goliath did not come that day; he first fought a lion and a bear, then he overcame the fear and faced the giant. Serve your sisters and mothers. Do not mock them, belittle them, or compete with them to prove that you are the strongest. Be a team with them; if there is food, let them have the larger portion, and you take the smaller one. Give them a good place to sit.

Have you thought about reading the Word of God together with your younger sisters or siblings? Do you pray with them? Praise them for doing good, and forgive them when they do wrong, helping them to improve and cover their

faults. You have an opportunity to make them beautiful both outwardly and inwardly. One day they will say, “My brother gave me the opportunity to reach my dreams. I love and respect him.”If your younger sibling, sister, or mother is selfish and self-centered, help them. Pray to God to assist you, and your task will be to restore good relationships. Be an example to your younger siblings, your sister, and mother. The Lord has made millions of people who do not love Him, love Him, and you too should do the same. A mature boy does not care about who loves him or not, but he focuses on doing what is right, regardless of how people treat him. Do not think your younger siblings, sister, or mother do not want your help and love. They will often change. Girls can be fickle at times, but you should find ways to please your sisters, even ask your mother; she will help you. It is the work of a boy and a man to make his sisters and, ultimately, his wife happy.

When choosing a wife, give God the chance to choose for you. Pray and wait for the time He will choose for you. A person chooses based on what they see outwardly, but the Lord knows the heart. See if she loves spiritual matters. Avoid engaging in rough games with men. It is forbidden to dance with girls because it stirs up bad desires. Many boarding schools host dances that have led young people into lust and sin. Every day we face battles in our minds, and the kingdom of Satan. Put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6) and do not expose yourself to temptations.

Dancing is a tool of Satan himself. Ask any man if he would allow someone to dance closely with his wife, and he will tell you no! In the colonial era, people were forbidden to dance traditional dances, calling them barbaric, but it is strange that these dances were done at a distance, with the man and woman not close together. Nowadays, sins are done openly, with people embracing and dancing together.

Many are taught about using condoms, but for someone who honors God, sex is only within marriage; outside of that, it is sin or rebellion against God’s laws. However, condoms do not erase sin, do not remove guilt, and do not prevent pregnancy or HIV completely, or bring peace.

A boy must always know that only God is the help to avoid sexual sin. Many men, especially in today’s world of pornography, have fallen into sin due to three things: women, money, and the pride of power. If a boy thinks he cannot fall into this trap, he must be stronger than Samson, wiser than Solomon, and love God even more than David.

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and receives favor from the Lord.” A boy should distinguish between the woman described in Proverbs 7, a prostitute, and the noble woman of Proverbs 31. Does she have the full qualities of a good girl? Does she understand the role of sex according to God’s Word? Teach her about bodily changes like puberty, and continue to talk to her at every

step.

Many parents talk to their children when they are thirteen and then stop; then they are surprised when things go wrong when they are seventeen! They only gave one lesson on sex and left it at that! Sexual temptations reach many, including masturbation; a child should be taught to avoid these regularly. Keep your children from sleeping over at other people's houses or attending nighttime parties (pajama parties or sleepovers), as this should be forbidden.

A boy should keep himself clean in words, thoughts, and body until he is married. Does he plan to approach the girl's father before marriage, rather than living together without plans for marriage (come we stay)? Is he ready to tell when he wants to marry? Is he prepared to remain single if God calls him to be celibate, and not live a double life?

The Bible is not just a book of advice or good opinions, but the thoughts of God Himself, with the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth. God's Word shows us how to relate to and please everyone we meet, whether a friend, sister, brother, parents, employer, girls, the elderly, enemies, or children. It warns us about traps, shows us how to work, invest money, what to eat, when to sleep, and even how to rest. It gives principles for every area of your life. It teaches us how God works and how to hear His voice. It helps us understand life, nature, and even other planets. It explains from Genesis to Revelation how to receive the Lord who gave Himself for us, offering eternal life.

You are not an animal, as the theory of evolution tries to teach; you were created for a special purpose. Every boy should ask himself why he is here, where he came from, and what will happen when he dies. The Word of God explains why there is so much pain. No other book can explain all these things. One hour in another book will never compare to one hour in His Word.

There is no book as exciting as this, and one that changes a person's life. Mathematics or chemistry cannot change your life like this book. But the Bible is not a book to gain information, but to transform your life. If you follow its advice, things will become real, and you will be transformed. Do not waste time reading theoretical stories (novels) or fictions that make you lose interest in the Word of God. Fictional stories make the Bible lose its flavor.

Your mind will expand as you read His Word, and you will even have greater ability in school. Read and explain to your friends what you learned from each chapter. Sometimes, be quiet in peace and look at His glory. Memorize many of its verses, sing songs. Mark 1:35 says, "He went out to a solitary place to pray;" and so should you, rise up and pray.

Listen to the advice of the elders, and you will not be like your peers, but you will have wisdom beyond your years. These pieces of advice from the elders

may seem outdated, but you will chew over matters and reflect with wisdom that children of your age do not have. We see that when Solomon died, his son Rehoboam sought advice from young men who led him astray, and he lost his kingdom as a result.

Wise elders do not speak their thoughts quickly; they first weigh things. They know what a boy or child's life will be like, even if they have not gone to school, for the years of experience they have help them. Many have opposed their advice, and this has caused them to become silent, fearing they will incur animosity with the youth. Therefore, it is the responsibility of boys and young people to sit with the elders and ask questions about the good skills or disciplines to study or what are the best investments, etc.

Ask the elder questions like these: What should a person do to have good relationships? What things ruin relationships? How has society changed today? Has it changed for better or worse? What mistakes did you make that caused things to go wrong? In what part of your life did things go very well? What can you teach me about marriage and having children? If you were an employer, what kind of person would you hire for your company? When you were young, did you remember the advice your father gave you? Did you follow it? What is most important in your life now? Are you ready to die at any time? If yes, why? If no, why?

There is a time to kill and a time to heal (Ecclesiastes 3), and this is the challenge of growing up or becoming a man. Many people get confused, killing when they shouldn't and not killing when they should. How will a boy know? A man or a boy is not another animal in God's dominion. He was given authority and dominion. He is to respect living things and be a good steward, not kill creatures or cut down trees without reason, simply because they are in his possession. He should use these things for his needs but not for destruction, and when cutting trees, he should plant new ones. He should not be cruel; he must know how to preserve, and also know what he will preserve.

For example, if mice are in your house eating your maize, should you kill them? Should you kill ants in the wild? Should you kill a cat crossing the road? If you live near a game reserve and are hungry, should you kill a gazelle without permission? Do not ignore the work that God gave you—to preserve and care for creatures. Even animals know who fears the Almighty by the mercy and care that person shows for animals. Do your livestock get enough feed and food, or do you keep a dog without feeding it, so that its ribs show? Remember, Noah was told to bring the animals onto the ark. God could have created others, but He loved those animals. The Bible says, "God remembered Noah and the animals."

For a person to meet the needs of his family, sometimes he must kill, but he should not kill God's creatures out of anger or greed, but for sustenance or protection. When wars occur, we know that many people who love the Almighty have fought wars to bring freedom and protect our countries or communities. Others, because of their conscience and the role God has given them to play, have refused to kill in wars and instead focus on treating the wounded, and this is right because of a person's understanding of certain things. However, all men must know how to protect their families and how to bring home sustenance.

A person has a duty to preserve the resources around him and not to be destructive. Some boys have killed birds with sticks and just laughed, without any meaningful reason. A man needs to take care of what God has entrusted to him, including the environment. We live in a time when people even kill their own children by abortion or other means. People are willing to kill their children but are afraid to kill cockroaches in their cabinets. We must know the value of human life, and at the same time, have the courage to kill things like cockroaches or rats.

Home worship is important. Do not wrinkle your face during prayer or worship. The Israelites took much time for worship and offering sacrifices, but they were also self-centered and greedy. Every day is a day of worship, and the way we live is also a form of worship. It means we might be good singers but our lives might stink. We need our hearts to change, so that we are not heads full of the word of God but hearts full of sin.

If you want to be a true man whom God will use, learn how to worship God as He desires to be worshipped. Worship Him every day in His beauty and holiness. Relationships and communication are important. Learn to write encouraging letters to people. Learn to write simple letters, and as you continue writing, you will become skilled and your letters will be good. Many receive complaint letters, and when they see a letter of thanks, they will be surprised, gain courage, and keep your letter forever.

Where I live, many people are afraid to receive gifts because they feel indebted, prideful, or don't want to be in the "welfare distribution" situation. Others are afraid to write thank-you letters. Giving and receiving gifts builds good relationships. If you refuse to receive gifts, people will think that you believe your things are the only important ones or that you don't want to give, thus closing the door. It is more blessed to give than to receive, so do not make others lose their blessing by refusing their gifts given in good faith.

For our children, we give them the practice of giving when we receive. But write a letter to thank them and specify what you are thankful for, for example: "Thank you for the money, it has helped me a lot this season for the cucumber farming." Many write letters asking for things when they are

school students (boarding), but as adults who no longer need anything, they never write—this is wrong. Communication is not just about receiving things but also the service of love.

How do we prepare to be good fathers when we are young? Answer: By doing what we want our children to be! Do not think about how you will raise your children, but think about how God wants you to be like Him. When your children are your age, what kind of character do you want them to have? For your children will want to be like you. Are you faithful? Are you a good worker? Do you like to complain all the time? Know that they will follow your example.

God is merciful, even though you may have ruined things. He does not give us what we deserve (exceptions). Not all of your bad behaviors will be passed down to your children, but "a fruit does not fall far from the tree." Your children will resemble you. Your twelve-year-old son will be like you were at twelve. If you are a grateful and diligent boy, he will be the same, but if you are lazy, he will inherit that bad habit. If you are diligent in practicing a musical instrument, he will grow to be the same. Any subject you dedicate yourself to, he too will dedicate himself to, and whatever you enjoy, they will enjoy. Your example will teach them a lot.

The character you build today will make you the man of tomorrow, and that will affect your children. You may think, "I am just a boy; they don't see me now." God's plan for life is that a good tree bears good fruit, not by accident, but by a heavenly law.

Does a child know what evil is? Does he know the Ten Commandments as a standard of righteousness? Does he understand God's mercy and deal justly with people, or does he show prejudice? For God wants us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. Can he correct his siblings? Does he get angry and hold grudges against his siblings? Does he dislike correction? Should he know how to manage his household well? Children should be given tasks according to their age, such as washing the car, cutting grass, or farming.

Self-denial is important because the garden of Eden was lost by not controlling the desire for food and greed. A child should be taught to avoid this. He should guard his heart and mind by avoiding things that are degrading, like bad TV programs and computer games.

He should avoid getting into debt. Discuss the topic of debt and how to avoid it, especially in these days of credit cards. He should pay it off when possible and learn to give offerings and tithes. He should not be an angry person, "He who rules his spirit is like a city broken down without walls" (Proverbs 25:28). Even a small child should be taught to wait without getting angry when playing with others.

Uncontrolled anger can hurt a wife or children, or even the boy himself. If he struggles with controlling his emotions and has fits of rage, teach him, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” He should continue to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy, and meditate on such things.

He should learn how to serve his family and be well-mannered, for manners do not come naturally but must be practiced. He should learn to say sorry, excuse me, thank you, please, forgive me, and I ask. He should learn not to mistreat those beneath him, for many children who were mistreated by their parents continue this behavior, but he must go before God to renounce that power, so that the curse does not continue to the third and fourth generations.

Does he have a lot of time to waste watching TV? Is he learning the habits of being a diligent person? Can you rely on him to do a task without his mind drifting to technological devices? Do his close friends love God, or does he prefer to associate with evil people like Delilah? Does he know how to have a normal friendship with girls without getting involved in a bad relationship? What are the behaviors to avoid in friends?

Does he make excuses to skip worship? Does he frequently leave to drink water or go to the bathroom during worship? Does he rely on God or complain when things don’t go well? Can he complete a task you gave him like Noah or Nehemiah? Can he keep his promises like Elkana and his wife? Or does his mind wander all over the place? Does he leave his things everywhere? Even when he takes off his clothes, his pants end up lying on the floor right where he took them off?

Sometimes parents are involved in serving people, and the child gets attention that the parents are unaware of. I learned this from the preacher Billy Graham, who, when he was very famous, his children would stay near the gate of their house, and before visitors came to see the preacher, the children would ask them for money or things. The guests would feel embarrassed because of his father and would give these children things without reporting it to him. This was a behavior of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha! He asked for clothes and silver and was involved in deceit regarding the prophet’s work. This preacher later realized that if you are a famous parent or involved in something where many people come to you, watch how your children interact with people to protect them from certain evils.

Can he be hospitable like Abraham, welcoming strangers and receiving blessings? Read about hospitality and welcoming guests. Does he also know how to show hospitality to his family? Is he afraid to answer the phone,

respond to letters, or open the door to visitors? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. It may be that Jesus is knocking at the door.” These days, we may not have guests at home, but even our phones sometimes receive people who need advice or assistance from us. I have learned many times that it is people who bless me, not me blessing them, just like Abraham, where the guest blessed him, and not Abraham blessing the guest! The child should learn to be a servant, not avoid guests.

Thus, a boy who does not know how to earn a living is worse than one who is an unbeliever. Although women are now earning their own living, this is still the primary responsibility of a man. This requires a man to not be selfish, and parents should help their sons become providers in a lawful manner. Help them support their younger siblings, grandparents, and family projects. Discuss the family budget and how they can earn small jobs.

Can he earn his own dowry? Does he understand the responsibility of caring for aging parents? Does he help with household chores faithfully? Does he have the hospitality to assist those in need and show them how to do it? He should learn to be a good listener and not interrupt other people’s conversations.

Does he remember to pray for others, or does he only bring his own troubles before God (intercession)? Does he know how to confess his sins when he falls short? Does he know how to briefly share the story of salvation, explaining his Bible verses?

What kind of girl does he want to marry? Does he respect girls as future wives and therefore protect them from evil and impurity so that they can remain virgins for their future husbands?

Often, we try our best, then leave it to God, who is the Almighty. We may not know why something has happened to us, but eventually, many events show us their rewards in the end. A boy who lives according to the judgments and laws of God will reap the fruits of children who love God in the future (Proverbs 22:6). So, when you are tempted to do evil or foolish things, like breaking the law, think about your decisions and how they will affect future generations, even up to the third or fourth generation. So, avoid living in a way that harms future generations. You will live without regrets, and it will be a fortress for your children and grandchildren, as God will bless you. Let us remember that God is patient, abundant in mercy, and forgives evil.

Should a boy have any association with alcohol? The answer is: “He should never even try to put a drop of alcohol in his mouth; he should not wear t-shirts with alcohol advertisements or listen to advertisements for alcohol. He should not go to places where alcohol is sold or mock a person who is drunk, because sin is a sorrowful thing.” Reject the excuse that it is necessary to drink, even if you do not plan to, for it is a temptation that can come your

way, since many do not think they will fall into alcoholism. Kindly tell your friends that you will not drink because you respect God. Proverbs 23:32 says, “Stay away from it as you would stay away from a snake.”

If you have a dog that bites people, two out of five guests who come to you will continue to own it?

The boy should know why he receives discipline or correction of his behavior so that he can be guided in the right way of wisdom. A child who loves his parents will thank them when they help him. He should avoid being corrupted by peer pressure, which is what led to Samson’s downfall. Loving God, walking in His ways, and serving Him with our hearts, minds, strength, and souls is wisdom. His words should be seasoned with salt so that he knows how to respond to others, for words reflect character and what fills his heart. Purity of thoughts, words, and actions is essential

RAISING A DAUGHTER TO BE A WOMAN OF PROVERBS 31

- Lessons for Mothers and Daughters

David, the writer of Psalms, speaks words of blessing in Psalm 144:11-15: “Our sons will be like plants grown in their youth, and our daughters like corner pillars that are carved and adorned for a palace…”. Indeed, raising our daughters to maturity while pleasing God is a great blessing. Many parents, due to their busy schedules, are tempted to leave their children to grow up on their own. God did not give us children to neglect them. Parenthood is a serious responsibility, more so than many of us think. Mothers, we cannot leave our children, even those in secondary school, alone at home while we are busy or constantly traveling.

Some of us work shifts, others travel here and there, leaving our children alone; this is a mistake. A child’s mind wanders frequently. They may go to the neighbors or watch inappropriate things. They may start doing wrong, but do not let it be because of you. Some have taken young children to the West, leaving them there alone, without being present. Many failed to finish their schooling, but what is even more heartbreaking is that many left their faith. They entered strange marriages to obtain work permits, fought with locals in those countries, and others became poor through hardship. Solomon says that a child has a certain form of foolishness.

University studies or going to the West have become like gods these days. The life of fearing God is a seed. Do not leave your child with someone to look after them unless it is an emergency, for you will blame that person. Children have many things; even if you give them a good person to watch over them, how much pain do they have for your child more than you?

We met an older secondary school girl, raised far from her parents, who did not greet people, thank those who did good for her, nor open her mouth when greeted or asked common questions. We thought she was mute or deaf, but we discovered that it was the behavior she had been raised with, without being taught manners, or it was ignorance. Some said she was a “shy person,” but modesty and lack of manners are different things.

Our daughters need training because in the future they will be teachers of their own children and will need good communication with their husbands and even their in-laws. Can you accidentally step on someone’s foot and not apologize? Yet, anyone who wants to be a citizen of the kingdom must learn to tell people the good news! Will they remain silent, too shy to speak?

Proverbs 31 says a lot about the kind of woman one should be. I think this

begins in childhood training, not in adulthood. Many have said that the woman of Proverbs 31 is a combination of many women! We see she has people to help with her tasks, but it is she who organizes the plans for what needs to be done. As parents, especially women, we need to learn more about the woman of Proverbs 31 in detail. These questions and answers are for discussion with our daughters. Let us continue guiding them and evaluating them, and we ourselves will continue to grow on our journey to heaven.

Mama Pam Foster of doorpost.org has discussed this woman in great detail. We have taken her questions, and you should take time every day to discuss them with your daughter, teaching her about these questions from Proverbs 31. It is good to read the entire book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms together. Take time to read the entire Word of God every evening for three years, reading one chapter at a time and reflecting on it, with questions. You will learn many things on how to raise a child with the right character. There is no better book for raising a child than the Word of God.

Does she understand that the creation story in six days, with rest, is a key pillar in the teachings of the Word of God? Nowadays, evolutionary theories have arisen, making our daughters undervalue themselves, as if they were not created by God! The days of creation in Genesis are actual 24-hour days, not millions of days.

The first lesson for our children is obedience. We repeat “Obedience” is the first lesson! Obeying God’s commands and the parents.

Let us remember that these words were spoken by Solomon’s mother, advising her son on how to identify a good woman! The opposite of a good woman is the woman of Proverbs 7, who is a “strange woman.”

We, as women, must be people who pray and stay awake, having complete plans and goals for raising our children, and write them down on paper. If we want our daughters to be like the women of Proverbs 31, we must set examples ourselves. Therefore, let us pray for God to give us strength, tighten our belts, and help each other with our daughters. Daughters should learn obedience, planning, self-denial, skills, cleanliness, and work.

We would all like to have daughters who are mature spiritually, mentally, socially, economically, and physically. This woman is discussed in great detail. We see her preparing food, sewing clothes for herself and her family, doing business, buying land and farming, purchasing houses, planting vineyards, and helping the needy. She is a woman to be admired.

Men would also love to have a sister, mother, daughter, or wife like this. Even if the husband is an unbeliever, he can change because of such a woman. Women have a significant role in upbringing. We see that Timothy, the great preacher, received his faith from his grandmother Lois, and then his mother

Eunice. Let us not grow weary of doing good because we will reap at the right time if we do not lose heart.

Some women have given up due to the hardships of suffering. One said, “I have drunk from the cup.” It is true that some have fallen into difficult situations, but let us not grow weary, even if humanity or our close family members do not appreciate or love us, our calling, by God’s grace, is to live the life of the woman of Proverbs 31.

These things should be done with our growing daughters. Perhaps we should have fewer things to invest in our children, storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Let us not think only about school subjects but also about home matters. It is good to have a syllabus to help children with both character and academics because even the wisdom of the world, which we emphasize so much, may be foolishness to God; 1 Corinthians 3:19. You can bring up topics in prayers, question people, engage in practical activities, discuss, memorize verses related to the topic, ask questions, read other relevant books on character, and in the end, evaluate to help them grow spiritually in the area you want to build.

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. A wife of noble character, who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). This passage tells us to pray for our daughters to have humble and gentle spirits before God, to be ready to hear and obey His Word. Give them the opportunity to ask their grandmother or mother, who has a passion for loving God, for advice. Give our daughters the chance to talk to their father or uncles and ask what qualities attracted them to marry their wives. Who are such women in the Word of God? Provide examples of stories about women like Deborah, Esther, Huldah, Elizabeth, Job’s wife, Ruth, Lot’s daughters, Tamar, Sapphira, Gomer, Priscilla, Abigail, Jezebel, Bathsheba, Rachel, and Rebekah.

Read Titus 2 and make a list of the characteristics of a woman who fears God. Read 1 Timothy 5:3-10, which addresses how a widow should be valued and helped. Ask yourself questions about your daughter, such as whether she loves God and if her salvation is important to her. Does she love reading the Bible, or does she enjoy listening to it when she’s younger? Does she understand God’s Word? Does she desire to obey God? Does she have a relationship with God? When she sins, does she regret it and ask God and those she wronged for forgiveness? Does she desire to be like the world’s girls in her clothing, sports, and attitude? Does she have certain character weaknesses? What is she doing to overcome those weaknesses? Do the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 appear in her life? How can you help her grow in these areas? Is she growing according to Proverbs 31 and Titus 2? Does she have goals to glorify God and serve Him and her family, or does she love herself and only seek

pleasure for her own benefit?

“Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value” (verse 11). Her husband sees that she takes her responsibilities seriously. We must prepare our daughters for this by teaching them (training). Your daughter’s education is important and begins at home. She should know household tasks; take her to a woman who diligently fulfills her duties, and ask her why she does her work with faithfulness. Why should she be faithful in her work? Discuss examples of faithfulness in the Bible, such as Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, the slave girl of Naaman, Delilah, Michal, Potiphar’s wife, Haman’s wife, Herodias, Eve, or Tabitha. The time of initiation rites and puberty ceremonies, where girls were taught these things, is past; today, you and your fellow believers should teach these lessons to your daughters. Don’t say, “Let the aunt teach her this.”

Girls often face temptations to gossip about others and to flatter. As parents, we should avoid adding salt, lying, gossiping, murmuring, jealousy, anger, pride, and hypocrisy in our words, actions, and attitudes. Take her to ask someone at church, “Why do you trust so-and-so and not so-and-so?” Can you trust your daughter if she says something or tells half-truths, giving excuses? Does she lie through her actions and make up stories, or hide the truth? Does she keep her promises? If she lies, does she try to cover it up with another lie? Does she speak ill of people when they are not present? Does she return things she has borrowed? Is she trustworthy in her relationships, goals, or plans, or does she deceive even herself? Does she like to bribe or flatter to get what she wants? Does she say she was “just joking” when caught doing wrong? Does she sometimes speak without thinking and criticize others carelessly or without kindness? Can she freely come to you and talk about matters that are not right, especially sensitive ones?

Discuss with her questions like, “Why is it wrong for a wife to speak badly of her husband, parents, or even peers to others? Why should a student not speak ill of their teacher?” Trustworthiness is important in childhood and adulthood. Discuss the evils of divorce and write an essay on it.

Is she ready to help a friend when they make a mistake with love and humility, not just gossip about them in front of others and leave them to continue in their bad behavior? Does she get angry quickly and cut off friendships easily? Does she want everyone to stop being friends with someone she no longer wants to be friends with? Does she forgive quickly when wronged? Does she value the thoughts of her friends or younger siblings and is she able to offer them good advice? Does she feel jealousy or bitterness when a friend or sibling succeeds? Is she willing for her friends to also be friends with others, or does she want them to be only her friends? Does she like to criticize, belittle, or make fun of others when with her friends? Does she value her parents’

guidance and family goals? Does she lack respect for her parents in front of her friends? Does she remain faithful to her future husband by preserving herself, or does she engage in romantic friendships with boys/men? Does she know that marriage is a lifetime commitment?

As a girl, being attentive is a good quality, even when she gets married. She should be attentive without interrupting, arguing, or speaking out of turn. She must understand that a wife listens to her husband as the leader when he gives instructions or discusses family matters. Her children will also need to be listened to, and this is a skill she should learn to have. Many women need to learn to listen more than speak.

Sins that easily entangle us, like gossiping, criticizing, and nagging, come from talking too much rather than listening. We should teach our daughters to listen. The book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and Paul's letters all have much to say about this. Look at people whom you think have wisdom, then observe how they speak to others. How do they talk? How do they listen? How do they ask questions? What can you learn from them? Gossiping and failing to listen well can damage relationships. Why is it important for a wife to listen to her husband or a child to listen before jumping to conclusions? Have her write an essay on listening to her husband or child. Take an advertisement that lies and let her point out the flaws in it.

Questions to ask as a parent: Does she listen to God's voice and obey the Holy Spirit when He speaks to her heart? Does she listen to sermons in church? Can she repeat what was said in church, or does she only say that the sermon was good but can't remember anything? Does she listen to you or her father when you speak to her? Does she show respect when you talk to her? Does she pretend she didn't hear? Does she lose focus when others are talking to her? Does she have a frown when you talk to her and want to continue with her activities, and sometimes walk away while you're still talking? Does she listen carefully to what you say and act accordingly? Does she remember what she was told? Does she like to interrupt conversations and think about what she will say rather than listening? Does she quickly offer her advice while someone is still telling her their problem? Does she like to dominate the conversation?

As a girl, she should possess the quality of love, not be self-centered. Have her memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and after about two weeks, have her finish memorizing it all. What actions will she take if she loves people? If she loves God and wants to do His will, what actions will be seen in her? How can she show love to her siblings, father and mother, grandparents, uncles, and aunts? How should she treat her "enemies" according to God's Word?

Titus 2 encourages older widows to teach younger women to love their husbands. Love is also taught, and it is essential to teach our daughters, especially in today's world, which is full of selfishness ("me, myself, and I").

Many say, “I’m doing this for myself,” or “I’ve been doing things for others all the time; I’m tired now, I want to do something for myself!” Widows greatly value their husbands, especially when they remember them and say, “If I had known.”

Read and discuss the three types of love (Phileo, which is brotherly love; Agape, which is God’s love; and Eros, which is romantic love between husband and wife). How do these types of love differ? Does she have patience when others make mistakes, or does she get angry quickly? Does she show God’s love to others even if she disagrees with them? Is she willing to forgive small offenses done to her? Does she get along with others and do they enjoy being her friend? Does she love helping the needs of others before her own, or does she always put her own needs first? Does she rush to take the best seat or the biggest portion, so others don’t get it? Does she focus excessively on people’s faults and weaknesses? Does she criticize her friends harshly? Does she like to build others up, or does she like to boast about herself? Does she remember others’ wrongs constantly? Does she laugh and rejoice when others receive punishment? Does she look for opportunities to serve others, or does she want to be served? Does she show love to those who want to hurt or bring her down?

Obedience and respect are very important for a girl. Our daughters must be prepared to obey God. In order to live lives of peace and joy, it is essential to obey their husbands if God has ordained them to marry. Arguments, frowns, murmuring, rejection, and trying to drag others down are not good qualities. All of us have fallen short of the glory of God, but we must return to Him.

Our mother Eve, by disobeying and staying close to her husband, became the first sinner in the world. Often, we think that men commit many wrongdoings, such as murder, robbery, lying, and others; but let us remember that it was a woman who led us to this point by disobedience! Men have been given their part, to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. This is a huge responsibility, perhaps more than a woman’s, when she carries out her role as expected.

I once heard a mother say that men are more generous than women, and when we raise sons, we should not forget this. Later, I was surprised to realize it’s true because most of the government aid programs, whether for social welfare or other nations, are often led by men! So, mothers, let us teach our daughters generosity and the different roles of the genders, and the lesson will reach even our grandchildren! On the negative side, women often quarrel with people here and there or with neighbors, but men go to war and fight with many others! All these things the Proverbs 31 woman should know in order to help her children. They say Barbara, the wife of President Bush, said this when her son became President of the United States, “I’ve ruled

the world twice, first my husband was president, now my son is president!" This mother understood that as a mother, she has a certain position; it's not necessary to hold the same position a man holds, but she has her own role.

In the example God has given us, it is not hard to obey the husband, for it seems he has the bigger responsibility in marriage, and we are the helpers. Obeying the husband is a great joy and a command from God. If you don't believe this, ask a mother whose son is disobedient to her and let her explain how she feels about that government.

A girl should know God's command in Ephesians 6: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." How can a daughter show obedience to her parents? What other authorities, besides parents, should she obey? The church, the government, work, etc. Read about those who obeyed and those who did not, such as Achan, Cain, Noah, or Jacob. Read Deuteronomy 28.

Why can God's name be blasphemed by a child who does not obey their parents or a wife who does not obey her husband? Does she obey without hesitation, arguing, or complaining? Does she do what you say joyfully, or does she sulk? Does her face show a spirit of humility before God and the authority He has placed in her life? Do her actions show obedience? Does she obey the authority given to others like a nanny, aunt, or teacher? Does she understand that God is the ultimate authority? Does she value your decisions, even when they sometimes don't make sense to her? Does she know how to respectfully appeal to you if she wants to be heard again? Does she show respect to the police, teachers, and government authorities? Does she spend time knowing God's Word and obeying it? Does she obey you when you are near or even far away when you cannot see her? Does she obey with joy or with a heavy heart?

Maintaining peace at home is important for a girl. Girlhood is like a laboratory for how she will behave in the world. Good relationships are a gift from God, and maintaining and nurturing them is a responsibility. We must protect our daughters from hatred, seeking revenge on their parents or relatives. Hatred or deceit is not a good thing. We should forgive to bring healing, growth, and even spiritual maturity. Read about reconciliation, quarrels, warnings, and a quarrelsome woman in the book of Proverbs.

How should an enemy be treated? Encourage your daughter to write about forgiving others and being forgiven. Read God's Word and look at examples of forgiveness and being forgiven. We can know God's Word, but if we don't know how to forgive, we will face much pain, broken relationships, and even go to Hell if we're not careful. A girl's early relationships in the family prepare her to have good relationships with her family when she becomes an adult.

Are parents peacemakers? Do they forgive people, or do they love arguments? As a mother, look at where you need to correct. Discuss the quarrelsome

woman in the book of Proverbs. Read about the women who quarreled in the Bible, such as Sarah/Hagar, Rachel/Leah/Jacob, Peninnah/Hannah, Michal/David, Miriam/Moses, Job/His wife. What did they quarrel about? What were the results? What can we learn from this?

Read Hebrews 12:15-16 and discuss with your daughter. Discuss anger, revenge, forgiveness, and patience.

Does she get along well with her siblings, or do they always argue, justifying herself by saying she is defending her rights? Does she rush to speak, or does she listen when she is corrected? When she quarrels, does she examine her heart to see if she is at fault? Does she forgive others, knowing she also makes mistakes? Is she willing to go to the one who wronged her and ask for forgiveness? Does she love reconciliation, or does she hold onto resentment? Does she know how to find solutions in a way that does not escalate the conflict? Does she pray first before addressing reconciliation? Is she willing to reconcile, even if it takes more than once with the same person? Does she try to resolve conflicts early, or does she hold on to anger for a long time? Does she believe God will fight for her, or does she prefer to take matters into her own hands and seek revenge? Does she focus on the good in others, or does she only see their flaws? Is she quick to criticize and hold grudges? Does she forgive and move on, or does she keep bringing up past wrongs?

These things are important because, when a girl has her own home, she will be wronged by her husband or children, and she will also wrong them. Therefore, she should start learning how to maintain peace in relationships as she grows up.

She must understand that humility is important. She should humble herself under God's leadership so that every day her selfishness decreases and the Holy Spirit can work in her to help her develop good character. She should be ready to be corrected without arguing. Is she willing to admit where she was wrong without hiding it? Do her words show pride, thinking that she is always right? Does she despair when she sins, or is she ready to ask for forgiveness, not to avoid punishment, but because she loves God? Does she know she cannot do well without God's guidance? Does she know that God is the ruler and has entrusted you, the parent, to help her in her life? Does she know that God's laws are for our good?

Living a pure life is important for a girl and for the community she will be part of when she grows up. Purity of thoughts, words, and actions. Teach her to pray every day so that she can obey God and avoid temptation.

What are temptations? Why do we sin, and what are the consequences of sin? Read together in God's Word about sin and the life of darkness or relationships stained by sin. How many have sinned? What is the wage of sin? Who overcame

temptations, and who avoided them? Read Proverbs 7 together and learn how to avoid the behavior of a strange woman. Does she know there is a battle between Satan and God, and that she is involved? Does she know where Satan came from? Does she know that when she faces problems, she should not turn to witches or sorcerers, but to godly people? Does she know why she is on earth? Does she know how she will gain victory? Does she know how to use God's Word to gain victory over temptations? Does she avoid places where temptation is strong, or does she walk right into them? Does she choose friends who love God, or those who lead her into evil? Does she know how to flee from temptation? Does she accept advice regarding bad company? Does she obey in all things, such as the time to come home or tasks to be done?

Does she have a tendency to flirt with boys or say things that raise suspicion of inappropriate behavior? Does she ask God for help in avoiding sin? Does she avoid having male friends or "boyfriends," knowing that the dating plan is not for purity but for courtship? Does she use her time wisely, or does she read inappropriate books or watch harmful images? Does she spend her time daydreaming without purpose? Does she come to you with questions that are sensitive and age-appropriate, or is she hesitant to discuss things with you (such as relationships, bad friends, etc.)?

It is important to teach our daughters patience and heavenly behavior. We should teach them these values when they are young before they mature. They should learn patience in many areas, for example, not starting to have male friends too early, but following the plan of courtship. We don't advise starting courtship until they are mature, usually around the age of 18, but it is better that they become independent so they are not a burden. Regular friends are the ones they will often marry.

She should avoid talking to boys in private, giving them false hopes of unhealthy friendships. It is better for her to be open about what is happening, as parents have much experience, especially in today's life, to help daughters avoid entering marriages filled with sorrow. Mothers should be ready to discuss; your child cannot learn from others the same way they can learn from you. It is better for a mother to help her daughter set standards for the husband she wants to marry, one who is ready to obey and respect her. Look at examples such as Isaac/Rebekah, David/Michal, Esau, Samson, Solomon.

Read books like "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" by Joshua Harris and discuss the dangers of dating (friendships with boys) and the benefits of courtship. Is she willing to listen to your advice on choosing a life partner? Does she believe that God will help her find a spouse, or is she rushing? Is she ready to grow spiritually in order to build a better home, or is she rushing to get married? Does she read love stories that teach many false ideas about love and marriage?

Is she ready to preserve herself by avoiding sexual temptations found in music,

books, images, friends, and movies? Has she come to you with questions about God's plan for sex and purity? Does she know God's plan for sexuality? Does she understand maturity as a girl by rejecting falsehood and how to preserve herself? Take time to talk about these things, not just once, but here and there. Is she willing to live alone if that is the calling God has placed on her life?

Self-dedication is crucial for a girl. We see how Ruth dedicated herself to her husband and then to his family, and she was blessed. A girl should respect her parents when she is young at home. She should respect siblings and extended family members, like brothers, sisters, mother, father, grandparents, uncles, and aunts. She should be carefully taught, and then ask yourself these questions: Does she respect her elders? Does she mock or ignore them? Does she expect her grandparents to help her, but she doesn't want to help them? Does she listen respectfully to uncles, younger fathers, or aunts? Does she consult her grandparents for advice? Does she regularly communicate with her grandparents? Parents must show an example of loving and respecting their parents. Does she help elderly people in her village gladly? Does she thank relatives when they help her, or does she think it's her right?

"She seeks wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight" (Proverbs 31:13). We should teach our daughters to have entrepreneurial spirit and diligence in their work. "He who does not work, let him not eat." They should work, whether they feel like it or not! They should learn to work with joy, as work is a command from God, even before the fall of man. Whether a worker is present or absent, the girl should know how to do all types of work and do them.

She should do household chores, school tasks, and we should have a list of daily activities. If it's feeding chickens, making the bed, washing, sweeping, raking, or feeding animals, we learn from bees, ants, and other animals about not being lazy. Take time to observe these insects with your daughter. Watch how you work and let her do the same, paying attention when she learns to do these tasks without laziness. Give her other occasional tasks with small rewards if you can to motivate her. She can even open her own savings account if the family is able to assist, and learn how to manage savings/spend money wisely. Study about the dangers of excessive sleep and its consequences. Reflect on the lives of Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel, Ruth, or Tabitha. Look at the lives of Rachel and Rebekah as they worked before being courted. Assign her some part of the garden to manage. Look at the lives of athletes, scientists, writers, inventors, and the hours they invested. Observe hardworking women you know—what do they do? What problems arise from laziness?

Ask yourself, is she doing her best? Does she work well when people are watching? Does she complain or show a bad attitude when she expects to

be rewarded or paid? Does she wait for others to do the work, grumbling or making excuses? Does she ask questions as if she doesn't know how to do the task you gave her, or is it just an excuse for laziness? Does she complete daily tasks without being reminded? Does she finish tasks, or does she disappear or get distracted? Can you explain how the task should be done, and will she do it? Does she do things halfway? Does she take care of her belongings? Does she return things after using them? Does she check her work before reporting it, or does she rush through it? Does she waste time, or does she say "I'll do it tomorrow"? Does she give up and stop working when the task becomes difficult?

"She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar, and rises while it is still night" (Proverbs 31:14). The attitude of productivity, work ethic, and proper management of possessions is very important. A girl should be taught the work ethic of handcrafts, how to manage money, how to budget, how to shop for groceries or other items. If possible, compare prices or different markets before making a purchase. Teach her the dangers of wastefulness and misuse of items. She should know how to buy nutritious food that is also affordable. Teach her the value of bargaining and assessing the worth of things. Does she know how to compare bulk purchases and understand price differences? If she cooks a large amount of food, can she divide it into two servings for the next day, saving money?

Teach her how to make purchases and how to save. She should learn how to garden to reduce the cost of buying everything, especially vegetables. Does she know how to find quality second-hand clothes and make them presentable, either for herself or for her younger siblings? Many families spend a lot on expensive recreation—does she know affordable, worthwhile entertainment options?

I saw in Dar es Salaam, Indian families going to the beach to enjoy the breeze, eating cassava chips or coconuts at a reasonable price. Meanwhile, other families go to expensive places for entertainment, eating fried chicken at large hotels, soda, pizza, ice cream, and other costly and unhealthy foods. These are important lessons to teach our children.

Can she preserve leftover food and turn it into something useful? Leftover vegetables and beans can be used to make soup by adding other ingredients. If unexpected guests arrive, does she know how to stretch her food to serve many? Does she know how to raise chickens for eggs or cows for milk if possible? Teach her how to preserve food for the dry season.

In the past, many tribes would dry leafy vegetables, sweet potatoes, etc. These days, we are less familiar with this. During rainy season, we have plenty of vegetables, but during dry season, we struggle. See if she buys unnecessary things without thinking. Does she fall for commercial ads that

encourage impulse buying? Is she willing to buy things that have dropped in price, or does she have the patience to wait? Does she learn how to sew, knit, or develop other skills to reduce expenses? If you send her to the market, can she compare prices and bring back quality, affordable items? If you write her a shopping list, does she follow it, or does she buy things you didn't send her for? When she enters the market, does she know the difference between nutritious food and junk food? Can she stick to a budget and manage it wisely? Does she leave her things lying around without caring if they get damaged?

A girl should be taught how to manage time well. Time is an amazing talent that everyone has been given. A child should be taught how to manage and redeem time so she can help her husband, children, community, and church. Teach her how to plan time for household chores. Give her a project with a deadline. Create a list with her of things that can be completed in five, ten, or fifteen minutes. Time management is highly valuable.

She should walk around with a book while waiting for the bus, knit, or do something productive. Read books that help her life (long life learning). Reflect on how time was important in creation in Genesis 1. Create a daily schedule for her, including waking up, brushing teeth, bathing, and reading the Word of God. Give her time to ask adults what they would do differently if they could go back to their youth.

What regrets does she have for wasting time or not doing something? What shortcuts should be avoided when cooking, cleaning, or sewing? How does she budget her time? How did people like David, Josiah, Christ, Daniel, Miriam, Joseph, and Moses use their time wisely? List activities that happen at certain stages in a girl's life, such as education, having children, marriage, and old age. Ask her if she is doing what is expected at each stage of life.

Buy her a notebook to plan her time and a monthly calendar to review every week. Ask yourself if she is using her time wisely to plan for the future or wasting it on distractions. Does she invest her time in eternal matters by reading the Word of God and praying? Does she have a daily schedule, or does she just daydream? Does she use her free time wisely? Does she waste time on the phone, TV, and computer? When given a task, does she waste time or manage it efficiently? Does she take too much time getting ready? Does she sleep in, or does she follow a routine? Does she arrive on time at church, school, or appointments? Does she often say, "I'll do it tomorrow," or procrastinate until the last minute? Can she multitask or does she sit idly while waiting for food to cook?

As a girl and later as a mother managing a husband and children, she should know how to do laundry, maintain hygiene in all feminine matters, cook, mature, and handle all household tasks. Can she delegate tasks to her younger siblings, and later, even when she has a helper, can she tell them what to do

without wasting time? Watch how you do work and delegate it to others to help. Observe the tools you use and teach her. She should begin to purchase her own tools slowly as she gets some money. These tools include items like a sewing machine, needles, hoes, and pots.

Does she know how to use a sewing machine, and can she repair her clothes? Does she know how to use needles to repair clothes, sew on buttons, or make garments? Can she read the pattern for a sweater, weaving fabric, or sewing clothes?

Work on a project together, such as decorating a wedding hall, and write down how you will complete each task step by step.

Look at the lives of Joseph, Deborah, and Daniel. How did God prepare them to be rulers? God prepares our daughters to take on responsibilities such as caring for their families and other tasks. Look at whether He finishes the tasks He gives them. Can He break a large project into small tasks and delegate them to others to help? Is He teaching His younger ones with patience? When He is given a task to assist others, does He want to do it all by Himself? Can He follow instructions when given (directions)? Can He review the work of others who are under Him? Does He lead others with humility or does He oppress them, showing that He is the boss? Does He assist His younger ones in doing work, or does He just watch them? Do others enjoy working with Him, or do they avoid Him?

A woman can cook 1000 meals a year, and many remember their mother's cooking. It is important to teach our children how to cook well. We should even learn recipes from different tribes and plan meals based on what we grow and what is easy for that season. Does He know how much everyone in the family should eat? In these days of globalization, He can find recipes from various places like books, websites, and others. Can you help Him write a simple recipe book to use in your church?

Experts say that any recipe with more than seven ingredients is not healthy. Teach Him to cook, not with many seasonings, but for health first, then taste, and later appearance. Some recipes take a short time to cook, while others are inexpensive. Ask friends, church members, and relatives for new recipes, and write them down. You could volunteer at your church to have a cooking class once a month for about three hours.

What tools are needed for cooking? Can you learn to bake bread, make jam, or peanut butter? Look at recipe magazines. Ask mothers, "Why is mealtime important?" Does He know how to bake? Fry? Boil? Can He use kitchen tools skillfully, safely, and maintain them well? Can He follow a recipe (recipe)? Can He cook for double the number of people (for example, cooking for six people instead of three)? Can He cook on time and set the table? How does

He know when food is cooked? Does He clean up the dishes after cooking?

If a mother gets sick, can she manage everything by herself? Can she make food that is delicious and pleasing? Are the people she cooks for more important than the food she makes? Does she prefer expensive, decorative foods instead of budgeting and cooking nutritious meals? Can she budget the monthly food expenses? Does she collect good recipes and learn what is possible? Does she know how to cook for people with special health needs like diabetes, allergies, heart problems, or high blood pressure? Is she willing to develop her cooking talent and sell food? As a mother, would you help her start a small restaurant business? What is important about food, besides being nutritious and tasty?

Another thing to consider is organizing things. Section 15. Properly organizing a house brings peace and also reflects the nature of God, who is orderly and beautiful (beauty). People we invite will want to come more if our homes are peaceful and well-organized. A girl who learns to organize things as a child will be helpful to her family and even when she works.

Some people are born with the talent of organizing things well, like women from the Far East who arrange flowers beautifully without much effort, but most of us need to be taught and encouraged repeatedly. If you're not a good organizer of things, like me, seek help by reading and from others.

The first law in heaven is order. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says that everything should be done decently and in order. Young girls should return their things after playing. They should learn to make their beds. In the morning, plan your day and even write down what you want to do, otherwise, the day will end without accomplishing much. Learn how to plan your activities in a calendar or notebook. Teach children to organize their books, pictures, dolls, study desks, letters, schoolwork, etc. Teach them to organize long-term and short-term goals.

Organize the kitchen, their cabinets, and bookshelves. Organize together and teach them how to prioritize tasks. If you're planning to go somewhere, such as a trip, organize together what to pack, the map, hotel bookings, necessary phone calls, departure dates, places to visit, and things to do. Plan a schedule for hosting guests or a small party. Set a budget and follow it. Plan for games, decorations, and how to raise funds for the event. If possible, read books by Don Aslett such as "Clutter's Last Stand" or "Clutter Free."

Visit the homes of women who organize things well and with their permission, see how they arrange kitchens, cabinets, or living rooms. Organize home health records, such as vaccinations, first aid, and doctor's appointments. Also, keep certificates like birth certificates, school reports, and store them

in a special place.

Take a new file and divide it into sections, writing down phone numbers, addresses, calendar appointments (like sports/events), instructions for the babysitter, children's clothing sizes, etc. Keep this book in an easily accessible place for reference. Look at places in the house where organization is necessary and work together after organizing what to do.

Give the girl a task to arrange photos neatly and label them in a photo album. Organize receipts, insurance papers, or teaching pictures for the church. Help the girl organize her room and decorate it affordably. Read www.Titus2.com where they discuss managing the home. Tell the girl to write an essay on "The Value of an Organized Home."

Does she put everything where it belongs, even when she takes off her clothes at night, without leaving them on the floor? Does she pile things up instead of organizing them? Does her closet, purse, or school bag have order? Can she pack her bags well when going on vacation from school? Does she throw things around everywhere? Does she have trouble finding things like needles, thread, schoolwork, or shoes? Can she organize a messy area? Can she prioritize what to start doing? Does she like collecting things, even if they are insignificant (junk), and refuses to let them go? Can she keep track of appointments, addresses, and phone numbers without losing them? Is she so mentally organized that she gets upset when plans change? Can you leave the house with her for one day? Does she write down her long-term plans?

"She looks at a field and buys it; with the earnings of her hands, she plants a vineyard" - Section 16. This section shows how to organize buying things, arranging seeds, and planning how the field will produce efficiently and yield good results. Even if small, she can do small tasks, such as washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning the house, caring for younger siblings, going to the market, changing babies' diapers. Doing work will help her organize bigger tasks.

Many focus on school, which is good, but children study to get jobs later. Everything they do is meaningful to the King of heaven for His glory, and also builds character, which is what they will take to heaven. Let us not despise small beginnings, as they help build our children into strong and courageous women. Let her start setting small tasks to do before playing. Assign small jobs for her to do as she grows.

She can start setting goals for small tasks, even in entrepreneurship, if she is over 14 years old. What are her spiritual goals for the future, like showing God's love? A woman's goals must align with her husband, discuss why. Is there something difficult that God wants her to do in her life? Does she want

to please God and bring Him glory, with her focus on eternity rather than temporary things? Do her future goals align with God's word, or are they for pleasure? Does she have a daily plan and long-term goals, and does she write them down? Does she agree with your family's goals and support them both physically and financially? Is she willing to sacrifice temporary pleasures for her goals? (For example, studying for exams instead of playing). Is she eager to learn new things and use this talent? Does she know that Jesus is coming, and it is important to prepare for this great event above all others?

We see that a garden is important in a woman's life. It blesses the one who cultivates it and others too. A garden can bring beauty, exercise, and even a place to relax and meditate. A garden does not have to be large; I have seen many city friends who plant flowers or tomatoes in pots and even share them. The joy of planting seeds and seeing them grow is essential. Every girl should learn to plant vegetables and flowers! Get training in gardening for efficiency, as it is a great service for those in need.

Many of us who have gardens have given produce to those in need and been blessed. It is good for a girl to write an essay on the benefits of having a garden. Does she know the difference between weeds and plants? When working in the garden, does she do it with you? Does she know how to prepare the soil for planting and where to find agricultural knowledge? Does she know how to deal with pests that destroy crops? Does she ask for advice from others about farming knowledge? Have you given her a piece of land to garden? Can she plan how to run a garden for a season?

This woman in Proverbs, when she plans to buy and cultivate, becomes an entrepreneur who knows how to manage finances well. Since our daughters will grow up and have responsibilities to manage their own money, their husbands' money, and help children with various plans, teaching them financial planning is essential (financial training). A child should be taught to divide their money when given: giving a tithe, setting aside savings, and leaving some for expenses. It is good to read the story of the Widow's two coins in Mark 12; Matthew 25 for the teachings on talents, and Luke 12 about the rich man with many possessions.

A girl should ask different people, including parents, to tell her the blessings of God for those who return the tithe. Lessons on greed, hoping for wealth, borrowing, and mismanagement of money are important. Teach the child short-term and long-term financial goals. How will she get the money to buy something she wants? Parents should discuss and, if possible, help her start a small business. The child should be taught that giving is better than receiving, and God blesses us when we give without complaining. If possible, open an account for her.

What principles should be followed when borrowing things? Can she compare

prices before buying? Look at the examples of Abraham, Job, Solomon, Zacchaeus, Sapphira, and Hezekiah. Keep a household spending record together monthly. Make a clothing budget for the year. Look at good principles for lending money to others. Ask a few women how they manage money or save.

What is the difference between an offering and zakat? Does he give zakat and offerings with humor? How can a wife help her husband by being a good steward of wealth? When creating a household budget, involve him in understanding the monthly household expenses. What are the expenses we consistently have that we can cut or reduce? What are the benefits of a wife staying at home versus having a job outside the home? Does she know that everything she has was given to her by the Heavenly Father? Is she thankful to God who provided it?

Does she know how to save, or does she spend money thoughtlessly? Is she stingy, or is she willing to share with others because God has blessed her? Does she waste money? Does she enjoy borrowing, or does she spend more than she has? Does she prefer spending money on temporary pleasures rather than saving? Can she budget based on the money she has?

“She girds her loins with strength and strengthens her arms.” Verse 17. Just like a soldier goes to war as described in Ephesians 6:17, so should our daughters. In order for our daughters to understand the word properly, we need to teach them systematically and in an organized manner so they understand the key doctrines of the faith.

Each child should have their own Bible, and by the age of seven, they should have their own time for Bible reading, even if it’s just for ten minutes. It might be good for them to start with a Bible in simple language. We have been using the Clear Word Bible or the International Children’s Bible, but we currently do not have children’s Bibles in Swahili. We have started writing children’s Bibles or Bible stories for children; please pray that we can complete this work.

We cannot know or love God without reading His Word. And eternal life is to know God, to depend on Him, to trust Him, and to walk with Him day by day; John 17:3. Prayer is when we speak to God, and reading God’s Word is when God speaks to us.

As a mother, you must be an example. Do your children see you reading God’s Word every day? A child should begin memorizing the 66 books of the Bible in order, perhaps by using a song. They can memorize portions of God’s Word and recite them. Every day, you can read one chapter of Proverbs. Reading God’s Word is a daily activity, just like eating. If we find ourselves too busy, the remedy is not to eat until we have read God’s Word. We will feel hungry

and will read. Once the child can read, they should begin reading God's Word.

Have a daily reading chart, perhaps reading one page or one chapter a day. Learn the history of how God's Word reached us and some aspects of the Bible, such as the language used, the books of the Torah, history, poetry, and psalms. It was first printed in 1456 using Gutenberg's printing press, and it has changed the lives of many. It was written over 1,700 years by about 40 people. It has 1,189 chapters and is not just a book of good advice or thoughts but is the voice of God and the final authority on earth and in heaven!

The daughter should read the Bible and put her name, for example, 1 Corinthians 13. Where the word "love" is, she should first put God's name and then read it again, putting her own name. Memorize the key theme in each book of the Bible. Take your daughter to attend Bible study at church. Read Psalm 119 together and discuss it. Explore different ways of reading the Bible and pray for the grace to live according to its teachings. Register your daughter for Bible study by post or online, such as amazingdiscovery.org, amazingfacts.org, secretunsealed, or voiceofprophecy Bible study. When she reads a verse, it is good for her to write the following: What does this verse say? What does it mean? How can it be applied in my life? What should I do with this verse? After a week, let her check if anything has changed in her life because of that verse.

Do they read the Word of God every day without being reminded? Do they have a passion for reading it? Does it change their life and bring meaning? Can they give examples of how the Word of God can be applied in their life? Do they ask questions while reading it? Do they share it with others? Do they seek answers to their questions in the Bible? Can they easily find a verse? Do they know at least a little bit about the history of the Bible? Do they know how to use Bible study tools like a dictionary, concordance, and cross-references?

It is very important to memorize the Word. In times of trial, you will overcome the devil by remembering the promises you've stored up! "It is written." When the Word of God is kept in our hearts, it is a great weapon against evil; Psalm 119:10. The Holy Spirit will remind us of the right verse to use for a certain trial. Start memorizing one verse every week. Young children have a good memory, and since they don't have too much in their heads, it will help. There is no better way to expand the mind and gain knowledge than memorizing the Word of God. Discuss as they continue to memorize to understand the meaning of these verses. Start with passages like Psalm 23, or Psalm 91. 1 Corinthians 13; The Ten Commandments, or even the book of Ephesians on relationships—these are all very good. You can record how they've memorized it. It is good to have a notebook to write down what you read. Can they memorize 20 verses?

Teaching a daughter the habit of praying every day is very important because even when she becomes an adult, she will know to bring her problems to God, and in the challenges she will face with her family, prayer will help her solve them. Always teach those we mentor to bring their problems to God. Pray together in the morning and evening, and pray individually as well. Discuss together the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. Every time she is tempted to speak ill of someone, let her pray. She should have a small notebook where she writes down what she is praying for and the dates. This will help her go back and thank God. Let her pray for those in trouble, the government, family, school, the elderly, the church, the discouraged, and the sick. She should learn to pray for those who hurt her. Praise God, confess sins, thank God, and bring your needs as part of every prayer.

Ask people of faith, missionaries, or preachers how prayer has opened doors or how God has answered their prayers. What women went to Christ to ask for something? Write down God's promises and how to pray them (there are more than 3500). Let her start praying for the husband she will marry, even though she is only ten years old.

Let her read stories of faith like that of Hannah, Moses, Solomon, Nehemiah, or David. Read the lives of Augustine, John Newton, and others who give thanks for the prayers of their mothers that made a difference in their lives. Learn the principles of fasting prayer as your daughter grows. Does she close her eyes while praying? Is prayer a real communication with God for her, or is it just tradition? Does she pray for God's guidance before making decisions? Does she think of praying only when facing difficulties? Does she show reverence in prayer, or does she talk carelessly? Does she believe that God answers prayers? Do you share answered prayers with her? Does she give thanks in her prayers, or is she always asking for things?

It is important to teach our daughters to control their emotions. To confront their bodies or feelings. It is very important to deny themselves, go to bed on time, and wake up on time. Read the Word and pray right after waking up. Eat at proper times and learn good principles for taking care of the body (brushing teeth, combing hair, trimming nails, bathing, washing clothes) without being reminded.

She should learn to eat when she is truly hungry, not just because she has nothing else to do, so food does not become a comfort. She should not eat until four or five hours have passed. Laziness, gluttony, wearing immodest clothes, evil lifestyles, and bad friends are things to reject.

What kind of music does she listen to? Ask others to tell her which of her behaviors might be annoying to others, so she can let go of them by the grace of God. Does she know about healthy food and exercise, or does she eat whatever she likes? Does she know what the Word of God says about what we

should eat?

Let her read about people who denied themselves to do great things in life, like Daniel, Esther, and Joseph. Write an essay on 'Gluttony.'

Sit in a public place where people pass by and observe them. How do they walk, look, dress, or carry themselves? Does any of that communicate something? Who appears to be self-confident, self-denying, or lazy? How does the Word of God describe our bodies? Read about the consequences of overeating or eating too little. Read about the consequences of eating unhealthy food (junk food) or what God says we should not eat.

There are sins that affect our bodies, such as anger and others. Examine these. Read the health and dietary laws in the Old Testament, like from the time of Noah before the Jews. See if she is making an effort to live a healthy and clean life without being reminded—does she brush her teeth? Does she wash her underwear every day? Does she bathe every day without being reminded? Does she exercise and control her eating habits? Does she know that her body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

Does her appearance reflect self-denial and self-respect? Does she control her body so that she doesn't annoy others? Does she always seem tired? Is she often sick? Does she behave with decorum? Are there things that could help her be healthy and strong? Does she have nervous habits like biting her nails? Does she care about how she looks to others? Does she worry too much about her appearance?

It is important to teach our daughters to seek appropriate counsel. God is the greatest counselor, but He has also placed people to help us. She can ask godly older women for advice. As she becomes an adult, she will need advice from people. It is better to be humble and ask for advice than to ruin things when we get stuck. The Word of God in James 1 says anyone lacking wisdom should ask, and God will give it. Ask your parents where in your life you sought counsel and succeeded.

The book of Proverbs is great for reading, and it always says, "My son, listen to my instruction…" How will she seek a good advisor for spiritual matters, family matters, social issues, or finances? Titus 2 says older women should be advisors. Read about people who received good or bad advice in the Word of God.

What is wisdom? Read Ephesians 5:22-24 and discuss: What does it mean to submit to a husband in seeking advice from others? What should a wife do when her husband gives unwise counsel, like Abigail did?

I remember the advice my mother gave me before finishing 12th grade when she saw people coming to ask about engagements or relationships. Even

when I was studying at the seminary because I was the only girl, and even at university in the chemistry department where I was the only girl, this was the age when people looked for wives. The boys who came, my mother advised me: “You see how many people are coming now, look, don’t give rude or arrogant responses, even though you are studying and don’t want to get married, answer politely and respectfully, even to those you think are not suitable because of their bad behavior. Tell them to give you time to think about it, and after a few days, let them know that you are still at school, or you have things to finish, so they should continue, and it won’t work out.” She said that maybe in a few years, you will have changed your mind, and since you responded kindly, they may come back, and you might find someone good to marry. Even if not them, they will speak well of you, and others will believe that you care about people.

The world is changing; today they want to marry, but you are not ready; tomorrow you may want to marry, and they may not be ready because of arrogance or your responses. Then she said it is not a girl’s job to chase after a man, like Potiphar’s wife. Men should pursue you, and among those who pursue, you choose one of them. It is shameful to chase after a man, even if you love him, let him follow you. Although nowadays, girls are very eager to chase! A man was created to pursue, and he feels good when he finds the one, the girl or makes an effort. Above all, praying for a good husband more than three times a day is important because no one knows who is truly suitable. Those who appeared to be failures have become great husbands, and those who seemed good have become cruel to their wives. The heart is deceitful and has hidden diseases, who can know it except God? So, a girl should know that a good husband is a gift from the Lord, not someone she will find with her own knowledge.

People change, those who married stable people have changed and become bad to their wives, and those we thought married unsuitable people have changed. A spouse can change their behavior by giving them space to grow. Look at how parents gave advice.

Does your daughter follow your advice on ordinary and sensitive matters? Does she accept your counsel about her friends or argue? Does she always think she is right? Does she ask for advice on spiritual matters? Does she seek to know God’s will by reading His Word? Does she enjoy counsel from God and those who love Him, or does she just want her own way?

Since we are in a community of believers, it is good to empower those who share the same faith. Involve your daughters in church and discuss scriptures and the Word of God together. Let your daughters see the value of helping with church activities. They can join others in cleaning the church. They should thank their teachers who teach them in church and the leaders. There

are many services in the church to help those in need, and your daughters can join.

Let your daughters learn how to sit quietly in church and honor the Lord's day with the Bible plan that was instructed. Do women in the Old and New Testaments have a role in the church?

Does she complain about going to church and try to avoid it? Does she frequently leave church to go to the restroom or drink water? Does she use what she has been taught in church? Does she only pray for food but not for her life? Are her closest friends from church? Does she enjoy being in the house of the Lord? Can she say what she learned today? Does she serve others with the talents she has been given? Does she listen attentively? Does she pray for the needs of the body of Christ? Does she know her spiritual gifts? Does she admire women in her church or leaders, or does she admire worldly people (celebrities)?

"It is good if her product has value; her light does not go out at night;" verse 18. The woman of this character is patient (perseverance). As parents, we should avoid the temptation of shielding our children from difficulties or challenges. Children should not see from us that God treats them unjustly. Let us help them return to God and His Word. Let us not withhold the opportunity for our children to see God's greatness and faithfulness in their difficulties so they can grow and be purified to become precious gems. Books like Pilgrim's Progress show this well. Ask the elders of faith about God's faithfulness in their lives. Hebrews 11 is a chapter to read and discuss how people solved their problems with God's help. When we go through tough times, what bad things may happen? Who holds the reins of everything? How does obedience and faith help us show others that God is the Almighty?

Read about notable people who did not give up during great trials or failures. Read Psalms and magazines like Voice of the Martyrs on the internet about people who have died for their faith recently. Read Isaiah 53. Who in the Bible endured until the end? How can we thank God for everything? Discuss God's greatness and power together. Why does God allow trials and suffering? (1 Peter). How can a wife be patient and obedient to a husband who is difficult to live with? What does the Bible say about divorce? How are divorce and perseverance related?

Does she give up quickly and not want to try again after failure? Does she complain and pity herself when things don't go as planned or when someone wrongs her? Does she focus only on problems? Can she control her emotions during hardship or while facing challenges without harboring bitterness? Does she make it seem like she is the only one with problems in the world? Does she find comfort in Scripture during trials or hardship? Does she examine her own sins during challenges to see if God is trying to lead her to repentance?

Does she know that God wants her to learn from her struggles? Does she glorify God in the way she handles difficulties? Does she trust in God and see trials as helping her mature?

“She extends her hands to the needy. She reaches out her hands to the poor;” verses 19-20. God has been kind to us and invites us to be kind to those we don’t know, showing love to them. A woman learns kindness when she is young. A home that welcomes those in need of comfort, fellowship, assistance, and love is a model home. A mother will bring joy by participating in helping others. Many are told they have welcomed angels unknowingly (Hebrews 13).

Teach children to be kind by delivering food to the sick, helping those in need, like the elderly and sick, inviting people to our homes. Teach children how to greet a visitor, introduce them, carry their luggage, talk with them, serve them food, and make them feel at ease. Discuss what the host should do. How can one assist a family with an unexpected guest? How can one help the children of a guest who comes to visit with their mother? Think of someone who warmly welcomes you when you visit their home and try to imitate them.

How can visitors to the church be welcomed so they feel loved? Read examples in God’s Word of people who welcomed guests. Who welcomed angels? Look at the examples of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 and John 12. Can she quickly prepare a simple meal for guests? Does she know what food children like? Can she assist with guests who are staying overnight? What is the difference between a wife and a husband when it comes to hosting guests? Does she sit with the guests or keep to herself?

Is she willing to let guests use her things? Does she politely engage in adult conversations? Does she try to initiate a conversation with a guest? Does she try to be kind to guests of all ages? Does she help guests feel at home? When her friends come over, does she take responsibility for welcoming and serving them? Does she show respect when sitting at the table with guests? Does she greet visitors at church and welcome them? Does she resent visitors because she will have a lot of work to do? Does she realize that her hospitality is a way of serving God? Does she see her home as a means of reaching people with the knowledge of God?

On the other hand, does she know how to be a good guest when visiting others? Be cheerful and respectful where she is. Wear clothes respectfully, even when going to bed. How should she respond to others or act wisely? For example, if she hears her hosts arguing, what should she do? What activities can she help with as a guest?

Being a woman of mercy is important. Helping the poor, giving people spiritual and physical hope is essential. “He who is merciful to the poor lends to the

Lord, and the Lord will repay him" (Proverbs 19:17). Children of God are not stingy but generous. Teach children to give their toys, clothes, etc.

Plan ways to help widows, the sick, the handicapped, the lonely, or the elderly in your church. Consider how to set aside money to assist those in need, such as prisoners, missionaries, those caring for the sick, pregnant women, people with mental illnesses, those being oppressed, etc. How can you help them? Which Scriptures will be comforting to them? See www.persecution.com.

Read the Gospels and see how Christ helped those in need. How did He help the poor, the sick, widows, or orphans? Read the news or listen to reports about how you can assist those who have suffered a disaster. Can you help your neighbors who are poor but do not want handouts but work instead? What does mercy or compassion mean?

Does she notice when people are suffering or in need? Does she have compassion for their needs? Does she feel sorrow and show mercy to those in need? Does she know how to speak comforting words to those in pain? Does she give her time and resources to love God, or does she give so that people can see her? Does she have a passion for following Christ by serving others? Does she rejoice in serving? Does she dedicate herself to voluntary service?

We must also be involved in helping people's spiritual needs. As women, we are involved in this daily. We are commanded to go into all the world and tell people the good news. It is good to briefly understand how to give a testimony. How was she a Christian? How has God changed her life? She should know the story of the cross, even briefly—that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and 6:23. The wages of sin is death, but we are saved by grace. God gives grace when we believe; we must confess our sins and truly repent, trust in Christ as our Savior, and have assurance of salvation.

Can she explain to a friend what salvation means? Can she pray with someone and help them pray a true prayer of repentance? Can she have a Bible club for the children of the neighbors? People helped with physical needs in order to assist someone spiritually. Can she raise funds for a project to help meet the needs of the church, like construction?

Does she believe that Jesus died and rose again to pay for her sins? Has she accepted Christ as her Savior and Lord? Does she grieve for those who are lost without knowing God? Does she pray for those who do not know God? Does she know Scriptures to guide someone in trusting God? Is she ashamed to confess Christ to others? Does she love obeying God? Does her life align with His Word? Does she pray for those working for God and encourage them? Does she give what she has to support God's work, or does she only think of life here on earth?

Being a righteous person is one of the characteristics of a good woman. She

should know about the country's laws. Voting and respecting leaders are important. She should know that leaders are placed by God, and it is crucial for them to act justly. Who should she vote for? There are many agendas that a Christian should consider, such as abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, homosexuality, pornography, taxation, immorality, or lying. How does a person who loves God engage with these? When voting, should she vote for leaders who support these? Are there leaders who love God and bring blessings to the people? Read about the lives of Daniel, Noah, or Rehoboam.

Does she know her leaders and understand the meaning of authority? Can she express her opinions to local or even national leadership? Does she know how a bill becomes law? Does she understand the issues in the country today? Can she discern the misleading words of "human thoughts" in the media? Does she show the respect due to leaders, even those who are selfish and evil? When she is in a position, does she strive to change bad laws by speaking to local leaders? Does she serve those who have been wronged? Does she know that all authority has been given by God?

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet;" verse 21.

A strong woman prepares for the future. It is good for a daughter to know emergency numbers, such as family members to call for help, police, or firefighters. Joseph prepared Egypt for a time of trouble (Genesis 41). We should also teach our children to do the same. Teach them what to do when a fire starts, where to run, and how to help younger siblings. She should know where the flashlight, matches, or candles are.

If you leave her to care for younger children, teach her well how to watch over them and handle potential dangers. Are there poisonous plants or flowers nearby? What should she do if a child drinks kerosene or falls into a river? Ask a mother who has faced household dangers with her children, what did she do? Teach her about the dangers of water, electricity, and gas, and how to turn them off when necessary.

First aid is important; every child should be taught according to their age level. Does a child know what to do if they suddenly fall ill, who to ask for help, and how to take them to the hospital? What hazards exist where you live, and what should you do about them? Can she tell if food has gone bad and what should be discarded to avoid poisoning? Should leftover food be thrown away? How should meat, eggs, or fish be stored?

Does she know which way the pot handle should face when cooking? How should she hold a knife when giving it to someone? Does she know how to safely use a pressure cooker? Teach her how to safely preserve vegetables by drying them or putting them in jars. Learn a few safety precautions for

transport tools like bicycles, motorcycles, or cars. Can she change a tire? Does she know how to receive vaccinations without harm? Teach her to conduct thorough research.

Books like “A Place Without a Doctor” are good to have. When is home first aid insufficient, and the person must be taken to the hospital? Learn with your daughter about alternative medicine and growing medicinal herbs like echinacea, ginger, and garlic. Take first aid classes, self-defense classes. Learn home safety regarding weapons, like arrows, clubs, rat traps, or poisons, and firearms.

Does she know when precaution is necessary? Can she swim? Can she anticipate coming dangers? Does she act cautiously to avoid harm or injury to others? For example, leaving water uncovered, throwing objects, etc. If she encounters trouble with transport, can she be of assistance? Does she know how to handle a home emergency? Does she handle food with cleanliness and safety? Does she know what to do if an earthquake or storm occurs? Can she use tools safely? Does she know how to protect herself from illness? Does she know self-defense moves to protect herself from an attacker? Does she trust God as her main protector and provider?

“She has made herself coverings of beauty, her clothes are fine linen and purple;” (Proverbs 31:22).

A woman who fears God also loves beautiful things, and she strives to sew and learn some skills. She makes an effort to dress well even at home, not like the one chasing birds in the field, but one who dresses well when leaving the house. She learns to make her bed and leave her room in a good condition when she wakes up. The room changes completely just by making the bed! She can help weave cloths for chairs and tables. She plants flowers and decorates the home, helping her relatives sew buttons. God has created us to appreciate skill and beauty. Teach her to sew, to repair clothes, and if she can’t, find someone to help her. She should learn how to sew a zipper, make a bag, sew a handkerchief, a child’s clothes, a skirt, or an apron. She can even sew and help those in need. Attending sewing, decorating, or weaving classes will help her gain more knowledge. Women can teach these things to girls in church homes or communities. Books like “Simple Secrets to a Beautiful Home” by Emilie Barnes are good for our girls to read.

Does her room have order? Does she try to make her room clean and tidy? Are her table, chairs, clothes, and bedding in good order? Does she take time to learn how to decorate with flowers and simple items for the room, house, or even work together with others to decorate God’s church? Are her wall decorations of worldly people, celebrities, and magazines of the rich and famous, or are they things that help her?

It appears this woman wears linen and purple, which are royal garments, she is a daughter of the King! I believe that if we have the ability, we should have a few beautiful clothes and also help those in need. Being a child of the King also involves royal behavior. Our daughters should learn royal manners and politeness. Saying thank you, please, sorry, and excuse me are words of gold or royalty. They should know how to be calm in church and elsewhere; not shouting or speaking loudly, or arguing. They should know how to call someone or speak with them. They should understand the rules when visiting other people's homes. Gary and Cathy Maldaner wrote a book "Visiting Other Families in Polite Moments." Try to see what things to teach children when visiting someone (out of town).

What should you do when you go to a hotel or restaurant (polite manners)? How to serve food, how to ask for a menu, use a spoon or fork, or a napkin (paper towel for wiping the mouth)? Write down these rules and learn together. For example, who should start serving food when you are guests somewhere? Books like Manners Made Easy by June Hines Moore are helpful.

How to answer the phone, and introduce yourself when meeting people. How to compliment someone or encourage them (compliment/praise), how to greet a guest at the door, how to thank someone when praised, how to thank when finishing hospitality, how to blow your nose, sneeze, or cough in front of people. How to excuse yourself when going to the bathroom, how to arrange the table and serve people, how to make someone listen to you when they are doing something (interrupting). How to be a good guest when invited somewhere, how not to be selfish or self-centered, or how to write a thank you note after being invited.

How should a girl learn how to do things with grace (a girl's guide to etiquette)? Read the Bible books, what do you learn about Christ as a guest, friend, and teacher? How did he greet people, how did he speak to them, how did he say goodbye? Read how Nabal in 1 Samuel 25 and Hanun in 2 Samuel 10 had poor manners. How does Philippians 2:2-4 help us with relationships with others?

Write a list of things that annoy people (bad manners) or that show poor manners (bad manners). Write how a girl can change these bad behaviors. Write down people you would like to be with, observe their behavior, what are their polite habits? Do they respect others more than themselves, compare with your own behavior. Look at the example of a woman with good manners, ask her how she does these things (graciousness and good manners/etiquette). How does the fruit of the Spirit relate to our behavior in Galatians 5:22-23?

Invite a guest, then let the girl set the table, arrange flowers, cook, and be a gracious hostess. Look in the Word of God at those who showed good manners, what did they do? Where in the Bible are we told to have gentleness and kindness (politeness/kindness); like caring for the elderly or serving others

before ourselves? Why is it not good to speak while chewing food?

Does she treat others the way she would like to be treated? Does she have good manners at the table (manners)? Does she speak kindly to people (politely)? Does she know how to excuse herself when needed, does she love people and show good manners (good etiquette) by following the rules with humility and love for others? Do others enjoy talking to her or visiting her? Do you often feel embarrassed when with your guests because of her behavior or how she speaks to people? Does she show respect for the elderly? Does she know how to give thanks, and does she respect other people's things?

It is good to teach children to be moderate. Let us teach them that how they dress or speak can offend others. Tell them their responsibility is to have wisdom in what they wear and how they speak to others. They must know they are children of the King, and be taught from a young age. Let's dress them in appropriate styles from childhood.

Often, young girls are dressed in revealing clothes, like short skirts, and when the child reaches 12, we start telling her that is not appropriate, even though she has worn it from a young age! Young children should be dressed in skirts with dresses, so that when they play, their undergarments (panties) are not visible. A child should not walk around wearing a wrap that exposes the shoulders all day, but should add another one to cover the shoulders/chest.

We should also teach them to be humble and not feel they are more important than others. 1 Timothy 2 describes a woman who loves God. What kind of clothing or fashion is immodest? There must be a dress code. What kind of trousers do they wear? Are they tight in the private areas? Do the clothes reveal the chest and breasts? Is her dress above the knees? Tell the girl to talk to her father about clothes that do not tempt young men or even older men.

Take a catalog of women's clothes with pictures and discuss it. Sit in a place and observe people passing by, and discuss which clothes are modest and which are not. How do you measure these clothes? Write down the dress code for a girl representing God, and how to style her hair, nails, or face to represent God. Does appearance matter, or is it enough for our hearts to be pure? Why did God give us clothes in the Garden of Eden? Why didn't he leave them to walk around in the fig leaves they made themselves, which barely covered them? If God gave us clothes to cover the body and not leaves, what does that mean for us?

Look at the fashion of clothes in different countries, then look at how people dressed 50 or even 100 years ago. Do these fashions represent the morals and culture of those people? Let the girl discuss with her parents what her goal is in her dressing? Is she dressing to please God or people? Does she want people to look at her or bring glory to God?

Many countries nowadays have places where the whole family can go without clothes (nude beaches or recreation); why is this wrong? Why did Noah curse his son who saw his nakedness? When Christ was on earth, how did people dress? What is nudity? Is it being completely without clothes or wearing half clothes with some parts exposed?

The Word of God is clear about which parts of the body should be exposed and which should be covered. Tell the girl to go with her father to buy her clothes, and the father should give his thoughts on the choice, then explain why he has chosen that outfit. Tell her father to also check her clothes in the closet and evaluate them, giving reasons why they are appropriate or inappropriate.

Read about the stranger woman in Proverbs 7. What does she do to attract men? Compare her with the woman of Revelation, one dressed in the sun and moon, and the one who deceived nations. What is the difference between them? What kind of men go after strange women? Ask the father to explain to the daughter how young men view women when they wear tight clothes or expose sensitive parts of the body (flirtatious). Read the book “For Young Women Only” by Shaunti Feldhahn and discuss it at home.

Read Matthew 5:27-28. When the girl dresses, she should think about the men who will look at her and what they will think. Consider a woman with modesty in spirit and dress. Look at her behavior, actions, and how she speaks to men, or how she dresses. Read about women without modesty and how they dressed. What did they do, and what were the results? How can dressing immodestly show a lack of trustworthiness to the one she will marry? How does it affect other young men to lack trust in their future wives? Prepare the girl for courtship when she reaches around 18 years. Discuss how to avoid being legalistic in dressing, while keeping it godly and moderate.

It is said that men are tempted to lust after a woman, and a woman is tempted to make a man lust after her. Discuss this. Does she want to please God with her dressing, or does she seek glory for herself and for others to look at her? Does she receive advice on dressing, or does she dress in whatever pleases her? Does she know how men’s eyes look at her dress and what they think when they see a woman dressed in a certain way? Does she protect men from sinful thoughts with her dressing? Does she wear clothes that cover her or does she enjoy exposing her body?

Does she dress like a girl or prefer to dress like a boy? Does she like to flirt with men through her dressing, behavior, and words? Does she overdo modesty to the point where she appears unflattering and not like a girl? Does she have pride because she dresses modestly and judges everyone else who

dresses improperly? Is she becoming legalistic about her dress, focusing on external appearances while her heart harbors rebellion? Does she impose her standards of dressing on others?

“Her husband is known at the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land;” (Proverbs 31:23).

This man who is respected at the gates must also be respected at home. Proverbs 12:4. A wise woman who honors him helps her husband mature and grow in leadership and responsibility.

Honoring her husband starts with a girl honoring her father. Nagging is a behavior to avoid. She must learn to honor and see that her father and mother are authorities placed by God in her life. She should learn to respond politely when called by her father, help him welcome him at the door, take his coat, cook his meal, and set it for him. She should learn to thank her father and understand the things that please him, like a newspaper, music, or books. Write a list of things that annoy or please your father.

Read the book of Proverbs and observe the relationship between parents and children. Also, read Ephesians 5:33.

What shows respect for your father? How does a mother show respect to her husband? Here, as women, we must strive for our children to see this. How do we assist our husbands as helpers? How can a child show respect for their grandfather or uncles? Can you write a list of things that show disrespect? If a daughter has a problem respecting her parents, she should write the reasons for not respecting them and see what the Bible says about those reasons.

Read about Job’s wife, Michal, and Vashti, how they disrespected their husbands. Read about Sarah and Esther and how they respected their husbands. Examine children or women who disrespect their husbands or parents. What example do children get from women who disrespect their husbands? How does the authority of the man appear in this household? How does the authority of God manifest in this household?

A daughter should discuss with her father the importance of respecting her husband. How should a worker, citizen, child, or wife behave if authority is not respected? Is she free to disobey authority, even when it is sinful?

Does she speak to you and her father with respect? Does she speak with respectful words to parents and authority figures? When you speak to her or call her, does she respond and turn her face to listen to you? Does her face and demeanor show that she obeys? (expressions, gestures, and posture). Does she respect you in front of others and even when you are alone together?Does she speak of your weaknesses in front of others? Does she criticize you in front of others? Does she respect elders, police, and government leaders? Does she

make an effort to please you? Does she see you as the authority that God has placed in her life? Does she respect your opinions? Does she know how to express herself when she disagrees with you? Does she disrespect you and show that she is ashamed of you being her parent? Does she enjoy mocking or laughing at you in front of others?

Supporting your husband is very important, let's teach our daughters. This helps our husbands perform their leadership role given by God with excellence. A woman is a helper to her husband, she should obey him and use her time and energy to respect him. By doing this well, she can be a crown to her husband. Perhaps she must set aside her desires to serve her husband, and this should be taught when they are young.

Some women may not think about this, because they are married to men who do not fear God, but even they need to be respected; Matthew 20:28. Even the Son of Man came to serve people. Let her learn how to serve her siblings, brothers, or sisters. Let her ask her mother or other mothers, "What are your goals today?" She will see that many mothers' goals are to serve and care for their households.

Let her learn how to please her brothers or sisters for one day. Let her pray for her parents. Discuss ways to support her father in his work. Does she know how to let go of her interests to help others? Let her observe her mother and see how she supports her father. A girl should ask her father how her mother encouraged him in the calling God gave him. How did she help him in his life? Look at how daughters support their fathers. Ask two men how their wives have helped them succeed in life? How have they encouraged them to mature in their leadership roles?

Study the lives of famous people and historical leaders and the role their wives or mothers played in helping them. 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

Does a woman have a responsibility to help her husband in what ways? 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 show that a man needs his wife's support in many things. Look at the example of Jesus as a servant, how did He serve people?

Look at women in the Bible like Sarah and Priscilla and how they helped their husbands. Read about the lives of wives like Lot's wife, Haman's wife, Jezebel, or Herodias; how did they help their husbands? Look at families where the wife does not want to support her husband, what are the results? For those wives who want to pursue a career rather than support their husbands, ask yourself how this will help their children or husbands.

How can a family sin as a team? How can a wife help her husband with her words, by praising his good qualities, being humble and respectful, or by praying for him? Write 15 ways to respect your husband. How can your role as a wife be like the church, a helper to Christ for your husband?

Verse 24 shows the entrepreneurial spirit that our daughters should learn. Let's teach our daughters how they can create businesses at home to earn income and skills. A father or mother can start a project to help, perhaps selling small things like water, sewing items, or food items. If there is a job they can do and get paid, let them do it.

Women like those in Acts 16-15 show us that they can sell decorative items. Discuss the benefits of women earning income from home rather than working outside the home. Learn about business licenses and government taxes. Ask women who have their businesses, what do they do? Think of a business that requires little capital and start it. How does a woman use the income she earns from her work?

Does she do her work with excellence? Does she want God to be pleased with her work? Does she improve her craft skills? Does she have the ability to generate income? Do others know she is a good worker? Do people like her products or skills? Does she have entrepreneurial skills? Does she like to work both outside and inside the home? Does she try to solve problems when she sees a need? Does she want to earn money for her personal needs only, or help the family and others as well?

"Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the future;" verse 25. This woman knows the life of faith, contentment, and gratitude to God. She knows that God holds the reins of the future. We need to help our daughters be content with what God, and we as parents, have given them. We can discuss and write together what we are thankful for. Does she thank her parents for anything? What is the difference between asking and thanking? Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Does she have jealousy, hatred?

Read about those who were discontent in the Bible. Whenever you are tempted to complain, read Philippians 2 and Isaiah 53. Should a king's daughter live a life of discontent? Talk to an older woman about contentment. Discuss the meaning of the word "covet." Write a list of things you are discontented with (discontent); about your appearance, where you live, your family, and then write the root of this discontent in your heart. Then confess it to God. Look at Hebrews 11 and how each person listed was content.

Does she thank God for what He gives her? Does she demand to buy things when you are at the store? Does she care if someone else gets more than her? Does she want to have things that others have? Can she live a simple life and see the lessons God teaches her?

Does she depend on God as the provider? Does she focus on temporary things or eternal things? Is she content with what she has, or does she want more? Does she have a spirit of gratitude for her parents and your love? Does she give thanks for the service or the things she is given? Does she love to complain

and whine? Does she struggle with getting what she wants from others? Does she always want to defend her rights? Does she indulge in self-pity? Does she envy the things of others and feel hurt by them?

God provides for our needs now and in the future. Who gave Adam his wife? Does God want us to be the kind of people described in Micah 6:6-8? Look at the women who helped Jesus' work or His needs, how many were unmarried? Know unmarried women in your fellowship and visit them. Can a daughter make her unmarried years meaningful (school, Bible study, service, memorizing verses, skills)? Does she know the sin that came when women married women and men married men? Discuss with her.

The Bible mentions people like Miriam, Rahab, Delilah, Mary, Martha, Esther, Anna, the widow of Zarephath, and the daughters of Zelophehad. How did their singleness help them serve as they did? How did God help them get their provision? What mistakes did they make, and what punishments did they face? 1 Corinthians 7:34-35.

Write how an unmarried woman without the responsibility to please a husband can serve most effectively. Look at how her freedom can help her be of service to God's work. What things can she contribute to the church now that she is unmarried? If called by God to be single, can she trust Him?

Talk to parents about being called to serve God without marrying. Why does God sometimes call people who are unmarried? How do these people support themselves and get provision? If unmarried, will she live in her own city? Where will she seek counsel when she is alone? Read the Bible when it talks about "the calling to live a single life." Read the book "Did I Kiss Marriage Goodbye" by Carolyn McCulley. Can living alone be fulfilling and complete? Discuss loneliness.

Does she trust God for everything and find fulfillment in her relationship with Him? Does she know that the enemy comes in more ways than just through sin? Discouragement, hypocrisy, bad friends, fatigue, etc.? Has she dedicated herself to serving God and using that time to learn to be a wife and mother? Does she trust God to choose a suitable husband for her at the right time, if that is His plan? Does she care about your thoughts regarding the men who come to her? Does she care more about getting married than obeying God? Does she dream about marriage? Does she have inappropriate thoughts about love?

What is more important to her, being a mature God-fearing woman or marrying anyone? Does she envy her peers who get married? Does she fear that she may not get married? Does she know that God may have called her to singleness and service rather than marriage? Does she know that God has specific plans for her, whether married or unmarried? Does she use her unmarried years to

prepare for His calling? Does she speak to other unmarried women at church with love and care? Does she have a heart to meet the needs of those who are lonely?

Let's teach our daughters not to live in fear, but with strength and courage. Let them understand that prayer is important. When they get fearful, they should trust in Him. Read about God's promises and protection. Look at how women like Noah's wife, Lot's wife, Sarah, Esther, Jochebed, Deborah, or Ruth trusted God. Choose Psalms to read when you are afraid. Look at the times when the Israelites were afraid in the book of Exodus. How did those in Hebrews 11 show courage?

"Read about the women who were tested to have fear, how they acted when they were afraid, and how they relied on God. Read about Sarah's life, what were her strengths and weaknesses? How did she act when tested? Why is she used as an example for those with faith?

Does she fear trusting God to take care of her? Does she have faith in Romans 8:28? Does she know how to read passages while being fearful? When she is fearful, does she pray? Is she afraid to try anything new? Is she afraid of what people think of her? Does she fear making mistakes? Is she afraid of the future? Can she say 'no' when people ask her to do evil? Does she fear being hurt? Does she fear speaking to people? Does she worry and think that she will fail, only seeing problems?

Does she have the courage to resolve conflicts or disagreements with friends, family, teachers, or parents? Does she have the courage to admit when she is wrong? Is she willing to apologize when she wrongs someone? Does she fear God more than people? Can she tell a friend when they are sinning? Does she lose hope when she sins? Does she receive rebuke and correction positively? Does she fear sharing her thoughts? Does she fear witnessing for Christ in front of others? Does she fear expressing her feelings?

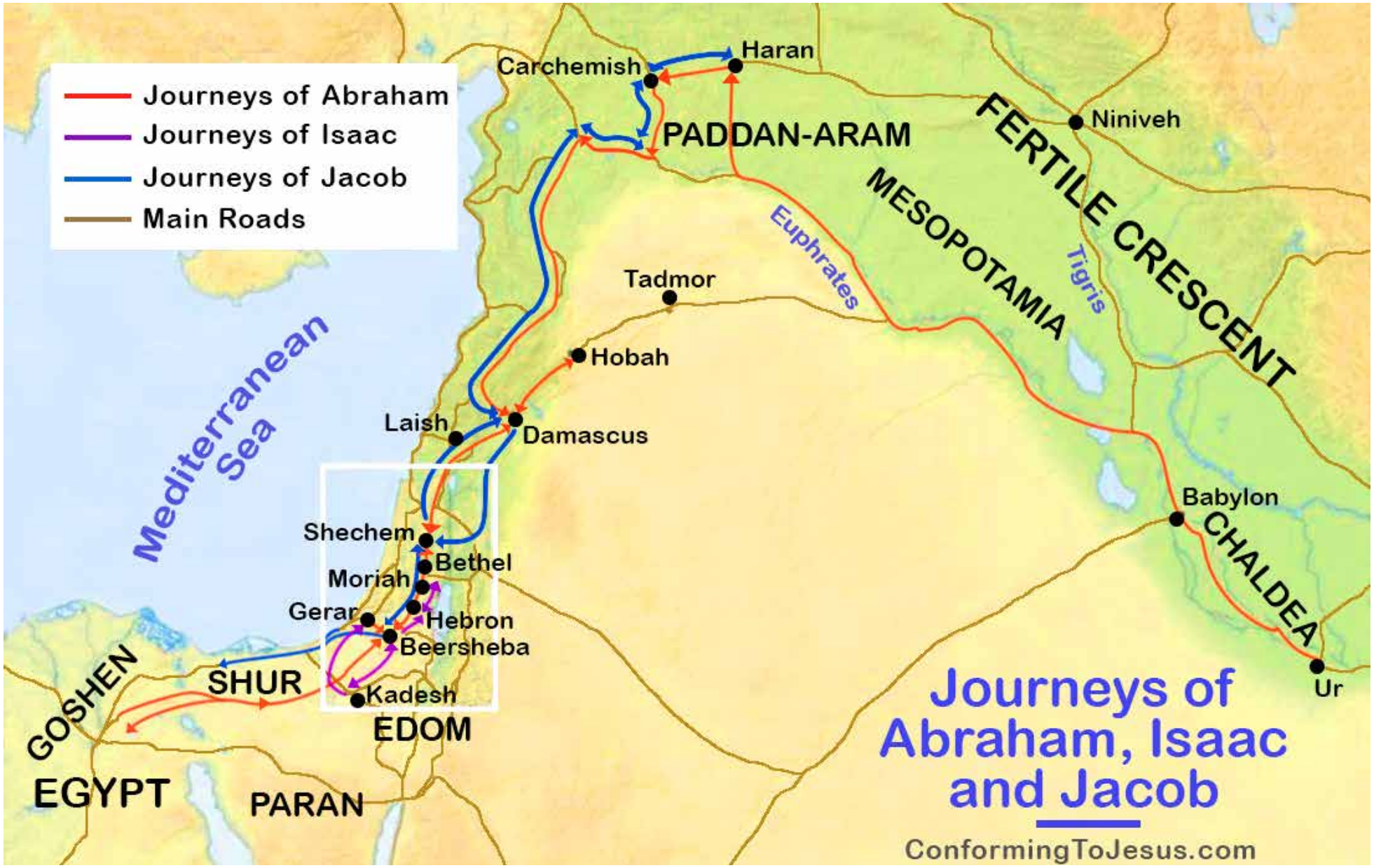
"She opens her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue." The tongue cannot be restrained, it is full of restless evil. It is full of deadly poison. As parents, we should help our children 'train' their tongues early so that they may be a blessing to their husbands, children, church, and community. David asks God to put a muzzle on his tongue. It is good to tell our daughters when they speak inappropriately, and their friends can also be their protectors. We should not return evil for evil. How can we do this? Tell your daughter to ask someone to watch over all her idle words (Matthew 12:36-37).

Read James 3 and discuss it. Read about people who have been helped by good words, and those whose lives have been destroyed by bad words. Look at words such as quarrels, complaints, gossip, lies, cursing, false witnessing,

and blasphemy. How can a woman control her words? Read the story of Abigail or Pilate's wife. How can a woman have words that encourage or give good advice? How can we control ourselves when we speak? How can we make our conversations a blessing (improving speech)?

Does she like labeling people? Does she speak foolishly, in an irritating tone? Does she mock others? Does she like to complain and grumble? Does she enjoy gossiping about others? Is her voice always loud? Does she yell when arguing with her siblings? Does she like reporting other people's mistakes? Does she use unkind words to her siblings? Does she like provoking others? Does she like criticizing and mocking people (sarcastically)?

Does she like to take God's name in vain? Does she show respect to you and your father with her words? Do her words build others up, or tear them down? Does she say everything that comes to her mind, or does she filter her words? Does she correct someone who is wrong with humility? Does she give good advice to others? Opening the mouth with wisdom is important for a mother or wife. Children need to be taught to obey. She should not be lazy in her work. We should teach our daughters to have inner beauty that surpasses outward beauty."


Journeys of Abraham
Journeys of Isaac
Journeys of Jacob
Main Roads
Carchemish
Haran
PADDAN-ARAM
FERTILE CRESCENT
Niniveh
MESOPOTAMIA
Euphrates
Tigris
Tadmor
Hobah
Laish
Damascus
Mediterranean Sea
Babylon
CHALDEA
Shechem
Bethel
Moriah
Gerar
Hebron
Beersheba
Kadesh
SHUR
GOSHEN
EDOM
EGYPT
PARAN
Ur
Journeys of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
ConformingToJesus.com


Invasion and Conquest of Canaan
Gathering of the Canaanite army
Canaanite army retreat
Hebrew army
Hebrew Central campaign
Hebrew Southern campaign
City attacked and burned
Site of battle
Tyre
Abel-beth-maacah
Dan
Kanah
Taphnath
Beth-anath
Hammon
Kedesh
Madon (?)
Achzib
Yiron
Lake Huleh
Hazor
Beth-emek
Merom
Acco
Mishal
Aphek
Neiel
Chinnereth
GESHER
Shikmonah
Nahalal
Mt. Carmel
Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee)
Henathon
Rimmon
Rakkath
Achshaph
Hammath
Golan (?)
Yarmuk
Shimron
Daberath
En-haddah
Chesulloth
Sarid
Dor
Ophra
Shunem
Jermuth
Great Sea
Megiddo
Jezreel
Lo-debar (?)
Taanach
Harod
Mt. Gilboa
Beth-shean
Ibleam
Reliob
Dothan
Bezek
Hamonath
Socoh
Tirzah
Jebel Ujeid (Peor)
GILEAD
Jordan
Zaphon
Elmathan
Pirathon
Shechem
Succoth
Mahanaim
Penuel
Zerqa
Aphek
Janoah
Arumah
Jokmeam
Zarethan
Tappuah
Ramath-mizpeh
Joppa
Jehud
Lebonah
Adam
Gedor
Jegbehah
Lod
Ophra
Bethel
Ai
Upper Beth-haran
Lower Beth-haran
Mizpah
Gittaim
Jabneel
Gibbethon
Gezer
Michmash
Gilgal (?)
Shuvib
Beth-nimrah
Tyre of Toblah
Jazer
Rabbath-a
Baalath
Aijalon
Gibeon
Ramah
Jericho
Timnah
Kiriath
Abel-shittim
Ekron
Zorah
Sibeah
Beth-hoglah
Hushan
Hoshbon
Ashdod
Jerusalem
Beth-shemesh
Bezer
Middin
City of Salt (?)
Gath
Hushah
Bether
Azekah
Etam
Bethlehem
Medeba
Adullam
Peor
Libnah
Tekoa
Beth-zur
Eglon
Lachish
Jahaz
Hebron
Kedemoth
Debir
Juttah
En-gedi
Aroer
PHILISTIA
CANAAN
Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
0
10 km
N
35°
The Historical Atlas of the Bible (2006) Cartographica Press


Physical Features of Palestine
Mediterranean Sea
I. Coastal Plain
II. Hill Country
III. Jordan Valley
IV. Trans-jordan Plateau
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40
N
W
E
S
Sidon
Damascus
PHOENICIA
Lebanon Range
Mt. Lebanon
Mt. Hermon
Anti-Lebanon Range
Tyre
Dan
UPPER GALILEE
Lake Huleh
Hazor
BASHAN
Plain of Accho
LOWER GALILEE
Sea of Galilee 695
Kishon R.
Nazareth
Mt. Tabor
Yarmuk R.
Dor
Megiddo
Jezreel
Caesarea
Plain of Sharon
Mt. Gilboa
GILEAD
SAMARIA
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
Jabbok R.
Jordan River
EPHRAIM
Joppa
I
II
III
IV
Jericho
KINGS HIGHWAY
Mt. Nebo
Beth-shemesh
Jerusalem
Mt. of Olives
Bethlehem
Lachish
Gaza
JUDEA
Hebron
Plain of Philistia
Shephelah
Wilderness of Judah
Dead Sea 1292
Arnon R.
AMMON
ARABIAN DESERT
MOAB
WAY OF THE SEA
Beersheba
River of Egypt
WAY OF SHUR
NEGEB
Arabah
Zered R.
EDOM
Mt. Seir
Kadesh-barnea
©2009 S. Scott Richardson Sr., Russellville AL


THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH
1 KINGS 12
PHOENICIA
Sidon
Tyre
Dan
Damascus
Jeroboam built a sanctuary
ARAM
Akko
Sea of Galilee
ISRAEL
Kamon
Megiddo
Political capital of Israel from Omri onward
Jordan River
Mediterranean Sea
Samaria
Adam
Shechem
Jeroboam built a sanctuary
Jaffa
Bethel
Ai
Rabbath-Ammon
Jericho
Ashdod
AMMON
Jerusalem
Ashkelon
Lachish
Gaza
Hebron
Dibon
Debir
Dead Sea
PHILISTIA
MOAB
Beersheba
JUDAH
Zoar
Tamar
EDOM
Kadesh Barnea
CONFORMINGTOJESUS.COM


PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS
By Mark Barry © 2011 Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Damascus
SYRIA
Mt. Hermon
Caesarea Philippi
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
PHOENICIA
TRACHONITIS
Seleucia
Ptolemais
Korazin
Capernaum
Gennesaret
Magdala
Bethsaida
Naveh
Cana
Gergesa
Tiberias
Sea of Galilee
Sepphoris
Mt. Tabor
Dium
Nazareth
Abilene
Gadara
GALILEE
Nain
Caesarea
Scythopolis
DECAPOLIS
Pella
SAMARIA
Samaria
Gerasa
Shechem
Sychar
Mt. Gerizim
Jordan River
Antipatris
Gedora
Joppa
Arimathea
PEREA
Lydda
Ephraim
Philadelphia
Jamnia
Jericho
Emmaus
Mt. Olives
Jerusalem
Azotus
Bethany
Qumran
Bethlehem
Ashkelon
JUDEA
Machaerus
Hebron
Gaza
Dead Sea
En Gedi
IDUMEA
Masada
Raphia
Beersheba
Elusa
Zoar
NABATEA
Mampsis
N


MACEDONIA
THRACE
BLACK SEA
Paul preaches the Gospel for 2 yrs under house arrest as he awaits for his appeal to Caesar
Tiber River
Rome
Three Tavers
Appii Forum
Puteoli
Pompeii
Tarentum
Brundisium
ITALY
ADRIATIC SEA
TYRRHENIAN SEA
Lydia & her household believe
Paul & Silas beaten & thrown in jail
Jailer and his household believe
Paul restores life to young Eutychus
Philippi
Amphipolis
Neapolis
Berea
Apollonia
Thessalonica
SAMOTHRACE
Byzanthium
BITHYNIA & PONTUS
GALATIA
MYSIA
ASIA
Troas
Assos
Paul & Barnabas mistaken for gods
Paul stoned
Timothy joins Paul & Silas
CAPPADOCIA
Pergamum
Mytilene
Thyatira
Sardis
CHIOS
Delphi
Smyrna
Antioch in Pisidia
PHRYGIA
Iconium
Messina
Rhegium
SICILY
Paul speaks at the Areopagus
Corinth
Athens
Ephesus
Philadelphia
CILICIA
COMMAGENE
Olympia
Cenchreae
SAMOS
Miletus
Lystra
Tarsus
Syracuse
ACHAIA
Sparta
Laodicea
PAMPHYLIA
Derbe
Euphrates River
Syrtis Minor
CYCLADES ISLANDS
Cnidus
LYCIA
Attalia
Perga
cos
Antioch
Seleucia Pieria
MALTA
RHODES
Patara
Myra
Ship lost in storm
Paul swims safely to shore
Phoenix
CRETE
Salmone
Salamis
SYRIA
CLAUDA
Fair Heavens
Lasea
CYPRUS
Orontes River
Paphos
Proconsul Sergius Paulus converted
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Sidon
Damascus
Paul sent to Rome to appeal to Caesar
Tyre
Ptolemais
Syrtis Major
Cyrene
Jerusalem Conference c. 49-50 AD
Caesarea Maritima
Antipatris
Jordan River
Jerusalem
Alexandria
JUDEA
DEAD SEA
CYRENAICA
EGYPT
NABATEA
Memphis
Nile River
MAP OF PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS
Paul's first journey
Paul's second journey
Paul's third journey
Paul's voyage to Rome
City
One of the "Seven Churches"
ConformingToJesus.com
0 100 200 300 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometers

THE MAIN THING IS TO KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

Grace Momadi Masaka saw a need of books for children online that will be free of charge online. In these times of dotcom life, many youth surf online. We have written and translated about 53 books currently.
The main thing in this life is for the young and the old to live purposeful and meaningful life. There is no Book that bring so much meaning in life as this one.
The world history starts in Mesopotamia, and this book goes parrallel with the World History, infact there is not religious book that goes with world history except this! Read more about this in Daniel two, seven and eight!
What is the main thing? The main thing is to fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgement has come, and we need to prepare for this. It is without doubt that we are living at the end of the time, and life has meaning only if we prepare for this.
This is a manual of teaching the young ones Bible, and in a context that is not centered for the Western countries only. it is inclusive of any culture.
This is the First Edition, edited and reviewed. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to share them with us so that we can work together in this mission.

May the Spirit of God help us to consecrate ourselves fully. When we fully dedicate ourselves, we will be able to reach the three billion people who have not yet heard the message of the Remnant—of the living God in heaven. He is our Creator, who died for us on the cross and is coming again to take us to live with Him forever. Life is very short—Scripture says that a thousand years are like a single day to God. This means that Adam, who lived over 900 years, only lived about 20 hours in God's time! Someone who lives 80 years today would only have lived about two hours. This reality compels us to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, keeping His Word before us day and night. The Scriptures reveal God's love and promises, even granting us eternal life.

The Bible contains 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. It took over 1,700 years to write the Bible. However, all approximately 40 authors maintained a unified message and did not contradict one another because they were inspired by the same God. The Bible has 1,189 chapters. The longest chapter is Psalm 119, and the longest book is Jeremiah, followed by Genesis, Psalms, Ezekiel, and Exodus. The shortest books are 3 John, 2 John, Philemon, Obadiah, and Jude. The shortest chapter is Psalm 117, and the middle chapter of the Bible is Psalm 118.

Before the printing press was invented, over 23,000 manuscript copies of the Bible were found worldwide, and they were remarkably consistent with each other—unlike other ancient writings like those of Plato or Socrates, which only had a few copies, sometimes fewer than ten. This shows that the Bible is not a fabricated book, in fact the Bible is the most authentic ancient literature. The books of Acts and Luke were examined through historical events, cities, and dates, and they were found to be astonishingly accurate.



Character and the people we love are the only things we will take with us to heaven! JESUS is coming soon! The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let everyone who hears this say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let them come and take the water of life freely. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. MARANATHA, beloved of the LORD! Amen.

Writers:
Grace Masaka Momadi-New Jersey, USA
Daniel Nyangaresi Masaka-Kisii, Kenya
David Jabez Masaka-Pennsylvania, USA
Paul Momadi Masaka-Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania