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Daily Manna devotions: Editor's Choice
Current archive for January to December 2024

Old and New Testament Bible teachings
as requested by the late Fred Morris, author and founder of Manna
Publications (USA), before he died in 2018

See: <http://manna-publications.org.uk/Daily-Weekly-Devotionals.shtml>

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1st January 2024

Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth... God said, "Let there be light." He separated the light from the darkness. Then God separated the water below from the waters above. Then God said, "Let the waters below be gathered in one place and let dry land appear. Let the land produce plants. Let them bear their own seeds. And let there be trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it. Let each kind of plant or tree have its own kind of seeds." God said, "Let there be lights in the huge space of the sky. Let them separate the day from the night." He also made the stars. God said, "Let the waters be filled with living things. Let birds fly above the Earth across the huge space of the sky." Then God said, "Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures. Let there be livestock, and creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals." Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole Earth." So God created man in his own likeness. He created them as male and female. He said to them, "Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the Earth and bring it under your control. Rule over every living creature. I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole Earth that bears its own seeds. All of them will be given to you for food."

Matthew 1 begins with the ancestors of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ. Before they were married, Mary was pregnant with a child through the Holy Spirit. An angel of the Lord God Almighty visited them to explain this.

*Father God, thank You for reminding us of these 'beginnings' at the start of the new year.
Amen.*

2nd January 2024.

Genesis 2. Moses confirms the beginnings of the Universe and our planet Earth were in six days (v.1). "So on the seventh day God rested and blessed the seventh day and made it holy." Moses also confirmed that at first there was no rain on Earth but the ground was watered by springs (v.6). "The LORD God Almighty planted a garden in Eden. There He put the man He had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Their fruit was pleasing to look at and good to eat. The tree that gives life forever was in the middle of the garden. The tree that had the ability to tell the difference between good and evil was also there." (v.8-9). "The LORD God commanded 'You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die.' The LORD God also said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.' " (v.16-18) Then God created Eve out Adam's rib while he slept (v.22).

Matthew 2 describes the worship of the baby Jesus by wise men from the east. (v.1-2). But when they had gone, King Herod tried to kill Jesus by ordering all the baby boys in the area around

Bethlehem to be destroyed (v.16). But an angel of the Lord God Almighty had already warned Joseph and Mary to escape to Egypt with the baby Jesus. (v.13-15). After the death of Herod, Joseph took Mary and Jesus back to his home in Nazareth (v.19-23).

Thank you again heavenly Father for confirming these things that happened at the beginning of the world You created and at the beginning of Your visit to Earth in the form of the baby Jesus who is our Saviour. Amen.

3rd January 2024.

Genesis 3 describes how Adam and Eve were tempted to disobey God by Satan through eating from 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. Satan told his serpent to deceive them by telling them they would become like God Himself, knowing good from evil. Adam and Eve confessed to God what they had done (v.12-13). Then the Lord God Almighty said, "The man has become like one of Us [the Trinity]. He can now tell the difference between good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick fruit from the tree of life and eat it. If he does, he will live forever." So the LORD drove the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the soil he had been made out of (v.22-23).

Matthew 3. While Jesus lived in Nazareth, 'John the Baptist came and preached in the desert saying, "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of Heaven is near." John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord.' " (Isaiah 40:3) ...People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea... When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the River Jordan (v:1-6). He warned the religious people to "produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins... I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, One will come who is more powerful than I am... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (v.8,11) Then Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John... God announced, "This is My Son" ' (v.13,17)

Thank You heavenly Father for Your provision for mankind through hard work and the need to turn from the "knowledge or evil" in life to "produce good fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins". In Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

4th January 2024.

Jeremiah Chapter 36 describes the time when 'a message came to Jeremiah from the LORD God Almighty in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. He was the son of the godly King Josiah. "Get a scroll. Write on it all of the words I have spoken to you about Israel, Judah and all of the other nations since the time of King Josiah until now. The people of Judah will hear about all of the trouble I plan to bring on them. Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. If they do, I will forgive their sins and the evil things they have done." ' (v.1-3) But King Jehoiakim refused to change his ways and ordered the scroll to be burned. 'So Jeremiah got another scroll... He wrote down all of the words that were burned up and added many more words the LORD had given.' (v.32)

Titus Chapter 1. Paul left Titus in charge of the churches in Crete "to appoint elders in every town... An elder must be without blame. He must be faithful to his wife. His children must be believers. They must not give anyone a reason to say that they are wild and do not obey." (v.5-6) Paul knew that 'people from Crete are always liars and evil beasts. They do not want to work. They live only to eat... "So give [the elders] a strong warning. Then they will understand the faith correctly. They will pay no attention to Jewish stories that are not completely true nor listen to the commands of those who turn away from the truth." ' (v.12-14)

Father God, raise up people like Jeremiah and Titus in these wicked days who will persevere so that "all will turn from their evil ways". Forgive us for failing to remember the times you have saved us from disasters and instead joined revellers who "do not want to work but live only to eat". Help us to faithfully establish Your truth. Amen.

5th January 2024.

Genesis 5:28 to 6:8. This record by Moses begins at the time of Noah. (In those days before 'Noah's Flood', the climate was different and people lived a long time.) 'When Lamech was 182 years he had a son. He named him Noah. Lamech said, "He will comfort us when we are working... We have to work hard because the LORD has put a curse on the ground." Lamech lived until he was 777 years old. After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth. (5:28-32) Men began to increase their numbers on Earth and daughters were born to them. The sons of God

saw that the daughters of men were beautiful. So they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not struggle with man forever. He will die. He will have only 120 years." (6:1-4) The LORD saw how bad the sins of man had become on Earth. All of the thoughts in his heart were always directed toward what was evil... The LORD was very sad that He had made mankind on Earth... So the LORD said, "I created man on the Earth. But I will wipe them out... I am very sad that I have made man." But the LORD was pleased with Noah.' (6:5-8)

Hebrews 1:10-12. God said, "O Lord [that is Jesus, His Messiah or Christ], in the beginning You made Earth secure. You placed it on its foundations. The heavens are the work of Your hands. They will pass away. But You remain. They will all wear out like a piece of clothing... They will be changed as a person changes clothes. But You remain the same. Your years will never end."

Father God, grant us more understanding about what happened at the time of Adam, Noah and Jesus here on Earth. Also more perseverance to always "work hard". Also more faith regarding eternal salvation through Jesus our Creator and Saviour. Amen.

8th January 2024.

Psalms 128. The psalmist expresses the purpose of God for Israel. "Blessed are all those who have respect for the LORD God Almighty and live as He wants them to live. Your work will then supply what you need. Blessings and good things will come to you. As a vine bears a lot of fruit, so your wife will have many children by you. They will sit around your table like young olive trees. Only a man who has respect for the LORD will be blessed like that... May you enjoy the good things that come to Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your grandchildren. May Israel enjoy peace."

1 Corinthians 2:9-16. "It is written, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has known what God has prepared for those who love Him.' (Isaiah 64:4) But God has shown it to us through His Spirit... Only the Spirit of God knows God's thoughts. We have not received the spirit of the world. We have received the Spirit of God. The Spirit helps us understand what God has freely given us. That is what we speak about. We do not use words taught to us by people. We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to teach the truths of the Spirit. Some people do not have the Holy Spirit. They do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God... Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no-one can judge those who have the Spirit... For we have the mind of Christ."

Father God, thank You for the assurance we have in understanding Your purposes for today if we seek "the mind of Christ" through His indwelling Spirit. Help us then to pray in line with Your will, including "May Israel enjoy peace". Open our eyes to "know what God has prepared for those who love Him." To Your glory. Amen.

9th January 2024.

Numbers 33. Moses lists the final stages of the 40-year journey to God's Promised Land of Canaan (v.1-49). The LORD spoke to Moses by the Jordan River across from Jericho. "Speak to the people of Israel. 'Go across the Jordan River into Canaan. Drive out all those who are living in the land. Destroy all of their statues made out of stone and metal. And destroy all of the high places where they are worshiped. Take the land as your own. Settle down in it. I have given it to you... But if you do not drive out the people who are living in the land, then those you allow to remain will become like thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. Then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.' " (v.50-56)

Revelation 2:2-5 gives the words of Jesus to the church in Ephesus. "I know what you are doing. You work long and hard. I know you cannot put up with those who are evil. You have tested some who claim to be apostles but are liars. You have been faithful and have put up with a lot of trouble because of Me. You have not given up. But here is something I hold against you. You do not have as much love as you had at first. Remember how far you have fallen! Turn away from your sins... If you don't, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place." The city of Ephesus does not exist today!

Heavenly Father, thank You again for clarifying Your purpose and provision for Israel. We pray Your people will put their trust in You alone. We also pray for the Church of Jesus Christ worldwide that nothing will hinder Your love for us and our love for You in these difficult times caused by our disobedience and failure to persevere. Strengthen the love of Christ in us! Amen.

10th January 2024.

1 Kings 13:1-6. 'A man of God went from Judah with a message from the LORD God Almighty. He arrived in Bethel just as King Jeroboam was standing by the altar to offer a sacrifice. The man shouted a message from the LORD against the altar. "A son named Josiah will be born into the royal family of David. Altar, listen to me! Josiah will sacrifice the priests of the high places on you... So human bones will be burned on you." ...When King Jeroboam heard it, he reached out his hand and said, "Seize him!" But as he reached out his hand toward the man, it dried up. Also, the altar broke into pieces. Its ashes spilled out. That happened in keeping with the miraculous sign the man of God had announced from the LORD. King Jeroboam spoke to the man of God. "Pray to the LORD your God for me. Pray that my hand will be as good as new again." So the man of God prayed to the LORD for the king. And the king's hand became as good as new.'

Hebrews 10:14-18. "By that one sacrifice He (Jesus) has made perfect forever those who are being made holy... 'This is the covenant I will make with them', says the LORD. 'I will put My laws in their hearts and minds. I will not remember their sins anymore. I will not remember the evil things they have done.' (Jeremiah 31:33-34) Where those have been forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Thank You Father God for Your ancient message for today to trust only true believers, not false priests. Forgive us for any wrong acts of worship and misguided sacrifices. Instead, we pray that You will continue Your work of making us holy through the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May our actions and prayers of faith have great impact on society today, including kings and priests, with signs and wonders of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

11th January 2024.

Psalms 126 expresses Israel's desire for God's blessing after their return from exile. "Our enemies took us away from Zion. But when the LORD brought us home, it seemed like a dream to us. Our mouths were filled with laughter and joy. Then the people of other nations said, 'The LORD God Almighty has done great things for them.' LORD, bless us with great success... Those who cry as they plant their crops will sing with joy when they gather them in."

Romans 2:7-13. Paul says, "God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good. They desire glory, honour, and life that never ends. But there are others who only think about themselves. They do not accept the truth but go down an evil path. God will pour out ... trouble and suffering for everyone who does evil. That is meant first for the Jews but also for the non-Jews. There will be glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good. That is meant first for the Jews and also for the non-Jews. God treats everyone the same. Those who do not know God's Law when they sin will perish by the Law when they die. But those who do know God's Law when they sin will be judged by the Law." But remember that "hearing the Law does not make a person right with God. People are considered to be right [justified, KJV] with God only when they obey the Law." Paul adds, "On that day God will appoint Jesus Christ to judge their secret thoughts. That is part of my Good News." (v.16) This is the Gospel of salvation through Christ alone.

Heavenly Father, may Your people Israel continue to rejoice that "the LORD God Almighty has done great things for them". May both Jews and Gentiles remember that "God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good" in love. May we all obey the Law with faith in Christ's salvation and righteous judgement. Amen.

12th January 2024.

Haggai Chapter 1 is the time in Judea after the exile in Babylon. A message came to the prophet Haggai from the LORD God Almighty. "The people of Judah are saying, 'The time has not yet come for the LORD's Temple to be rebuilt.' My Temple is still destroyed but you are living in your houses that have beautiful wooden walls. Think carefully about how you are living. You have planted many seeds but the crops you have gathered are small. You eat but never have enough. You drink but are never full. You put your clothes on but you are not warm... Go up into the mountains. Bring logs down. Use them to rebuild My house. Then I will enjoy it and you will honour Me. You expected a lot but you can see what a small amount it turned out to be. Why? Because my Temple is still destroyed. In spite of that, each one of you is busy with your own house." Haggai gave God's message to the people. Then everyone began to work on rebuilding the Temple of the LORD.

Galatians 1:6-9. Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (Turkey). "I am amazed you are so quickly deserting the One who chose you through the grace of Christ. You are turning to a different

'Good News'. What you are accepting is really not good news at all. It seems that some people are trying to twist the 'Good News of salvation through Christ'... Anyone who preaches a 'Good News' that is different from the one you accepted should be judged by God forever."

Forgive us heavenly Father for quickly turning away from Your salvation and calling in life. Help us to build or rebuild Your Church instead of meeting our own needs in these difficult days. Help us to "think carefully about how we are living" then trust You for our needs as we preach and live Your "Good News of salvation through Christ alone". For His sake. Amen.

15th January 2024.

1 Kings chapters 12 to 16. After the death of King Solomon, most of the kings in Israel and Judah "did evil in the sight of the LORD their God" ...This period in the ninth century BC was before God raised up His prophet Elijah. However, during these 65 years, 'Asa became king of Judah and ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years... Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty as King David had done. Asa threw out of the land the male prostitutes who were at the shrines. He got rid of all of the statues of gods his people before him had made. He even removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother. She had made a pole that was used to worship the goddess Asherah. The LORD hated it so Asa cut it down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. Asa didn't remove the high places from Israel, but he committed his whole life completely to the LORD. He and his father had set apart silver, gold and other articles to the LORD and brought them into the LORD's Temple.' (15:9-15)

John 8:12, 31-32. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Those who follow Me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life... If you obey My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Father God in Heaven, we thank You again for Your written words which testify of good and evil, especially the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Make us bold to support leaders like Asa but above all to speak and live the truth of Jesus Christ. Free us from slavery to sin. Make us bold to speak against unholy ways of living today and the things that You hate. Raise up modern-day Elijahs to prepare the way for the return of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

16th January 2024.

Lamentations 3:55-59 says, "LORD God Almighty, I called out to You. I called out from the bottom of the pit. I prayed, 'Please do not close Your ears to my cry for help.' And You heard my appeal. You came near when I called out to You. You said, 'Do not be afraid.' LORD, you stood up for me. You saved my life and set me free. LORD, You have seen the wrong things people have done to me. Stand up for me again!"

Hebrews 10:5-10. "When Jesus Christ came into the world, He said [to Almighty God, His Father], 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. Instead, You prepared a body for Me. You were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said, here I am. It is written about Me in the scrolls. Father, I have come to do what You want.' (Psalm 40:6-8) First Christ said, 'You did not want sacrifices and offerings. You did not want burnt offerings and sin offerings. You were not pleased with them.' He said that even though the Law required people to bring them. Then He said, 'Here I am. I have come to do what You want.' He did away with the first [covenant]. He did it to put the second in place. We have been made holy by what God wanted. We have been made holy because Jesus Christ offered His body [as a sin offering] once and for all time."

Thank You God our Father for standing up for us again and again! Thank You for rescuing us from those time when we feel we are at the "bottom of the pit". Thank You for sending Your Son as a human being to suffer on our behalf that we might be saved for ever! May it always be that "You come near when I call out to You". Teach us more about what is written of Jesus and our salvation "in the scrolls". For His sake and Your glory. Amen.

17th January 2024.

Psalm 37:38-40. "The future of the upright person is peace... But transgressors shall be destroyed and the future of the wicked shall be cut off. The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in times of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him."

Revelation 22:16-21. Jesus said to John, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches... Let anyone who is thirsty come; and let anyone who wishes take the

free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen." John adds, "Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."

Thank You Father God for recording this Psalm of Your servant David which proclaims that "the salvation of the righteous" is secure and they will know Your peace. Praise You for the faith You have given us to put our trust in You. Thank You Lord Jesus for the evidence that You are coming soon. As we wait in faith, we repent on behalf of those who are guilty of watering down Your truth. Forgive us and revive Your Church to prepare to meet and greet You. In the meantime, we intercede for the 365 million Christians who are persecuted or insecure in the world today for Father God's mercy upon them. In Your name we pray. Come soon Lord Jesus! May Your grace be with us. Amen.

18th January 2024.

Amos 7:14-16. Amos sent a message to the king of Israel in the year 787 BC. "I was not a prophet... I was a shepherd... But the LORD took me away from taking care of the flock. He said to me, 'Go. Prophesy to my people Israel.' Now then, listen to the LORD's message." The message was the prophesy about the king's death and Israel's exile in Babylon (v.11) which the king rejected. This prepared the way for the exile to happen 10 years later. The book of Amos ends with a prophesy about Israel's restoration which happened several decades later (9:11-12). "I will rebuild David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places... Then My people will take control of those who are left alive. They will also possess all of the nations that bears God's name." We take this to refer to the time of Israel's Messiah in fulfilment of God's promise to King David to bless Israel and all nations who worship Jesus their Messiah.

Titus 2:1-8. Titus had warned the church in Crete to reject any Jewish traditions which deny the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ (1:14). "What you teach must agree with true teaching... Then no-one will be able to speak evil things against God's word. In the same way, help the young men to control themselves. Do what is good. Set an example for them in everything. When you teach, be honest and serious so that no-one can question the truth."

Father God, in Your mercy, send teachers and preachers who uphold Your truth even at risk of rejection. Fulfil Your purpose in sending Your Son our Saviour "to bless Israel and all nations who worship their Messiah". Encourage Your people Israel today to uphold Your truth and prepare the way for the return of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom on Earth. Amen.

19th January 2024.

Exodus 34:28-35. After God punished Israel for worshiping the golden calf, He told Moses to return to Mount Sinai to record again the Ten Commandments which Moses had destroyed in anger. 'The LORD God Almighty wrote on the tablets the words of the Ten Commandments... The face of Moses was shining because he had spoken with the LORD. Aaron and all of the people of Israel saw Moses. So they were afraid to come near him... Moses gave them all of the commands the LORD had given him. Then he put a veil over his face... He would keep it on until he went again to speak with the LORD.'

Mark 1:9-12. At the time John the Baptist came 'preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins', Jesus arrived from His home town of Nazareth. 'John baptized Him in the Jordan River. As Jesus was coming up out of the water He saw Heaven torn open. He saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. A voice spoke to Him from Heaven. "You are my Son, and I love You." At once the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. He was there 40 days where Satan tempted Him. Angels took care of Him.' Mark then records the beginning of the call of His disciples and the miraculous deliverance ministry of Jesus.

Father God, thank You for doing everything possible to establish Your truth for Your people down the ages despite their disobedience. Thank You for revealing to us Your anger and punishment as well as Your mercy. Thank You for Your commandments and the testimonies of signs and wonders at the time of Moses and John the Baptist. We note the records of the temptation of Jesus, His ministering angels, His calling of His followers and His miraculous ministry. Help us to understand and apply these things while growing in faith and respect for Your times of testing, Your words of truth and Your calling in ministry. Amen.

22nd January 2024.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 9 is where the writer despairs of the evidence of good and bad people sharing the same fate. "I realized that those who are wise and do what is right are under God's control. But a man doesn't know whether God will show favour to him. Death comes to godly and sinful people alike." (9:1-2) However, the writer's thoughts are beginning to show the wisdom of the LORD God Almighty. He advises, "No matter what you do, work at it with all your might." (9:10) Also, "It is better to be wise than to be powerful... Wisdom is better than weapons of war." (9:16-18) Finally, he concludes, "Fear God and obey His commandments. That is what everyone should do." (12:13)

Acts 2:29-39. Peter said, "Brothers... King David knew that God had made a promise to him that someone in David's family line would be king after him. David saw what was ahead. So he spoke about the Christ rising from the dead... God has raised this same Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses of this. Jesus has been given a place of honour at the right hand of God. This is what God had promised... So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

Father God, open the minds of the people You are calling not to despair but to receive eternal salvation through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

23rd January 2024.

Judges 11:21-24. These writings from 1160 BC look back to events on the way to the Promised Land of Canaan. "Then the Lord, the God of Israel, handed King Sihon and all of his men over to Israel. Israel won the battle over them. The Amorites were living in the country at that time. And Israel took over all of their land. They captured all the land that was between the Arnon River and the Jabbok River. It reached from the desert all the way to the Jordan River. The Lord, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out. But what right do you have to take it over? ...We will take over [only] what the LORD our God has given us."

2 Peter 3:11-15. "What kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives. Live like that as you look forward to the day of God. It will make that day come more quickly. On that day fire will destroy the heavens. Its heat will melt everything in them. But we are looking forward to a new Heaven and a new Earth. Godliness will make its home there. All of this is in keeping with God's promise. Dear friends, I know you are looking forward to that. So try your best to be found pure and without blame. Be at peace with God. Remember that while our Lord is waiting patiently to return, people are being saved. Our dear brother Paul also wrote to you about that. God made him wise to write as he did."

Father in Heaven, thank you that more people than ever are being saved as we await our Saviour's return. Help us "to be found pure and without blame". Meanwhile, encourage Your people Israel to expect their Messiah soon and be wise in understanding the instruction to "take over [only] what the LORD our God has given us." Prepare us all for the "day of God" with its new Heaven and Earth. Amen.

24th January 2024.

Judges 11:29-40 records the events of Jephthah, the commander of Israel's army. After winning the battle against the Amorites (see yesterday's reading) God encouraged him to fight against the Ammonites. But Jephthah made a promise to the LORD God Almighty. "If You hand the Ammonites over to me, then here is what I will do when I return from winning the battle. Anything that comes out of my house to greet me will belong to You and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." (v.31) When he returned from winning the battle it was his only child who greeted him. He cried out, "My daughter, I have made a promise to the LORD and I cannot break it!" She told him he must do what he had promised to do. From then on, the young daughters of Israel met each year to remember and celebrate the daughter of Jephthah.

1 Timothy 5:21-25. Paul says, "I command you to follow these directions in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels. Treat everyone the same without favouring one person over

another. Do not be too quick to lay hands on others to set them apart to serve God. Do not take part in the sins of others... The sins of some people are easy to see. They are already being judged... In the same way, good works are easy to see. But even good works that are hard to see cannot stay hidden."

Father God, spare us from making solemn promises which are against Your divine will. Also, spare Your people from appointing leaders "to set them apart to serve God" without Your approval. Open our eyes as we read the Scriptures to understand and apply Your truth "in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels". So prepare us for the difficult times ahead with faith in the mighty works of Your Holy Spirit promised to all believers, showing favour to all. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

25th January 2024.

Jeremiah 2:29-31; 3:11-13. The LORD God Almighty spoke through His servant Jeremiah. "All of you have refused to obey Me. I punished your people. But it did not do them any good. They did not pay attention when they were corrected. You have killed your prophets with swords... You who are now living, consider My message!" Some years later, God spoke again. "Israel, you have not been faithful. Return to Me. Then I will look on you with favour again. My love is faithful. I will not be angry with you forever. Admit that you are guilty of doing what is wrong. You have refused to obey Me. I am the LORD your God."

Romans 12:1-6. "Brothers and sisters, God has shown you His mercy. So I am asking you to offer up your bodies to Him while you are still alive. Your bodies are a holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God. When you offer your bodies to God, you are worshiping Him. Do not live any longer the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what He wants is right... So here is what I say to every of you. Do not think of yourself more highly than you should... Keep in mind the amount of faith God has given you. Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose... We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us."

Thank you Father God for the way that Your servant Paul was able to build on the truth You revealed to Jeremiah centuries before. Help us to not to "live any longer the way this world lives so that our way of thinking will be completely changed" and know "what God wants". Help us to use wisely the gifts You have given. Amen.

26th January 2024.

1 Chronicles 29:1-20. 'David praised the LORD God Almighty in front of the whole community. "LORD, we give You praise for ever and ever... Everything in Heaven and on Earth belongs to You... Without Your help we would not be able to give this much [for the Temple]. We have given back to You only what comes from You... to build You a Temple where You will put Your holy Name... Keep this longing in the hearts of Your people forever to be true to You." ...The whole community bowed low in front of the LORD and the king.'

2 Corinthians 1:3-13. "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace... We have received comfort from God as we share the sufferings of Christ and His comfort... If we are comforted, it is so that you will be comforted. Then you will be able to put up with the same suffering we have gone through... That happened so that we would not depend on ourselves but on God... God has saved us from deadly dangers. And He will continue to do it. We have put our hope in Him... You must help us by praying for us. Then many people will thank God for His kindness to us in answer to the prayers of many... Our way of living is not wise in the eyes of the world. But it is in keeping with God's grace. We are writing only what you can read and understand."

Thank You God for these words of Paul which confirms the objective of Fred Morris, author of Manna Publications, to write to the overseas churches "only what you can read and understand." Grant that we will know Your Spirit's guidance in comforting one another with Your Bible truth and the Good News of Jesus Christ. May we "give back to You what comes from You". "Keep the longing in the hearts of Your people to be true to You." Amen.

29th January 2024.

Habakkuk 2:1-4,12-14; 3:17-18. The writer stood complaining to the LORD God Almighty. He replied: "Write down the message I am showing you on the tablets you use... It speaks about what is going to happen. And all of it will come true... It will happen when I want it to. The Babylonians are very proud. And what they want is not good. But the one who is right with God will live by faith... How terrible it will be for the Babylonians! ...I am the LORD who rules over all. Human effort is no better than wood that feeds a fire. So the nations wear themselves out for nothing... The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." The writer then stood rejoicing, "The fig trees might not bud. The vines might not produce any grapes. The olive crop might fail. The fields might not produce any food. There might not be any sheep in the pens. There might not be any cattle in the barns. But I will still rejoice because of what the LORD has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy."

Colossians 1:15-20. Paul says. "Christ is the exact likeness of God. All things were created by Him. He created everything in Heaven and on Earth... Before anything was created, He was already there. He holds everything together. And He is the head of the body, which is the Church... God made peace through Christ's blood, through His death on the cross."

Heavenly Father, when we stand moaning and groaning, encourage us to remember these famous words by Habakkuk and Paul and rejoice. Grant us the faith to believe You will make things happen "when You want it to". Even in the midst of poverty and desolation help us to say, "God my Saviour fills me with joy." Thank You that You have "made peace through Christ's blood through His death on the cross". Amen.

30th January 2024.

Psalms 67. "May God, show us His favour and bless us. May His face shine upon us! Then His ways will be known on Earth. All nations will see that God has the power to save. May the nations praise You... Then the land will produce its crops. God Himself will bless us and all the people on Earth will have respect for Him."

Acts 6:1-7. 'In those days the number of believers was growing. The Jews who followed Greek practices complained against the Jews who followed only Jewish practices. They also said that the widows were not being taken care of nor getting their fair share of food each day. So all the believers met together. The leaders said, "It would not be right for us to give up teaching God's word in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them to give our attention to prayer and to teaching the word." This plan pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and also Nicolas from Antioch who had accepted the Jewish faith. Then the apostles prayed for them and placed their hands on them [in faith for Holy Spirit guidance]. So God's word spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem grew quickly. Also, a large number of priests began to obey the teachings of Jesus.'

We praise You heavenly Father and thank You for showing how the problems in the growing Jerusalem church were quickly resolved through a meeting of believers. Thank you that Luke records the wisdom given to choosing administrators to avoid neglecting the ministry of prayer and teaching Your truth and preaching the Good News of salvation in Christ. Thank you that through this action, the church grew with signs and wonders, but also opposition. "May all the people on Earth have respect for our God" and "show us His favour and bless us." Amen.

31st January 2024.

Ezekiel 18:5-9. God said to Ezekiel, "Suppose a godly man does what is fair and right. And he does not eat at the mountain temples nor worship the statues. He does not have sex with another man's wife. He does not make love to his own wife during her monthly period. He does not treat anyone badly... He does not steal. Instead, he gives his food to hungry people. He provides clothes for those who are naked. He does not lend money and charge too much interest. He keeps himself from doing what is wrong. He judges cases fairly. He follows My rules. He is faithful in keeping My laws. He always does what is right. You can be sure he will live."

Galatians 3:14-19. Paul writes, "Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing given to Abraham would come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ... The promises were given to Abraham. They were also given to his seed. Scripture does not say, 'seeds' which means many people. It says, 'and to your seed'.

(Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7) That means one person. And that one person is Christ... The Law came 430 years after this promise. But the Law does not get rid of God's covenant and promise. The covenant had already been made by God. So the Law does not do away with the promise. The great gift that God has for us does not depend on the Law... So what was the purpose of the Law? It was added because of human sin. And it was supposed to control us until the promised Seed [Jesus the Christ or Messiah] had come."

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your righteous Law given to Your special people. Thank You also for Your profound promise to Abraham of salvation for all nations through Israel's Messiah, Jesus the Christ, Your Son and Saviour of Jews and Gentiles alike. Amen.

1st February 2024.

Daniel 2:47-49. Daniel interpreted a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar which had prophetic meaning then and still has for certain nations today (2:43). 'King Nebuchadnezzar bowed low in front of Daniel to honour him and said "I am sure your God is the greatest God of all. He is the Lord of kings. He explains mysteries. That is why you were able to explain the mystery of my dream." Then the king put Daniel in a position of authority and gave him many gifts.' In the very next chapter the king ordered the building of a golden shrine for the people to worship.

Hebrews 9:7-14. "The high priest went into the inner room once a year taking [sacrificed] blood with him. He offered the blood for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. Here the Holy Spirit was showing us ... that the gifts and sacrifices they offered were not enough to remove the worshiper's feelings of guilt... These were rules that deal with things outside our bodies to obey until the new covenant came. Christ came to be our High Priest of the good things that are already here... He did not enter by spilling the blood of goats and calves. He entered the Most Holy Room by spilling His own blood. He did it once and for all time. He paid the price to set us free from sin forever... He did this through the power of the eternal Holy Spirit."

Dear God, thank You for the records from 2600 years ago which are still relevant for today. We note the destructive prophecies yet to be fulfilled for certain nations. We also note the need to be wary of praise from our leaders who at the same time encourage the worship of alien gods. Thank You that in Jesus Christ the sins of the nation can be exposed by the declaration of Your truth and forgiven by the sacrifice of His blood. Accept our praise and worship! Amen.

2nd February 2024.

1 Samuel 10 describes the way God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. The prophet Samuel anointed Saul in secret (10:1). Then Samuel said to the people, "The LORD God says, 'Israel, I brought you up out of Egypt... I also saved you from the powerful hand of all of the kingdoms that attacked you.' But now you have turned your backs on your God. He saves you out of all your trouble and suffering. But you say, 'We refuse to listen. Place a king over us.' " Then Samuel told each tribe of Israel to come forward to choose their king by lots. Finally Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. Later, God chose David to be the true king of Israel until the time of Christ (1 Samuel 16).

John 19:1-6 describes the way God chose Jesus, the true king of Israel, to sacrifice His life for the salvation of all who believe He is the Son of God. 'Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him whipped. The soldiers twisted thorns together to make a crown and put it on the head of Jesus. Then they put a purple robe on Him. They went up to Him again and again, mocking Him by saying, "We honour You, king of the Jews!" Once more Pilate said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing Jesus out to you. I want to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him." ...As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But Pilate answered, "You take Him and crucify Him. I myself find no basis for a charge against Him." The Jews replied, "The law says He must die. He claimed to be the Son of God." '

Father God, grant wisdom to know Your chosen people to lead the nations today. May they stand firm against unrighteous persecution and uphold Bible truth and salvation through Christ alone. For His sake, Amen.

5th February 2024.

Proverbs 31:30-31. Solomon observed, "Charm can fool you. Beauty fades. But a woman who has respect for the LORD God Almighty should be praised. Give her the reward she has earned. Let everything she has done bring her praise."

Hebrews 10:14-24. "By that one sacrifice, Jesus Christ has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also gave witness to us about this [over 600 years before]. First He said, 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time,' says the LORD. 'I will put My laws in their hearts. I will write My laws on their minds.' (Jeremiah 31:33) 'I will not remember their sins anymore nor remember the evil things they have done.' (Jeremiah 31:34) For those who are forgiven, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not afraid to enter the Most Holy Room. We enter boldly because of the blood of Jesus... It has been opened for us through the curtain... We have a great High Priest over the house of God. So let us come near to God with an honest and true heart. Let us come near with a faith that is sure and strong. Our hearts have been sprinkled [by the blood of Jesus]. Our minds have been cleansed from guilt. Our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold firmly to the hope we have. The One who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we can encourage each other in love. Let us help each other to do good works."

Thank You heavenly Father for these words of an unknown writer to the Jewish believers in the first century AD. Also for the words of Your prophet Jeremiah centuries before. Thank You that Your Spirit establishes Your truth in our hearts and minds but removes from Your mind the sins of our past. Thank You also for Solomon's prayer for female believers who show respect for You. Amen.

6th February 2024.

Ruth Chapter 3 describes the famous story of how Naomi advised Ruth to seek the favour of their nearest unmarried family member, Boaz. Ruth was obedient and the outcome was her marriage to Boaz, whose son became an ancestor of God's chosen King David. David's royal family line continued as prophesied to the time of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:16-21 is where Paul testified in Jerusalem of his conversion as a devout Jew to faith in Jesus Christ. "Ananias said [in Damascus], 'The God of our people has chosen you. He wanted me to tell you His plans for you. You have seen the Blameless One... Now you will give witness to all people about what you have seen and heard. So get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away.' I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the Temple. Then I saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' He said. 'Leave Jerusalem at once. These people will not accept your witness about Me.' 'But Lord,' I replied, 'these people know what I used to do. I went from one synagogue to another and put believers in prison. I also beat them. Stephen was a man who gave witness to others about You. I stood there when he was killed. I had agreed that he should die. I even guarded the coats of those who were killing him.' Then the Lord said to me, 'Go. I will send you far away to people who are not Jews.' "

Dear God, grant further understanding of how You chose Ruth, who was not a Jew, to become the wife of Boaz and ancestor to Joseph and Mary. Also, to understand how You chose Paul, a devout Jew, to stop persecuting the followers of Jesus and preach the Good News to those who were not Jews. Lord Jesus, help us to know You more as we prepare for Your return to Jerusalem, that we will help many to believe and be saved. Amen.

7th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 16:1-8 records one of the 613 laws God gave to Moses 3500 years ago. (These are not part of the 1500 laws added by the Pharisees later on which Jesus and Paul criticised.)

"Celebrate the Passover Feast of the LORD your God in the month when He brought you out of Egypt. Sacrifice an animal from your flock in honour of the LORD your God at the special place the LORD will choose. Do not eat the animal with bread that is made with yeast. For seven days eat bread that is made without yeast to remind you of how much you suffered... Remember it all the days of your life... Sacrifice it when the sun goes down. Do it on the same day every year on the day you left Egypt. Cook it and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose... For six days eat bread that is made without yeast. On the seventh day, come together for a service in honour of the LORD your God. Do not do any work."

Jude 17-22. "Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. 'In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own

ungodly longings.' They are the people who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love and show mercy to those who doubt."

Heavenly Father, we are sad when the enemies of Israel attack Your people on holy days. We pray for the Jews to show mercy and also all who follow their Messiah as Saviour even when they begin to doubt in these terrible days. In Your mercy. Amen.

8th February 2024.

Job 32:1-13. After three of Job's friends spoke to him about his complaints to God, the youngest of his friends, Elihu, spoke to him. "I am young, and you are old. So I was afraid to tell you what I know. I thought, 'Those who are older should speak first.' The Spirit in people gives them understanding... But older people are not the only ones who are wise... So I am saying you should now listen to me... Not one of you has proved that Job is wrong nor answered his arguments. Do not claim, 'We have enough wisdom to answer Job.' Let God, not a mere man, prove that he is wrong." The next five chapters record Elihu's divine wisdom before God spoke directly to Job as recorded in the following four chapters. Finally, in Chapter 42, Job confessed and was much blessed by God Almighty.

Luke 22:20-27. At the Last Supper, Jesus said to His twelve disciples, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. It is poured out for you. But someone here is going to hand Me over to My enemies... The Son of Man will go to His death, just as God has already decided. But how terrible it will be for the one who hands Him over! ...The kings of the nations hold power over their people. And those who order them around call themselves Protectors. But you must not be like that. Instead, the most important among you should be like the youngest. The one who rules should be like the one who serves. Who is considered more important? Is it the one at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am here among you as one who serves."

Thank You heavenly Father for reminding us to value Your wisdom in all people both young and old. Above all, may we see the importance of serving other believers and not ruling or overruling them. Amen.

9th February 2024.

Psalms 145:17-21. "The LORD is right in everything He does. He is loving toward everything He has made. The LORD is ready to help all those who call out to Him who really mean it. He satisfies the needs of those who have respect for Him. He hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all those who love Him... I will praise the LORD with my mouth. Let every creature praise His holy name for ever." #

Matthew 3:1-12. 'In those days John the Baptist came and preached in the desert. He said, "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of Heaven is near." John is the one the prophet Isaiah had spoken about. "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord.' " (Isaiah 40:3) ...People went out to him from Jerusalem and all of Judea... When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the River Jordan. John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming. He said to them, "You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God's anger? Produce fruit that shows you have turned away from your sins. Do not think you can say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones... All the trees that do not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water, calling you to turn away from your sins. But after me, One will come who is more powerful than I am. And I am not fit to carry His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." '

Father God, we thank You for the example of faith and vision of King David to praise You in all circumstances. We remember that we are privileged to be Abraham's children of promise through salvation in Christ. Help us to "prepare the way" for His return. Amen.

12th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 32:1-5 is the beginning of 'the Song of Moses' which he recited to the Children of Israel on the way to the Promised Land. "Listen, O Heaven and Earth! Let my teaching fall like rain. Let my words come down like dew... Let them be like rain on tender plants. I will make known the name of the LORD. Praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock. His works are perfect. All of

His ways are right. He is faithful. He does no wrong. He is honest and fair. Israel, you have sinned against Him very much." The song goes on to tell how God will deal with His disobedient people and also with their enemies. It also reveals how God loves Israel and how He will restore them.

Philemon verses 8-12. While in house prison in Rome, Paul spoke to a runaway slave called Onesimus who became a believer and a close friend. Paul decided to send him back to his owner, Philemon, whom Paul knew well. He sent a letter requesting him to forgive Onesimus. "Because of the authority Christ has given me, I could be bold and order you to do what you should do anyway. But I make my appeal to you on the basis of our love for each other... I make an appeal to you for Onesimus. He became a son to me while I was being held in chains. Before that, he was useless to you. But now he has become useful to you... I am sending Onesimus back to you. My very heart goes with him."

Father God, thank You for reminding us how we fail You and do wrong and deserve Your punishment. Thank You that You long to forgive us and show us Your mercy. Thank you for the example of Paul who pleaded for Philemon to show mercy to Onesimus. Help us to live Christ-like lives showing mercy to Your people and the needy "like rain on tender plants". Amen.

13th February 2024.

Joel 2:12-14. The "word of the LORD God Almighty" was given to His prophet Joel, 800 years before Christ, for the nation to repent (1:13-20). Then came a warning that time was running out before God's "day of darkness and gloom" (2:1-2). Then the LORD declared, "Return to Me with all your heart. There is still time. Do not eat food but weep and mourn. Do not tear your clothes just to show how sad you are. Let your hearts also be broken. Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. He holds back from destroying you. Who knows? He might turn toward you and have pity on you. He might even give you His blessing. Then you can bring your offerings to the LORD your God."

John 14:12-16. Jesus said, "What I am about to tell you is true. Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. In fact, he will do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father and I will do anything you ask in My name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name. I will do it. If you love Me, you will obey what I command. I will ask the Father. And He will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth." Jesus invites us to love Him three more times in the same chapter (v.21,23,28).

Dear God, thank You for encouraging us to take notice of the warnings you gave Your people 2800 years ago to repent, fast and pray in mourning for the sins of their nation. May we seek to love our Saviour more for the sacrifice He made so that the Holy Spirit will be at work in our nation and the church with power and compassion. Amen.

14th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes (NIV). "People should listen to the quiet words of those who are wise. That is better than paying attention to the shouts of a ruler of foolish people. Wisdom is better than weapons of war. But one sinner destroys a lot of good." (9:17-19.) "As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little foolishness overrides wisdom and honour." (10:1.) "Here is the conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil." (12:13-14.)

1 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIRV). "If anyone desires to be a leader in the church, his desire must be to do a good work for God and people. A leader must be free from blame. He must be faithful to his wife. In anything he does, he must not go too far. He must control himself. He must be worthy of respect. He must welcome people into his home. He must be able to teach. He must not get drunk. He must not push people around. He must be gentle. He must not be a person who likes to argue. He must not love money. He must manage his own family well. He must make sure that his children obey him and show him proper respect. If someone does not know how to manage his own family, then how can he take care of God's church?"

Father God, help us to understand the wisdom of these teachings so that we know how to pray in Your will for our leaders of church and state. May we all walk under the anointing of your Holy Spirit promised to those who put their trust in Your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Help us to care for each family member at home and for each member of the church family. Keep reminding us that Jesus is by Your side helping us to fulfil Your calling in life. Amen.

15th February 2024.

Joel 2:17-18. "Let the priests who serve the LORD weep. Let them cry between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, 'LORD, spare Your people. Do not let others make fun of them. Do not let the nations laugh at them. Do not let them tease your people and say, "Where is their God?"' "

Then the LORD will show concern for His land. He will take pity on His people." Joel then hints of times ahead when Israel's Messiah will appear and an even more distant day when He will come again. These things had not been fully revealed at the time of Joel (800 BC).

Mark 13:32-37. Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in Heaven know. The Son does not know. Only the Father knows. Keep watch! Stay awake! [Some manuscripts say, "Stay alert and pray".] You do not know when that time will come. It will be like a man going away and leaves his house with his servants in charge. Each one is given a task to do. He tells the one at the door to keep watch. So keep watch! You do not know when the owner of the house will come back. It may be in the evening or at midnight. It may be when the rooster crows or at dawn. He may come suddenly. So do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone. 'Watch!' "

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for the times that our Father in Heaven hinted of Your coming in the Old Testament. As we now await Your second coming, help us to "keep watch" and "stay alert and pray". In the meantime may we study and **teach** Bible truth, **preach** the Gospel and **reach** the needy. Also those who make fun of believers in their ignorance and say, "Where is their God?" For Your sake who suffered so much for our eternal salvation. Amen.*

16th February 2024.

Joshua Chapters 7 & 8 give the story of the destruction of Ai, a small city chosen by Joshua after the amazing victory over Jericho, a much larger city. The first attempt failed because one of his men, Achan, had been disobedient towards God (7:1). Also, Joshua himself did not prepare properly to go into battle by failing to seek God's guidance (7:2-5). However, after the repentance and punishment of Achan, God told Joshua exactly what to do to successfully destroy Ai (8:1-2). Afterwards, 'Joshua built an altar to honour the LORD, the God of Israel... Then the people offered on the altar burnt offerings to the LORD... Joshua copied the written Law of Moses on stones then read all of the words of the Law out aloud. He read the blessings and the curses. He read them in keeping with what is written in the Scroll of the Law. Joshua read every word Moses had commanded to the whole community of Israel. That included the women and children and also the non-Jews who were living among them.' (8:30-35)

Romans 15:14-16. "My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of goodness. What you know is complete. You are able to teach one another. I have written to you very boldly about certain things I want you to think about and remember. The grace of God has allowed me to serve Christ Jesus among those who are not Jews. My duty as a priest is to preach God's Good News. Then the non-Jews will become an offering that pleases God."

Father God, help us to avoid the sins that hinder Your provision for ourselves and that of others including non-believers. Keep reminding us of Your teachings through Your servants like Moses and Paul. Enable us to live without regrets over our past sins and our failure to seek Your guidance, as with Achan and Joshua. Help us in our "duty as a priest to preach Your Good News". For Christ's sake. Amen.

19th February 2024.

Proverbs 31:10-31 describes some of the qualities of a godly wife. "She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband can trust her completely. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She loves to work with her hands. She gets up while it is still dark and provides food for her family. She uses some of the money she earns to plant a vineyard. She knows that her trading earns a lot of money. Her lamp does not go out at night. She opens her arms to those who are poor and needy. All of her family are dressed in the finest clothes. Her husband is respected at the city gate. She speaks wisely. She teaches faithfully. She watches over family needs. She is busy all the time. Her children stand up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her. A woman who has respect for the LORD should be praised. Let everything she has done bring praise to her at the city gate."

2 John verses 5-10. This is the only book in the New Testament addressed to a woman. "Dear lady, I am writing a command we have had from the beginning. I am asking that we love one another. The way we show our love is to obey God's commands. He commands you to lead a life of

love... Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for. Make sure that you get your complete reward. Some people do not follow the teaching of Christ. Do not take them into your house. But those who follow the teaching of Christ belong to the Father and to the Son."

Thank You Father God for Your love for women from the time of Your creation of the human race. May Your godly provision for women throughout life be fulfilled in marriage commitments to bless their husbands and children and also help to meet the needs of their neighbours whose trust is in You. Amen.

20th February 2024.

Deuteronomy 31:14-21. God spoke to Moses before entering the Promised Land. "The people will not be faithful to me. They will soon join themselves to the gods that are worshiped in the land they are entering. The people will desert Me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and desert them... Horrible troubles and hard times will come on them. They will say 'Our God isn't with us!' I will certainly turn away from them on that day because they did a very evil thing when they turned to other gods. I want you to write down a song and teach it to the people of Israel to sing... Then the song I am giving you will be a witness against them. It will not be forgotten by their children and their children's children. I know what they are likely to do. I know it even before I bring them into the land I promised them with an oath."

Acts 7 records Stephen's account of what happened in the early days of Israel under Moses, Joshua and David. "You are stubborn! You will not listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed Him over to His enemies. You have murdered Him. The law you received was brought by angels. But you have not obeyed it." (7:31-53)

*Heavenly Father, we have sinned and failed to uphold Your Bible truth. Forgive us when we "oppose the Holy Spirit". Make us strong in **teaching** Your truth and **preaching** salvation in Jesus Christ whilst **reaching** out to the needy. Especially the believers who are persecuted by followers of other faiths in Africa and Asia or ancient forms of witchcraft as in Gabon, Burundi and Malawi today. Amen.*

21st February 2024.

Deuteronomy 8:1-6. After the teaching of the Ten Commandments, Moses warned the children of Israel. "Make sure you follow every command I am giving you today. Then you will increase your numbers. You will enter the land the LORD promised with an oath to your people long ago. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way. He guided you in the desert for these 40 years. He wanted to take your pride away. He wanted to put you to the test and know what was in your hearts. He wanted to see whether you would obey His commands... He let you go hungry then gave you manna to eat... He tested you to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD... The LORD your God trains you, just as parents train their children. Obey the commands of the LORD your God. Live as He wants you to live. Have respect for Him."

3 John verses 4 to 12. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are living by the truth [of God]. Dear friends, you are faithful in what you are doing for [visiting] believers. You are faithful even though they are strangers to you. They have told us about your love. Please help them by sending them on their way in a manner that honours God... They did not receive any help from those who are not believers. We should welcome people like them. We should work together with them for the truth." John then warns them to reject the teaching of Diotrephes. "Do not be like those who do evil."

Thank you Father for Your teachings through Moses and John. Help us to live "on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD". May we be seen as "children who are living by the truth of God". May we welcome and encourage other true believers in our midst. Amen.

22nd February 2024.

Psalms 133 is a psalm of King David for those who travelled to Jerusalem to worship the LORD God Almighty. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in peace! It is like the special olive oil that was poured on the head of Aaron the priest... The LORD gives His blessing and gives life that never ends." It is followed by another psalm for visitors to sing. "All of you who serve

the LORD, praise the LORD... Lift up your hands in the Temple and praise the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion (Jerusalem). He is the Maker of Heaven and Earth."

1 Corinthians 3:10-17. Paul says, "God has given me the grace to lay a foundation as a master builder. Now someone else is building on it. But each one should build carefully. No-one can lay any other foundation than the one that has already been laid. That foundation is Jesus Christ. A person may build using gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay or straw. But each person's work will be shown for what it is. On judgment day it will be brought to light... God will give the builder a reward for his work. If the building burns up, the builder will lose everything! ...Do you not know that you yourselves are God's Temple? God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone destroys God's Temple, God will destroy them. God's Temple is holy. And you are that Temple." Paul then goes on to warn about the importance of church unity and expelling sinful members.

Thank you Father God for Paul's reminder that we are Your Temple on Earth. Do not let us ignore the risks of destroying the unity in the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, but take Spirit-led action to maintain peace and holiness. May we value the words of King David, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in peace!" May this also remain true in Jerusalem today and in the future. Amen.

23rd February 2024.

Judges 11 is the story of Jephthah who was the son of a prostitute. When he grew up, his step-brothers drove him away from his home and said, "You will not receive any of the family's inheritance." However, he became a mighty warrior for Israel and helped to defeat the Ammonites. The Spirit of the LORD God Almighty came upon him as he advanced toward the Ammonites. Foolishly, he made a promise to God. "If You give the Ammonites into my hands, when I come back from winning the battle, anything that comes out the door of my house to meet me will belong to You. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." (v.31) Sadly, he did not repent whilst he had the time. When God gave him the victory over the enemies of Israel, it was his daughter who came out to greet him. He blamed her and said, "My daughter! You have filled me with trouble and sorrow!" (v.35)

Galatians 5:1-6. Paul's life was changed when he repented to God for persecuting Jesus the Christ, Israel's Messiah. He wrote to the Galatian believers, "Christ has set us free... So stand firm. Do not let the chains of slavery hold you again... Do not let yourselves be circumcised. If you do, Christ will not be of any value to you... Some of you are trying to be made right with God by trusting in the Law of Moses. You have become separated from Christ. You have fallen away from God's grace. But we can expect to be made completely holy because of our faith in Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we wait in hope. Circumcision or uncircumcision are no longer important to those who believe in Christ Jesus. The only thing that is really important is faith that shows itself through love."

Heavenly Father, forgive our foolish ways, now and in the past. Grant us the total freedom promised in Christ our Saviour as we repent of everything that still enslaves us. Amen.

26th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 reveals the despair of the writer who finds little purpose in life! He experienced many pleasures but they became meaningless (v.1). Laughter became meaningless like the pleasures (v.2). Also wine and other activities he explored using his human wisdom (v.3). Also engaging in great building projects and planting fields and parks and establishing flocks of cattle and sheep and employing slave labour (v.4-7). Using his own wisdom, he became rich and employed singers and women to "serve the delights of the heart of mankind" (v.8-9). He had everything his eyes wanted (v.10). "But then I looked over everything my hands had done. I saw what I had worked so hard to get and nothing had any meaning. It was like chasing the wind. Nothing was gained here on this Earth."

Romans 8:12-17. "Brothers and sisters, our duty is not to live under the control of our sinful nature... But by the power of the Holy Spirit you can put to death the sins your body commits [in your old life]. Then you will live [the new life in Christ]. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God... By the Spirit's power we call God 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit Himself joins with our spirits... As His children, we will receive all that He has planned for us that Christ has already received. But we must share in His sufferings if we want to share in His glory."

Dear Lord God, the writer of Ecclesiastes says it all! The freedoms we have to "serve the delights of the heart" lead us and others nowhere. Forgive us for seeking the selfish and sinful things

in life instead of the new life You give in Christ our Saviour. Grant us to understand the full meaning of Paul's words, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God". Prepare us to share in some of the sufferings Christ Himself experienced before we join Him "in His glory". Amen.

27th February 2024.

Micah 4:3-7. God's prophet said (700 BC) that in the last days, "He will judge between people from many nations. He will settle problems among mighty nations everywhere. They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning tools. Nations will not go to war against each another. They will not even train to fight anymore... Other nations worship and trust in their gods. But we will worship and obey the LORD. He will be our God for ever and ever. 'The time is coming when I will gather those who are disabled,' announces the LORD God Almighty. 'I will bring together those who were taken away as prisoners. I will gather those I have allowed to suffer. I will make the disabled my faithful people. I will make those who were driven away from their homes a strong nation. I will rule over them in Mount Zion (Jerusalem) and be their King forever.' "

John 5:36-47. Jesus warned, "I am doing the work the Father gave Me to finish. It gives witness that the Father has sent Me... His word does not live in you. This is because you do not believe the One He sent. You study the Scriptures carefully because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about Me. But you refuse to come to Me and receive life... I have come in My Father's name, and you do not accept Me... Do not think I will bring charges against you in front of the Father. Moses is the one who will do that. And he is the one you build your hopes on! He wrote about Me. But you do not believe what he wrote. So how are you going to believe what I say?"

Father God, we thank You for Your promised provision in the last days when Jesus our Saviour returns. Have mercy on those who currently refuse to believe. For His sake, who died to save us all. Amen.

28th February 2024.

Exodus 34:29-35. Moses prepared the second set of Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai in the presence of the LORD God Almighty. 'Then Moses came down from Mount Sinai. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. His face was shining because he had spoken with the LORD. But he did not realize it. Aaron and all of the people of Israel saw Moses. So they were afraid to come near him... He gave them all of the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face... He would keep it on until he went in [to the Tent of Meeting] to speak with the LORD.'

John 6:25-35. After the feeding of the 5000, the crowds found Jesus on the other side of Lake Galilee. He told them, "You are not looking for Me because you saw miraculous signs. You are looking for Me because you ate the loaves until you were full. Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man [Jesus the Messiah] will give you. God the Father has put His seal of approval on Him... God's work is to believe in the One He has sent." So they said to Him, "Long ago our people ate the manna in the desert. The Lord gave them bread from Heaven to eat." Jesus said to them, "It is not Moses who has given you the bread from Heaven. It is My Father who gives you the true bread from Heaven. The bread of God is the One who comes down from Heaven. He gives life to the world... I am the bread of life. No-one who comes to Me will ever go hungry. And no-one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty."

Father God, we seek to obey Your Ten Commandments and eat Your "true bread from Heaven" in following Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

29th February 2024.

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 goes beyond worldly wisdom by warning us of the dark days to come, including sickness and old age. Whilst we are young enough to live life to the full, remember that God will judge us with punishment or reward for what we have done on this planet Earth. This gives understanding and purpose to the many things in life that the writer thinks can be so meaningless. Therefore, we must stop worrying, put behind us our troubles and sins, then live to please God. If we seek God and obey His commands, we can place our future in His hands. Our youthful days and ways will soon pass but our life with God will go on for ever, for those who know His forgiveness and salvation.

Mark 6:1-12. Jesus and His disciples went to visit his home town of Nazareth but many were not pleased with him. Jesus said, "A prophet is not honoured in his home town among his relatives." (6:3-4) So Jesus went around teaching from village to village. He sent the disciples out two by two. He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits (6:6-7). He said, "Some places may not welcome you or listen to you." (6:11) However, 'they went out. And they preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons. They poured oil on many sick people and healed them.' (6:12-13)

Dear Lord God, please forgive the worldly decisions we have made in the past. In "the dark days to come, including sickness and old age", help us to stop worrying and live to please You and rejoice in the promise of eternal life with You. Do not let us be discouraged by those who know us but are not pleased with us, as happened to Jesus in His home town. Send us out in the power of Your Holy Spirit to preach the Good News of salvation in Christ alone and perform many signs and wonders. Amen.

1st March 2024.

Daniel 11:2-35 records the prophecy of "the kings of the north and the south". Daniel was exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon in 605 BC. He became a major official in the king's government and became famous for interpreting dreams and pronouncing prophecies from the LORD God Almighty. In the third year of King Cyrus (10:1) Daniel was given a prophecy through an angel of God of what would happen in the Middle East in the coming centuries. This included Alexander the Great whose kingdom became divided between Egypt to the south and Syria to the north. The remnant of the Jews was often in the middle of the conflict. This resulted in Antiochus, the king of the north, bringing the "abomination that causes desolation" to Jerusalem (11:31). He stopped the daily sacrifices and established the worship of the Greek god Zeus in the Temple. He led many Jews to do evil, "but the people who know their God will firmly oppose him" (11:32). These faithful Jews preserved the Jewish nation which still existed at the time of Christ, unlike the kingdom of Antiochus which did not last.

Revelation 1:1-3. The Apostle John was given amazing prophecies and revelations through an angel of God. "This is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show those who serve God what will happen soon. God made it known by sending his angel to his servant John... The things he gives witness to are God's word and what Jesus Christ has said. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and believe everything it says is important. The time when these things will come true is near."

Father God, thank You for sending an angel to Daniel and John to bring true predictions of what will happen in the future. Thank you for the faithful few in Jerusalem then and now and for today's "children of God" with faith in Jesus Christ Your Messiah and our Saviour. Amen.

4th March 2024.

2 Chronicles 13. Abijah became king in Jerusalem and established a battle line with his 400,000 troops against Jereboam, the king of the northern tribes who had 800,000 troops (13:1-3). Abijah stood on a hilltop and shouted to Jereboam, "Don't you know that the LORD God Almighty has placed David and his sons after him on Israel's throne forever? ...His kingdom is in the hands of men in David's family line. It's true that you have a huge army... But you drove out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron. You also drove out the Levites. You appointed your own priests. That is the way the people of other nations do... Then they become priests of gods that are not really gods at all! But the LORD is our God. We have not deserted Him." (13:8-10) Jereboam and his troops surrounded the troops of Abijah but God delivered them. 'Abijah and his men wounded and killed large numbers of them... The men of Judah won the battle over them. That's because they trusted in the LORD.' (13:17-18)

Galatians 2:20-12. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live but Christ lives in me. My faith in the Son of God helps me to live my life in my body. He loved me. He gave Himself for me. Therefore, I do not lose the grace of God."

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for the many examples in Scripture that testify of Your faithfulness for those who put their trust in You and in Your Son our Saviour. Thank you that for those who do this, we "do not lose the grace of God". Forgive us and our nation when we appoint priests and leaders "in the way the people of other nations do". Thank you that You "placed David and his sons after him on Israel's throne forever" to provide our new life in Christ our Saviour, Israel's Messiah, who was born through the family line of David. Amen.

5th March 2024.

Genesis 26 records the last years of Isaac, before his twin son Jacob married Abraham's relatives. There was a famine in the land of Canaan but God warned Isaac not to move down to Egypt. "Live in the land where I tell you to live... I will give all of these lands to you and your children after you. I will keep the promise I made to your father Abraham." (26:2-5) Canaan became known as God's Promised Land of Israel. The Philistines who lived nearby blocked up the wells dug by Isaac (26:15). So Isaac moved away from them. The LORD God Almighty spoke to him. "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will bless you. I will increase the number of your children because of My servant Abraham." (26:24) Then Abimelech, king of the Philistines, came to Isaac and made a peace treaty with Isaac and his family (26:26-31). Later, Isaac's other twin son Esau 'got married to Judith, a Hittite. He also married Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Isaac and Rebekah became very upset because Esau had married Hittite women.' (26:34-35)

Mark 7:24-30 records the visit of Jesus to Tyre, north of Galilee. A foreign woman came to Him drive out a demon in her daughter. He tried to ignore her by saying "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). However, because of her faith, Jesus healed her daughter. 'She went home and found her child lying on the bed. And the demon was gone.' (Mark 7:30)

We note how foreigners offered peace to Abraham's family but Esau disobeyed his father Isaac and married two foreigners. Unlike Jacob, who became God's chosen father of the twelve tribes of Israel. We note how Jesus, despite His calling to minister to Israel, healed a foreigner. We thank you Father God for our calling to minister to all who will receive Jesus as Saviour today. Amen.

6th March 2024.

Habakkuk 3. After the LORD God Almighty answered Habakkuk's complaints, Habakkuk begins to see the world around him from God's view point. He offers a prayer of praise and petition. "LORD, I have great respect for You because of Your mighty acts. Do them again for us! Make them known in our time. When you are angry, please show us your tender love... You sent plagues ahead of You. Sickness followed behind You. When You stood up, the earth shook. When You looked at the nations, they trembled with fear... Floods of water swept by. The sea roared and lifted its waves high... You came out to set Your people free and saved Your chosen ones. You crushed Pharaoh... But I will be patient. I will wait for the day of trouble to come on the nation that is attacking us. The fig trees might not bud. The vines might not produce grapes. The olive crop might fail. The fields might not produce food. There might not be any sheep in the pens. There might not be any cattle in the barns. But I will still be glad because of what the LORD has done. God my Saviour fills me with joy."

Titus 2:11-14. "God's saving grace has appeared to all people. It teaches us to say no to godless ways and sinful longings... We must do what is right. We must live godly lives in today's world as we wait for the blessed hope God has given us when Jesus Christ appears in all His glory. He is our great God and Saviour. He gave Himself for us and set us free from all evil. He wanted to make us pure. He wanted us to be His very own people and do what is good."

Father God, forgive us when we complain! Help us to see ourselves and the world around us from Your point of view. Help us to rejoice and live godly lives as we await our Saviour's return. Amen.

7th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12. This is part of the Song of Moses after he received the Ten Commandments from Almighty God. "The LORD's people are his portion. Jacob [Israel] is the nation He has inherited. The LORD found Israel in a desert land... He took care of them and kept them safe... The LORD was the only one who led Israel. No other god was with them." The song concludes in faith and vision: "You nations, be full of joy together with God's people. The LORD will get even with His enemies. He will pay them back for killing those who serve Him. He will wipe away the sin of his land and people." (v.33)

Hebrews 8:6-12 explains, "Jesus has been given a greater work to do for God. He is the go-between for the new covenant... It is based on better promises. Suppose nothing had been wrong with that first covenant. Then no one would have looked for another covenant. But God found fault with His people. He said, 'A new day is coming. I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their people long ago. That was when I took

them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. My new covenant will be different because they didn't remain faithful to My old covenant. So I turned away from them. But this is the covenant I will make with Israel after that time, says the LORD. I will put my laws in their minds. I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God. And they will be My people. I will forgive their evil ways. I will not remember their sins anymore.' " (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

Thank You Father God for Your commitment to your people Israel. Open our minds and hearts, for them and for us all, to the full meaning of Your new covenant established through Jesus Christ our Messiah and Saviour. Amen.

8th March 2024.

Ecclesiastes 7:25,29. "I tried to understand wisdom more completely... I tried to find out everything I could about it. I tried to understand why it is foolish to be evil... Here is the only other thing I found. God made men honest. But they have made [sought after, KJV] many evil plans."

2 Timothy 3:1-10,14-15. Paul wrote to Timothy, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will love themselves. They will love money. They will boast and be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They will not be thankful or holy. They will not love others. They will not forgive others. They will tell lies about people. They will be out of control. They will be wild. They will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving God. They will act as if they were serving God. But what they do will show that they have turned their backs on God's power. Have nothing to do with those people. They are the kind who get into the homes of weak-willed women to have control over them. They give in to all kinds of evil longings. They are always learning but never come to know the truth... They oppose the truth. Their minds are twisted. As far as the faith is concerned, God doesn't accept them... Their foolish ways will be clear to everyone... But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Do not give up what you are sure of... You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus."

Thank You Father God for these wise words for the "terrible times in the last days". Help us to remain confident in what we have learned from the Bible. Amen.

11th March 2024.

2 Kings 11:17-21. After the deaths of Ahab and Jezebel, most of their family members were killed. But their daughter Athaliah rose up to destroy the royal family members in Judah. However, the young boy Joash was hidden. When he was seven years old the Temple priest in Jerusalem, Jehoiada, 'made a covenant between the LORD God Almighty and the boy king and the people. They promised they would be the LORD's people. All of the people of the land then went to Baal's temple and tore it down with the altars and the statues of gods. Then Jehoiada stationed guards at the Temple of the Lord... and brought the new king into the palace and the king sat down on the royal throne. All of the people of the land were filled with joy. And the city was quiet because Athaliah had been killed with a sword at the palace.' Joash reigned for 40 years in Jerusalem and gave instructions for the repair of God's Temple which had been neglected.

Hebrews 2:11-18. "The One who makes people holy and the people He makes holy belong to the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters... Jesus became human like them in order to die for them. By doing that, he could destroy the one who rules over the kingdom of death, the devil... Jesus set people free who were afraid of death and held as slaves by that fear... So He had to be made like His brothers in every way to serve God as a kind and faithful high priest. And then He could pay for the sins of the people by dying for them."

Thank You again heavenly Father for the records that show how You used humble servants like Joash and Jehoiada to defeat the work of the devil. Thank You that You sent Jesus as a humble human being to die for us to set us free from evil and fear. Amen.

12th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 12:1-4,10. Moses said, "Here are the rules and laws you must obey. Be careful to follow them in the land the LORD God Almighty has given you to take as your own... Obey these rules and laws as long as you live in the land. You will soon drive the nations out of it. Completely destroy all of the places where they worship their gods... But first you will go across the Jordan River.

You will settle in the land He is giving you. It will belong to you as your share. He will give you peace and rest from all of your enemies around you. You will live in safety."

2 Timothy 3:15 to 4:4. Paul wrote, "You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture for teaching us what is true... By using Scripture, people of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing. I give you a command in the sight of God and Christ Jesus. Christ will judge the living and the dead. Because He and His kingdom are coming, here is the command I give you. Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Cheer them up with words of hope... The time will come when people will not put up with true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own longings. They will gather a large number of teachers around them who will say what the people want to hear. The people will turn their ears away from the truth."

Thank You Father God for reminding us of Your instructions and promises given nearly 3500 years ago to Moses and the Children of Israel. Thank you that this was in preparation for receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour. May Your people everywhere uphold Your truth and prepare for Christ's return. Amen.

13th March 2024.

Jeremiah 36. A message came to Jeremiah from the LORD God almighty in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. "Get a scroll. Write on it all of the words I have spoken to you about Israel, Judah and all of the other nations... They will hear about all of the trouble I plan to bring on them. Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. Then I will forgive their sins and the evil things they have done." Baruch wrote down all of the words the LORD had spoken and read them out in LORD's Temple. Later, when the words from God were read out to the king he had the scroll burned. 'So I got another scroll and told Baruch what to write on it.' Jeremiah ended up in prison.

Acts 10. 'A man named Cornelius lived in Caesarea. He was a Roman commander. Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped the one true God Almighty. One day he had a vision. An angel came to him and said, "Cornelius! Your prayers and gifts to poor people have come up like an offering to God. So He has remembered you. Now send men to Joppa and bring back a man named Simon Peter." Then Cornelius called two of his servants and sent them to Joppa.' In this way, the apostle Peter went to visit Cornelius. He preached the Good News of salvation in Christ and Cornelius and his family repented and were saved along with other Gentiles who believed.

Thank You Father God for again reminding us, through Jeremiah, of Your instructions, warnings and promises. Thank you for the impact of Your ministry through Cornelius and Peter in the early Roman Empire. We ask for Your Bible truth to be revealed today to people of power including kings and leaders of state, businesses and churches, despite the risk of persecution, even imprisonment. In the name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen.

22nd March 2024.

Isaiah 65:1-2; 13-17 give the words of the LORD God Almighty regarding His judgement and salvation. "I made Myself known to those who were not asking for Me. I was found by those who were not trying to find Me. I spoke to a nation that did not pray to Me. 'Here I am,' I said. All day long I have held out My hands to welcome a stubborn nation. They lead sinful lives. They go where their evil thoughts take them. They are always making Me very angry. They do it right in front of Me..." So the LORD and King says, "My true servants will have food to eat. But you will be hungry. My true servants will have plenty to drink. But you will be thirsty. My true servants will be full of joy. But you will be put to shame. My true servants will sing with joy in their hearts. But you will cry out because of the great pain in your hearts... I will give new names to those who serve Me. They will ask Me to bless their land in My name. I am the God of truth. They will take oaths and make promises in their land... The troubles of the past will be forgotten and hidden from My eyes. I will create new heavens and a new earth. The things that have happened before will not be remembered. They will not even enter your minds."

Romans 11:11-18 provide Paul's teaching on the Gentiles who are grafted into the root of God's people Israel. He warns, "Do not boast: you do not support the root but the root supports you."

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your warning to the stubborn nations and Your readiness to bless all "who serve Me" including those "who were not trying to find You". Lord God, raise up

more true servants who put their trust in Israel's Messiah in whom all true believers are rooted. For His sake. Amen.

25th March 2024.

Genesis 13. Abraham and his nephew Lot settled in the Negev which became part of the Promised Land of Israel nearly 600 years later. 'Abram said to Lot, "The people who take care of your herds and those who take care of mine should not argue with each another... Is not the whole land in front of you? Let us separate. If you go to the left, I will go to the right." (13:8-9) Lot chose the best pasture land near Sodom and Abraham trusted God to meet his own needs. After Lot departed, the LORD God Almighty spoke to Abraham. "Look north, south, east and west. I will give you all of the land that you see to you and your children after you forever... Go, walk through the land I am giving to you." '

Revelation 22:7-17. Nearly 4000 years after Abraham, Jesus spoke to His servant John in a vision. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy in this book... Let those who do wrong keep on doing wrong... Let those who do what is right keep on doing what is right... Look! I am coming soon! I will reward each person for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the Tree of Life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city. Outside the city are the dogs and those who practice witchcraft. Also those who commit sexual sins and murder, who worship statues of gods and do what is false. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches."

Thank You Father God for your Bible truth from Genesis to Revelation. Open our eyes to see "north, south, east and west" what You have provided for Your Kingdom on Earth, past, present and future. Help us to believe and "witness for the churches". Amen.

26th March 2024.

Ecclesiastes 11 to 12 give words of wisdom back in 1000BC. "Anyone who keeps on watching the wind won't plant seeds. Anyone who keeps looking at the clouds won't gather crops... You do not know how a baby is made inside its mother. So you cannot understand how God works either... In the morning, plant your seeds. In the evening, keep your hands busy. You do not know what will succeed. It may be one or the other or both might do equally well... Do what your heart tells you to do... But know that God will judge you for everything... And here is the final thing I want to say. Have respect for God and obey His commandments. That is what everyone should do. God will judge us including everything we try to hide... whether it is good or evil."

2 Timothy 3:12-17. Paul tells Timothy, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Evil people and pretenders will go from bad to worse. They will fool others, and others will fool them. But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Do not give up what you are sure of. You know the people you learned it from. You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It teaches us what is true and corrects our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again and for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing."

Father God, grant us the faith to "in the morning, plant seeds" and above all to "obey Your commandments". Thank You for the scriptures old and new we have learnt from childhood, which prepare us "to do every good thing". Thank You for Jesus. Amen.

27th March 2024.

Deuteronomy 1:1-8. 'These are the words Moses spoke to the people of Israel in the desert east of the Jordan River... "The LORD our God spoke to us at Mount Horeb. 'Take your tents down. Go into the hill country of the Amorites. Go to all of the people who are their neighbours... in the Negev Desert and along the [Mediterranean] coast. Travel to the land of Canaan and through Lebanon as far as the great Euphrates River. I have given you all of the land I promised I would give to your fathers. I promised it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to their children after them.' "

Acts 7:30-53 is when the apostle Stephen was arrested for preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah and our Saviour. He said to the Jewish leaders at that time, "An angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. He heard the voice of the LORD God Almighty. 'I have seen My people beaten down in Egypt. I have heard their groans. I have come down to set them free.' So Moses led them out of Egypt... This is the same Moses who

spoke to the people of Israel. 'God will send you a Prophet who will be like me.' Moses received living words to pass on to us. But our people refused to obey Moses. In their hearts, they wished they were back in Egypt... You people! You won't obey! You are stubborn! You won't listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed Him over to His enemies. You have murdered Him. The Law you received was brought by angels. But you haven't obeyed it."

Lord Jesus, help us to fulfil Father God's salvation plan! Amen.

28th March 2024.

Psalms 38. A petition to God Almighty from King David. "Oh LORD, my guilt has become too much for me. It is a load too heavy to carry." (38:4) "My heart pounds. My strength is gone. My eyes can hardly see." (38:10) "I am like a deaf person. I cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot speak, who cannot say a word." (38:13) "I confess I have done wrong. I am troubled by my sin." (38:18) "O LORD, do not desert me. My God, do not be far away from me. LORD my Saviour, come quickly to help me." (38:21-22)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17. Paul says, "The Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning. He wanted you to be saved. Salvation comes through the Holy Spirit's work. He makes people holy. It also comes through believing the [Bible] truth. He chose you to be saved by accepting the Good News that we preach. And you will share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, stand firm. Hold on to what we taught you. We passed our teachings on to you by what we preached and wrote. Our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father loved us [from the beginning]. By His grace God gave us comfort that will last forever. The hope He gave us is good. May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father comfort your hearts. May They make you strong in every good thing you do and say."

Father God, we note the confessions of King David and bow our heads in shame because of our own past sins. Thank You that we have been taught through the faithful preaching from the Bible to believe in Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Saviour, who took our sins on the cross in our place. "Make us strong in every good thing we do and say." Thank You that "from the beginning" You have "chosen us to be saved" like David and Paul. Amen.

29th March 2024.

Leviticus 25:8-55 describes the Year of Jubilee. The LORD God Almighty said to Moses, "Count off seven times seven years to a total of 49 years... On that day blow the trumpet all through your land. Set the 50th year apart. Announce freedom all over the land to everyone who lives there. The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you... Do not plant anything... It is a Year of Jubilee and will be holy for you. Eat only what the fields produce... Follow My rules. Be careful to obey My laws. Then you will live safely in the land. The land will produce its fruit. You will eat as much as you want. And you will live there in safety."

Hebrews 3:1-7. "Holy brothers and sisters, God chose you to be His people. So keep thinking about Jesus. He is our Apostle. He is our High Priest. We believe in Him. Moses was faithful in everything he did in the house of God. In the same way, Jesus was faithful to the One who appointed Him. The person who builds a house has greater honour than the house itself. In the same way, Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses. God is the builder. Moses was faithful as one who serves in the house of God. He gave witness to what God would say in days to come. But Christ is faithful as a Son over God's house. We are His house if we continue to come boldly to God. We must also hold on to the hope we have. The Holy Spirit says, 'Listen to His voice today. If you hear it, do not be stubborn [harden your hearts].' "

Forgive us heavenly Father for failing to gather together to celebrate in 1995, 50 years after You delivered us all from the second world war. Forgive us for hardening our hearts and failing to listen to the voice of Jesus our Saviour today. For His sake, Amen.

1st April 2024.

Genesis Chapter 49. In the year 1689 BC, Jacob and his family were still living in Egypt. He knew he was about to die so he blessed each of his 12 sons one by one, despite their many faults. (It was over 200 years later that Moses led their families out of Egypt into the Promised Land of Canaan, now called Israel.) In the previous chapter, Jacob had blessed the two sons of Joseph who had been born to his alien Egyptian wife, that they should be fully recognised by the rest of the family as part

of the tribe of Israel (48:20). Before he died, Jacob gave instructions that his body should be buried in Canaan "in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite near Mamre in Canaan. Abraham had bought it as a place where he could bury his wife's body. The bodies of Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there. So were the bodies of Isaac and his wife Rebekah. I also buried Leah's body there." (49:30-32)

Matthew 19:13-30. Jesus blessed the little children that people brought to Him. He told His followers, "Let the little children come to Me. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like them." Then a rich young man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?" He was faithful in keeping all the Ten Commandments but Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in Heaven. Then come and follow Me."

Thank You Father God, for recording the blessings You planned for Abraham's family "despite their many faults". This included sons born to aliens living in their midst. Thank You that Jesus confirmed His blessing for people with a child-like faith and for those who are ready to help the poor. Show us how to store up "treasure in Heaven" as we follow Jesus. Amen.

2nd April 2024.

Joshua 10:1-14. The people of Israel defeated Jericho and Ai in the year 1451 BC, 'The king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had taken Ai and that the city had been set apart to the LORD God Almighty in a special way to be destroyed. He also heard that the people of Gibeon had made a peace treaty with Israel... So he made an appeal to five local kings. "Come up and help me attack Gibeon." The five Amorite kings moved all of their troops into position to fight against Gibeon... Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his whole army. The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. I have handed them over to you." Joshua marched all night and took the Amorite armies by surprise. The LORD threw them into a panic and they ran away as Israel marched toward them. As they ran, the LORD threw large hailstones down on them from the sky which killed more of them than the swords of the men of Israel... Joshua spoke to the LORD, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon!" So the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation won the battle over its enemies. You can read about it in the Book of Jasher... It was a day when the LORD listened to a mere man. You can be sure that the LORD was fighting for Israel!'

Acts 7:44-53. Stephen said to the leaders of Israel, "Long ago our people had with them in the desert the holy tent where the tablets of the covenant were kept... Our people brought it with them when they took the land of Canaan. God drove out the nations that were in their way." But Stephen went on to accuse the Jewish leaders of killing Israel's Messiah. "The Law you received was brought by angels. But you haven't obeyed it."

Father God, forgive us for judging Your people Israel whom You blessed through Jesus Christ our Messiah. Help them and us to prepare for His return! Amen.

3rd April 2024.

Zephaniah 2:1-7. The prophet Zephaniah spoke to the unfaithful believers before "the day of his anger comes upon you". (2:2) Then he spoke to the faithful believers. "So look to Him, all of you people in the land who worship Him faithfully who always do what He commands you to do. Continue to do what is right. Do not be proud. Then perhaps the LORD God Almighty will keep you safe on the day He pours out his anger" (2:3). Zephaniah then pronounces what the LORD will do to Israel's evil neighbours, beginning with Gaza. "Gaza will be deserted... How terrible it will be for the people who live by the Mediterranean Sea!" This region was occupied by Israel after they returned from exile. "But the full occupation of this land will only take place when their Messiah returns again to reign." (Quoted from *The Applied Old Testament Commentary* by Thomas Hale, friend and colleague of Manna Publications author, Fred Morris.)

Galatians Chapter 3. Paul asks, "Why does God give you His Spirit? Why does He work miracles among you? Is it because you do what the Law says? Or is it because you believe what you have heard?" (v.5) "We know that no-one is made right with God by keeping the Law. Scripture says (Habakkuk 2:4), 'Those who are right with God will live by faith.' " (v.11) "Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing given to Abraham would come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ." (v.14)

Heavenly Father, thank you that we have the writings from Zephaniah to warn us about Your anger when believers are unfaithful. Thank you also for the writings which confirm Your love for

those who "do what He commands you to do". Help us to understand fully today the writings about the past, present and future as we faithfully continue to believe and trust in Christ our Saviour. Amen.

4th April 2024.

Joshua 6:1-5 gives God's instructions in 1451 BC to destroy the city of Jericho after the crossing of the River Jordan. 'The gates of Jericho were shut tight and guarded closely because of the people of Israel... Then the LORD God Almighty spoke to Joshua. "I have handed Jericho over to you and its king and its fighting men. March round the city once with all of your fighting men. Do this for six days. Tell seven priests to take trumpets and carry them in front of the Ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times... When you hear the priests blow a long blast on their trumpets, tell all of the men to give a loud shout. The walls of the city will fall down. Then the whole army will go straight in." Jericho was never rebuilt and remains a barren site to this day.

1 Corinthians 2:3-8. Paul writes, "When I came to you, I was weak and afraid and trembling all over. I didn't preach my message with clever and compelling words. As I preached, the Holy Spirit showed His power. That was so you would believe, not because of human wisdom but because of God's power. The words we speak to those who have grown in the faith are wise. Our words are different from the words of the rulers of this world. People like that are not going anywhere! No, we speak about God's secret wisdom which has been hidden. Before time began, God planned that His wisdom would bring us heavenly glory. None of the rulers of this world understood God's wisdom. If they had, they would not have nailed the Lord of Glory to the cross."

Thank You Father God that Paul understood Your plan was to "bring us heavenly glory" through Your wisdom, not through "the words of the rulers of this world". Like Joshua and Paul, in our weakness, may we obey You and see Your plans fulfilled in power! Amen.

5th April 2024.

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18. Solomon said, "I spent all of my time studying everything that is done on Earth... I said to myself, 'Look, my wisdom has really been growing.' Then I used my mind to understand what it really means to be wise. And I wanted to know what foolish pleasure is all about. But I found out that that ... a lot of human wisdom leads to a lot of sorrow. More knowledge only brings more sadness." At the end of his writings, he says, "Have respect for God and obey His commandments... God will judge everything people do, whether it is good or evil."

1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Paul said, "I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit... There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord Jesus. There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have those different things... To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others, He gives knowledge. To others He gives faith. To others He gives gifts of healing. To others He gives the power to do miracles. To others He gives the ability to prophesy. To others He gives the ability to understand the spirits. To others He gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages. And to still others He gives the ability to interpret."

Father God, we thank you for the invitation from the beginning to obey You. Above all, we thank you that because of our sinful nature to choose "foolish pleasures", You sent Jesus to sacrifice His life to pay for our sins and receive a new Spirit-filled life. Thank You for the gifts of the Spirit You share among true believers today including true wisdom and knowledge. Thank you that Solomon knew that without obedience we could not use the gifts of the Spirit for good.

8th April 2024.

Leviticus 5:14-19 describes the guilt offering law. The LORD God Almighty spoke to Moses. "When a person sins by breaking the law without meaning to, he sins against Me or My priests... He must bring Me a ram from the flock without flaws... It is a guilt offering to pay for his sin... The priest will pay for the person's sin with the ram and he will be forgiven. Suppose a person sins by doing something I command him not to do. Even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held accountable for it. He too must bring to the priest a ram from the flock as a guilt offering without flaws... The priest will sacrifice the animal. That will pay for what the person has done wrong without meaning to and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering because he has been guilty of doing wrong against Me."

Luke 4:1-13. After the baptism of Jesus He was tempted three times in the desert by the devil. The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." (4:3) Next

the devil said, "I will give you all the authority and glory that is given to me... So if you worship me, it will all be yours." (4:6-7) Next, the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and told Him stand on the highest point of the Temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here." Each time Jesus answered from Scripture. (Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:13; Psalm 91:11,12)

Thank You Father God for Your Old Testament teachings through Moses, many of which were repeated by Jesus our Saviour. Help us to understand the need to always repent of sin, even when we do it without meaning to, because we are "guilty of doing wrong against You". Help us, as Jesus did, to trust You and worship You and not put You to the test. Amen.

9th April 2024.

Jeremiah 42. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 590 BC by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, some of the people of Israel planned to escape to Egypt. They came to Jeremiah. "Please listen to our appeal. Pray to the LORD your God for all of us who are left here.... Pray that He will tell us where to go and what to do." (42:2) "We will do everything the LORD your God tells us to do." (42:5) After ten days, Jeremiah said, "The LORD God of Israel told me, 'Stay in this land and I will build you up.... Do not be afraid of the king of Babylonia... But if you have already made up your minds to go to Egypt... you will die there.' " (42:10-16) The people of Israel became angry with Jeremiah and ignored his warnings and carried on travelling to Egypt. They never returned to Jerusalem but died with the Egyptians when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt.

Romans 3:1-6. "Is there any advantage in being a Jew? There is great value in every way! First of all, the Jews have been given the very words of God. What if some Jews did not believe? Will the fact that they do not have faith keep God from being faithful? Not at all! God is true, even though every human being is a liar. It is written, 'You are right when You sentence me. You are fair when You judge me.' (Psalm 51:4) Does not the fact that we are wrong prove more clearly that God is right? Then what can we say? Can we say that God is not fair when he brings his anger down on us? God is certainly fair! If He were not fair, how could He judge the world?"

Forgive us heavenly Father for the times we make up our minds to do things without Your blessing. Forgive us for seeking Your guidance and blessing even when our minds are already made up! Keep us ever open to Your truth! Amen.

10th April 2024.

Psalms 46 celebrates The LORD God Almighty and His "holy place" in Jerusalem. It looks forward to the time when the events in Jerusalem will have an impact on the whole world. "God is our place [refuge] of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble. The Earth may fall apart. The mountains may fall into the sea. The waters of the sea may roar and foam. The mountains may shake and the waters rise. But we will not be afraid. God's blessings fill the City of God with joy... See what the LORD has done! The places He has destroyed and wars stopped from one end of the Earth to the other. He breaks every bow and spear... and says, 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be honoured among the nations. I will be honoured on Earth' The LORD who rules over all is with us. He is our fortress."

1 Corinthians 6:11-20. Paul writes, "Your sins were washed away. You were made holy and right [righteous] in God's sight. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Some of you say, 'Everything is permitted for me.' But not everything is good... Do not be controlled by anything! ...The body is not meant for sexual sins but for the Lord... Do you not know that your bodies belong to the body of Christ? ...Keep far away from sexual sins. All the other sins a person commits are outside the body. But sexual sins are sins within and against one's own body. Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in you from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honours God!"

Thank You Father God. Thank you Jesus. Thank You for events in Jerusalem past, present and future! Amen.

11th April 2024.

1 Chronicles 25. King David established the importance of singing in the daily worship of our LORD God Almighty. 'David and the commanders of the army set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. They served the LORD by prophesying while harps, lyres and cymbals were being played.' (25:1) 'All of them were under the direction of their fathers... Young and old alike cast lots for their duties, for students as well as teachers.' (25:6-8)

Acts 4:23-31 records the time that Peter and John were released from prison and warned not to preach in the name of Jesus. 'They went back to their own people to report everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When the believers heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Lord and King... Long ago you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David. 'Why are the nations angry? The kings of the Earth take their stand against the LORD. The rulers of the Earth gather together against His anointed king.' (Psalm 2:1,2) Herod and Pontius Pilate... made plans against Your holy servant Jesus whom You anointed. They did what Your power and purpose had already decided should happen. Consider now the bad things they say they are going to do. Help us to be bold when we speak Your word. Stretch out Your hand to heal and do miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they were bold when they spoke God's word.'

Father God, continue to encourage us to use our gifts in music and prophesying to worship You. Also to be bold in witnessing and preaching the Good News of Jesus our Christ and Saviour. Also to expect and do "miraculous signs and wonders" in and through the name of "Your holy servant Jesus". Amen.

12th April 2024.

Exodus 32 to 34. Aaron, the brother of Moses, allowed the people of Israel to build a golden calf to worship. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Aaron said, "Please do not be angry with me. You know how these people like to do what is evil. They said, 'Make us a god that will lead us. Moses brought us up out of Egypt but we do not know what has happened to him.' " (32:22-23) Moses said to the people, "You have committed a terrible sin. But now I will go up to the LORD God Almighty. Maybe if I pray to Him, He will forgive your sin." (32:30) The LORD sent a plague to kill those who had sinned. (32:33-35) 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses. "Go up to the land I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... I will send an angel ahead of you. I will drive out the Canaanites." (33:1-2) 'Then the LORD said to Moses, "Cut out two stone tablets that are just like the first ones. I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke." (34:1) Then God wrote the Ten Commandments on the stones for Moses to carry to the Promised Land.

Jude verses 3 to 23. "I want to remind you the Lord saved his people out of Egypt. But later he destroyed those who did not believe." (v.5) "The people of Sodom and Gomorrah also did evil things... They committed sins of the worst possible kind. They are an example of those who are punished with fire that never goes out." (v.7) "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love." (v.20-21)

Help us Lord Jesus to "carry" with us God's truth and be more like You! Amen.

15th April 2024.

Ezra Chapter 7. Ezra, an expert in God's Law given to Moses, was sent by King Artaxerxes of Persia in the year 457 BC to Jerusalem with a letter from him. "I and my seven advisers are sending you to Judah and Jerusalem. Find out whether the people there are obeying the Law of your God... I and my advisers have freely given silver and gold to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem... Take the offerings to give for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem." (7:14-16) "Use them for worshiping your God in His Temple. If you need to supply other things for the Temple of your God, take them from among the royal treasures." (7:19-20) "Work hard for the Temple of the God of Heaven. I do not want Him to be angry with my kingdom." (7:23) "Appoint judges and other court officials, using the wisdom your God gives you. Those you appoint should do what is right and fair when they judge people who live west of the River Euphrates. They should do it for everyone who knows the laws of your God. And I want you to teach the people who do not know those laws." (7:25)

Colossians 2:2-3. Paul writes, "I want their hearts to be made cheerful and strong. I want them to be joined together in love. Then their understanding will be rich and complete. They will know the 'mystery of God' which is in Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him."

Thank You Father God that You gave Your servant Ezra the amazing authority to bless Your Temple and Your people in Jerusalem through the support given from the treasures of the king of Persia. Ezra was also ordered to teach Your laws to all the people living west of the Euphrates! Help

us understand You gave Your servant Paul the authority to teach that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ." Amen.

16th April 2024.

1 Samuel 17 describes the story of David and Goliath. The young David was told by his father to leave his sheep and take food to his older brothers who were fighting the Philistines. King Saul asked to speak to David. David explained he could slay the giant in the same way he killed the lions and bears who attacked his sheep. David refused to use Saul's armour and went towards Goliath the giant. Goliath threatened to kill him but David said "You are coming to fight against me with a sword... But I am coming against you in the name of the LORD God Almighty who rules over all. He is the God of the armies of Israel. He is the One you have dared to fight against. This very day the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down. I will cut your head off. This very day I will feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and to the wild animals. Then the whole world will know there is a God in Israel." The successful battle against the Philistines followed and is remembered to this day, over 3000 years later.

Matthew 19:13-15. 'Some people brought little children to Jesus. They wanted Him to place His hands on the children and pray for them. But the disciples told the people to stop. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Do not hinder them. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to people like these." Jesus placed his hands on them and went on His way.'

Thank You Father God for revealing how even the youngest and weakest are called to serve You in defeating those who oppose "the Kingdom of Heaven". We note, too, that David was called by you to raise up a royal family that You would use to prepare for Israel's Saviour and Messiah, Jesus the Christ. Grant us child-like faith to trust You in life's battles. Amen.

17th April 2024.

Psalms 147:12-20. In this time of conflict, let us reflect on the words of the psalmist over 3000 years ago. "Jerusalem, praise the Lord. Zion, praise your God! He makes the bars of your gates stronger. He blesses the people who live inside you. He keeps your borders safe and secure. He satisfies you with the finest wheat... He has made His word known to the people of Jacob. He has made His laws and rules known to Israel. The other nations do not know His laws. Praise the Lord!"

Mark 13:1-8. Jesus gave us His teachings on the future of Jerusalem to His followers. 'Jesus was leaving the Temple. One of His disciples said to Him, "Look, Teacher! What huge stones! What wonderful buildings!" "Do you see these huge buildings?" Jesus asked. "Not one stone here will be left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down." Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the Temple. Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him a question in private. "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to come true?" Jesus said to them, "Keep watch! Be careful that no one deceives you. Many will come in My name. They will claim 'I am He'. You will hear about wars and about future wars. Do not be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still is not here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry. All of those things are the beginning of birth pains." '

Lord Jesus, You know everything about God's role for Jerusalem and Israel, past, present and future. May we be given divine understanding for today and each day to come until you return to establish God's Kingdom on Earth personally. Thank you for Your warning to "Keep watch" in the meantime. We pray in Your name for peace in Jerusalem. Amen.

18th April 2024.

Micah 4:6-13. The LORD God Almighty gave a vision before His people were exiled in Babylon. "I will gather together those I have allowed to suffer. I will make those who were driven away from their homes a strong nation. I will be their King forever. Jerusalem, the glorious kingdom you had before will be given back to you. Soon you must leave your city and go to Babylonia. But that is where the LORD will save you. There He will set you free from the powerful hand of your enemies. But for now, many nations have gathered together to attack you. Those nations do not know what the LORD has in mind. The time is coming when I will gather together those who are disabled and those who were taken away as prisoners and those I have allowed to suffer."

Galatians 3:25 to 4:7. "You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. There is no Jew or Greek. There is no slave or free person. There is no male or female. Because you belong to

Christ Jesus, you are all one as children of Abraham and will receive what God has promised. God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to Him. God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Holy Spirit. So you are no longer slaves. You are God's children. Because you are His children, He gives you what He promised to give His people."

Thank You Father for Your everlasting love for Your people Israel and the promises You have made to "gather together those I have allowed to suffer". Grant us that same love so that we can all be adopted as "children of Abraham" with the Spirit of Jesus Your Messiah in our hearts. This day, may the nations "know what the LORD has in mind" and free all who are slaves, disabled or prisoners. Bring glory to Your name, for the sake of Jesus who died to save us all. Amen.

19th April 2024.

Esther chapters 3 to 8 describe how King Xerxes, whose kingdom stretched from India to Egypt, was persuaded to destroy all the Jews in the land. (3:12-13) However, Mordecai the Jew persuaded Queen Esther to talk to the king. (4:16). The king listened and he agreed to send an order for the whole empire to protect the Jews. (8:11-13) 'The Jews were filled with joy and happiness. They were very glad because now they were being honoured... It was true in every territory and every city. Many people from other nations announced that they had become Jews because of their fear of the Jews.' (8:16-17)

Titus 3:1-7. "Remind God's people to obey rulers and authorities. Remind them to be ready to do what is good. Tell them not to speak evil things against anyone. Remind them to live in peace. They must consider the needs of others. They must be kind and gentle toward all people. At one time we too acted like fools. We did not obey God. We were tricked. We were controlled by all kinds of longings and pleasures. We were full of evil. We wanted what belongs to others. People hated us, and we hated one another. But the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared. He saved us. It was not because of the good things we had done. It was because of His mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely because of what Jesus Christ our Saviour has done. His grace made us right with God. So now we have received the hope of eternal life as God's children."

Heavenly Father, give us this day fear and respect for Your people Israel. Forgive the wrong we have done and give us all the desire to live in the hope and peace of Christ, Israel's Messiah and our Saviour. For His sake who died for us all. Amen.

22nd April 2024.

Proverbs 5:21-23. "The LORD God Almighty watches a man's ways. He studies all of his paths. A sinner is trapped by his own evil acts. He is held tight by the ropes of his sins. He will die because he refused to be corrected. His sins will capture him because he was very foolish."

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 to 3:1-3. "Some people do not have the Holy Spirit. They do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They cannot understand them. In fact, such things cannot be understood without the Spirit's help. Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things. But no-one can judge those who have the Spirit. It is written, 'Who can ever know what is in the Lord's mind? Can anyone ever teach Him?' But we have the mind of Christ! Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as if you were guided by the Holy Spirit. I had to speak to you as if you were following the ways of the world. You are not growing as Christ wants you to. You are still like babies. The words I spoke to you were like milk, not like solid food. You were not ready for solid food yet. And you are still not ready for it. You still follow the ways of the world. Some of you are jealous. Some of you argue. So are you not following the ways of the world? Are you not acting like ordinary human beings?"

Heavenly Father, we come before You this day aware of Your truth and warnings in both Old and New Testaments. Thank you that you have chosen and called us to be Yours from the beginning. But You have left us to choose for ourselves to obey You or remain "trapped by our own evil acts". Forgive us when we "follow the ways of the world" and "do not accept the things that come from the Holy Spirit". Amen.

23rd April 2024.

Genesis 28. Isaac sent his son Jacob to Laban who was his mother's brother. He warned him not to marry a Canaanite woman like his twin brother Esau did, but to marry a relative of his uncle Laban. On the way there he had a dream. 'He saw a stairway from Earth to Heaven with angels going

up and coming down on it. The LORD God Almighty stood above the stairway and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your children after you the land on which you are lying... They will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you and your children after you... And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised." "

Matthew 5:14-20. After Jesus chose some of His disciples, He taught them the Beatitudes (5:1-12). He then encouraged them by saying, "You are the light of the world... Let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in Heaven." He then explained that He had come "not to reject what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. Instead, I have come to give full meaning to what is written... However, You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law. If you are not, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." He explained later about God's plan for His crucifixion, resurrection and Holy Spirit power to enable believers to enter the Kingdom of God in this world and the next.

Thank You Father God for Your amazing promise of blessing us through Jacob's family, fulfilled through the Law of Moses and the sacrifice of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

24th April 2024.

1 Samuel 23:1-5. Before David became king he was a successful army leader against the enemies of Israel. David was told, "The Philistines are fighting against the town of Keilah." So he asked the LORD God Almighty for advice. "Should I go and attack those Philistines?" The LORD answered, "Go and attack them. Save Keilah." But David's men said to him, "We are afraid here in Judah. If we go to Keilah and fight against the Philistine army, we will be even more afraid." Once again David asked the LORD what he should do. The LORD answered, "Go down to Keilah. I am going to hand the Philistines over to you." So David and his men went to Keilah... They wounded and killed large numbers of Philistines and he saved the people of Keilah.

Galatians 5:16-25. Paul says, "Live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants you to do... The Spirit does not want what the sinful nature delights in. The two are at war with each other... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of what the sinful nature does... The fruit of the Holy Spirit produces love, joy and peace. It enables us to be patient, kind and good... faithful and gentle with self control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful nature to His cross. They do not want what their sinful nature longs for. Since we live by the Spirit, let us march in step with the Spirit."

Thank You heavenly Father for teaching us through Your servant David. Encourage us to seek You for the daily guidance we need and ignore our own desires. Remind us also to seek You when others discourage us from going forward. May we also take Paul's advice to "live by the Spirit's power" and "march in step with the Spirit." For the sake of Jesus who gave His life on the cross for us. Amen.

25th April 2024.

Proverbs 16:16-17,20. "It is much better to have wisdom than gold. It is much better to choose understanding than silver. The path of honest people takes them away from evil. Those who guard their ways guard their lives... Whoever pays attention to what they are taught, will succeed. Blessed is the person who puts their trust in the LORD God Almighty."

2 Timothy 2:1-10. "My son, be strong in the grace that is found in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach in front of many witnesses. Pass on to people you can trust the things you have heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others also. Like a good soldier of Christ Jesus, share in the hard times with us. A soldier does not take part in things that do not have anything to do with the army... In the same way, anyone who takes part in a sport doesn't receive the winner's crown unless he plays by the rules. The farmer who works hard should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand what all of it means. Remember Jesus Christ. He came from David's family line and was raised from the dead. That is my Good News. I am suffering for it and have even been put in chains like someone who has committed a crime. But God's word is not held back by chains. So I suffer everything for the good of God's chosen people. Then they also can be saved. Christ Jesus saves them. He gives them glory that will last forever."

Lord Jesus, help us reach the people God has chosen for You to save. Help us in our calling as a soldier or an athlete or a farmer. Help us to "pay attention to what is taught" and succeed in life.

Help us also to seek Your wisdom and understanding for sharing Your Good News, not silver and gold! Amen.

26th April 2024.

Isaiah 4:2-4. After pronouncing judgement on Jerusalem in the previous chapter, Almighty God speaks thorough His servant Isaiah. "In the days of the Branch of the LORD, Israel's king will be beautiful and glorious. He will be called 'The Branch of the LORD'. The fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of those who are still left alive in Israel. Those who are left in Zion will be called holy... The LORD will wash away the sins of the women in Zion. He will clean up the blood that was spilled there. He will judge those who spilled that blood." This begins the redemption for God's righteous people through their promised Messiah, "The Branch of the LORD".

1 Timothy 2:5-10. "There is only one God. And there is only one go-between for God and human beings. He is the man Christ Jesus. He gave himself to pay for the sins of everyone. That was a witness given by God at just the right time. I was appointed to be a messenger and an apostle to preach the Good News. I am telling the truth. God appointed me to be a teacher of the true faith to [Jews and] those who are not Jews. I want men everywhere to pray. I want them to lift up holy hands. I do not want them to be angry when they pray. I do not want them to argue. I also want women to dress simply. They should wear clothes that are right and proper. They should not braid their hair with gold or pearls... Instead, they should put on good works as if they were their clothes. That is proper for women who claim to worship God."

Father God, we repent of past sins and seek the redemption for righteous people through their promised Messiah. We note Your warning through Isaiah against "the sins of the women" and through Paul regarding the clothes to wear and the hair styles. Encourage "men everywhere to pray". Amen.

29th April 2024.

1 Samuel 8:1-9. 'God's prophet Samuel grew old. He appointed his sons to serve as judges for Israel... But they were only interested in making money... They made things that were wrong appear to be right. So the elders of Israel came to Samuel and said, "You are old. Your sons do not live as you do. So appoint a king to lead us. We want a king just like the kings of the other nations." Samuel was not pleased. So he prayed to the LORD God Almighty. The LORD told him, "You are not the one they have turned their backs on. I am the one they do not want as their king! They have deserted Me and served other gods. They have done that from the time I brought them up out of Egypt. Now they are deserting you too. Let them have what they want. But give them a strong warning. Let them know what the king who rules over them will do." '

John 14:12-17. Jesus said, "Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing and do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father. And I will do anything you ask in My name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father... If you love Me, you will obey what I command. I will ask the Father. And He will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. The Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him since the world does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him. He lives with you, and within you."

Forgive us Heavenly Father for disobeying You and the Spirit of Truth. Lord Jesus, "ask the Father" to establish leaders of Your choice and "give them a strong warning" not to "make things that are wrong appear to be right". Encourage us to listen and obey and bring "glory to the Father". Amen.

30th April 2024.

Jeremiah 23:3-5. The LORD God Almighty announced: "I Myself will gather together those who are left alive in My flock. I will gather them out of all of the countries where I have driven them. And I will bring them back to their own land. There My sheep will have many lambs. Their numbers will increase. I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them. My sheep will not be afraid or terrified anymore. And none of them will be missing. A new day is coming. At that time I will raise up from David's royal line a true and rightful Branch. He will be a King who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land."

Matthew 13. Jesus preceded his parable of the sower with this promise: "Anyone who does what my Father in Heaven wants is my brother or sister or mother." (12:50) He followed the parable with these words: "Here is why I use parables when I speak to the people. I say, 'They look, but they

do not really see. They listen, but they do not really hear or understand.' In them the words of the prophet Isaiah come true. He said, 'You will hear but never understand. You will see but never know what you are seeing. The hearts of these people have become stubborn. They can barely hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes. They might hear with their ears. They might understand with their hearts. They might turn to the Lord, and then He would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes because they see. And blessed are your ears because they hear." (13:13-16)

Thank You Heavenly Father for your promise of blessings through Israel's Messiah – past, present and future. "Place Your shepherds over us" and reassure us we are His "brothers and sisters". Help us "not to be afraid" and grant us "understanding with our hearts". Amen.

1st May 2024.

Deuteronomy 2:17-25. 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses. "Today you must pass near the border of Moab. When you come to the Ammonites, do not attack them. If you do, they will go to war against you. I will not give you any of their land as your own. I have given it to the people in the family line of Lot." The LORD had done the same thing for the people of Esau... The people of Esau have lived in Seir to this very day... Then the LORD said, "Go across the valley of the Arnon River. I have handed Sihon, the Amorite king, over to you and his country... This very day I will bring fear and terror on all of the nations because of you. They will hear about you and tremble with fear."

John 18:36-38. Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not part of this world. If it were, those who serve Me would fight... My kingdom is from another place." Pilate said, "So You are a king, then!" Jesus answered, "You are right to say I am a king. In fact, that is the reason I was born. I came into the world to give witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate said, "What is truth?" Then Pilate went out again to the Jews. He said, "I find no basis for any charge against Him."

Father God Almighty, we are amazed how You decided which nations should be saved and which nations should be destroyed on the journey to the Promised Land for Your people Israel. You spared the descendants of Lot and Esau and the descendants of Jacob prospered in the land of Canaan. We are also amazed how You decided that Your own flesh and blood, Jesus the Christ and Israel's Messiah, should die so that others would see "what is truth" regarding Your plan of salvation for the world, despite "any charge against Him". Amen.