

Weekend Manna: FRED SAID

Extracts from Manna Bible teaching commentaries by Fred Morris

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Weekend of 6th/7th January 2024

Ephesians 6:14-17. *Fight against Satan with the full armour of God.*

Paul described the spiritual armour we need from God to win the battle of faith (6:14-17):

- *The belt of truth.* A belt held the soldier's cloak tightly round him. It held some of the other pieces of armour in place. Our armour enables us to be free to move but ready to resist the lies of the enemy with the truth from God. Reading the Bible confirms God's truth within us and makes us ready to defend our faith and overcome doubts and fears.
- *The breastplate of God's righteousness.* In faith, we receive and put on His righteousness. Let us never doubt that we have been made righteous in the sight of God through the sacrifice of His Son for our sins. Satan tries to make us feel weak and unworthy. We must always remember that God has made us righteous because Jesus was punished in our place.
- *Sandals, shoes or boots to take the Good News of peace everywhere.* Christians know the Good News of Jesus Christ and carry it in their heart. They are sure of what Jesus has done for them and must be prepared to take the message of God's salvation plan to all people in addition to other Bible teachings.
- *The shield of faith.* The Roman shield turned aside all arrows from the enemy. It was large enough to protect the whole body. Paul compared Satan's attacks to flaming arrows. When we lift up our shield of faith we can trust in God's power to protect us.
- *The helmet of salvation.* The helmet stops the enemy from destroying us by attacking the head and our mind. Our salvation leads to divine thoughts and eternal life which Satan cannot take away from us.
- *The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.* The soldier took up his sword for when he was in danger. It is used to attack and to defend. The Bible is like a sword and our greatest weapon against Satan. We stand firm and use the Word of God against him. God's word defeats Satan. Speak God's truth in Jesus and Satan will withdraw (James 4:7).

Extracted from "EPHESIANS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000 2018.

Weekend of 13th/14th January 2024

Romans Chapter 5. *Peace with God in suffering.*

Paul further explains 'justification'. This is what happens when God forgives sinners and makes them right with Himself (5:1-3). Through Jesus:

- we have wonderful peace with God (see also Colossians 1:20).
- we have a way to come to God (see also Hebrews 10:19).
- we receive the grace of God and stand before Him, forgiven and made clean (see also Ephesians 4:32).
- we are given hope to share His glory (see also Romans 8:17)

"And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer" (5:3). These are strange words! When we suffer for Christ our hope grows stronger. Suffering makes us strong (1 Peter 5:10). Suffering makes us push forward to know Christ better (Philippians 3:10). It also helps us to understand the causes of suffering for ourselves and others.

Paul encourages them to believe that "suffering gives everyone strength [patience] to go on" (5:3). It enables us to grow more and more like Christ. Our faith and hope never let us down, because God fills our hearts with His love and peace. He does this through the Holy Spirit He gives us (5:5). We need to encourage this hope to grow. Hope in Jesus brings us the love of God. God pours His love into our hearts. His Spirit fills us with the great love of God which brings peace into our lives. Sometimes this hope seems to be just a dream but our hope comes from God Himself, who can be trusted.

Extracted from "IN CHRIST ALONE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2008 2012, 2023.

Weekend of 20th/21st January 2024

Romans Chapter 10: *Faith in speaking the word of God*

Paul preached that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be forgiven and saved (10:9). This is the main message of the Gospel or the Good News of God about His Son, Jesus Christ. The message is not too hard to follow. Even a child can understand it. But only those who hear it, speak it and receive it in their hearts can be saved. "For it is with your heart that you believe and are made right with God, and it is with your mouth that you say that Jesus is Lord. And so you are saved" (10:10). This is not just the decision of a moment, but a decision to keep following Jesus Christ. "The word of God which we are preaching is near you", Paul said. "It is in your mouth and in your heart. You must put your faith in it" (10:8).

Truth may seem distant and unreal, but it is not. It is nearby and real and personal. Paul states clearly his message of truth, faith and salvation in verses 9 to 13. We may not fully understand the mystery of the love of God who allowed His only Son to be punished for our sins. But we can all be part of His salvation plan for the world. Paul said, "If you say with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord', believe in your heart that God raised Him from death, then you will be saved" (10:9).

Paul's letter was written around AD 57. It was important news for all Jews who believed God and for all ungodly people who wanted to know God. It was also a clear warning to all believers in the new church fellowships who followed religious traditions. This is why the letter to the Romans is important for the universal Church of Christ today. Paul uses many words to say what he wants to say, but the truth is simple: all have sinned and do not meet God's standards.

Extracted from "LIVING IN CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2012, 2023.

Weekend of 27th/28th January 2024

1 Corinthians Chapter 11: *We are made worthy by the sacrifice of Jesus*

Paul said, "So do not eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a way that is not worthy of Him. If you do, you will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27). Be warned! Do not eat the Lord's Supper "in an unworthy manner". If you do, you will be guilty and you will suffer the judgment of God.

We must confess our sin and be made clean before we eat (1 John 1:9). Paul said we must 'put off' all that offends Christ and keep His body, the Church, healthy (Ephesians 4:22-30). It is God who makes us worthy to come to His table to remember the death of His only Son. He does this when we confess our sin and put things right with Him and with others. Then we can come near to God with a sincere heart, in full faith, holding to the hope we claim, encouraging each in love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:22-24).

Those people who do not examine themselves, refuse to understand what they are doing. They attend the meal of remembrance but eat and drink judgment on themselves rather than blessing. That is why many people had already been judged in Corinth. They had not examined themselves and confessed their sins. They had also failed to understand that the risen Lord Jesus met with them as they remembered His sacrifice of blood.

They were weak and sick in their spirits and maybe in their bodies, too. "A number of you have fallen asleep (died)" (1 Cor. 11:30). They had to see and fully understand that Christ's body was

broken and His blood was spilt for them. We share in the bread and wine to remember the Lord's death for us and also His resurrection.

Extracted from "CURCH UNITY AND DISCIPLINE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2021.

Weekend of 3rd/4th February 2024

Philippians Chapter 1. *God's plan for the Good News of Jesus Christ*

Paul said, "What has happened to me has helped to advance the Good News [Gospel]" (1:12). Paul was not free. He could not leave the house where he was living. A Roman soldier stood guard nearby. Paul said he was "in chains for Christ" (1:13). Though he was not free, he could preach the Gospel to all who came to see him. It was clear to all the churches that God was using Paul's 'chains' for a greater purpose. Because of this, Paul was convinced that "most of the believers in the Lord have become bolder" (1:14).

God's great purpose is always to bring honour to His name and to "advance the Gospel" and to bring good out of suffering. God wants all people to know about Jesus Christ. Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the Gospel to all people (Matthew 28:19). This brings people to Heaven and glory to the Father's name. Paul had preached the Gospel in Philippi and now he was doing the same in Rome (Philippians 1:14).

Paul said, "Some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of love to help me in my work" (1:15). Some preached against Paul and the Good News because they were jealous of him. Paul confirmed he preaches the Good News "out of love" (1:16). He did not mind being in chains under house arrest as long as the Gospel was being preached. He had only one goal in life: to honour the Lord Jesus Christ and preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23). Paul rejoiced in this (Philippians 1:18). In Rome, he was made strong by their prayers "and through the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (1:19; Galatians 4:6).

Christ's Spirit is the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2). God Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One Person (Matthew 28:19).

Extracted from "PHILIPPIANS and COLOSSIANS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2023.

Weekend of 10th/11th February 2024

Colossians Chapter 4.

Paul said that the rule for all husbands, wives, children, slaves and workers is to remember you are working for God. He also instructed masters to be fair to their slaves. "Do it because you know that you also have a Master in Heaven" (4:1).

Paul's teaching was not written for slaves who are trapped into working for evil masters in order to get rich and powerful. Today, there are many millions of people forced into 'modern slavery'. Pray for those who force people to do ungodly work and pray for their oppressed workers.

Paul warned, "Spend much time [continue] in prayer. Always be watchful and prayerful [thankful]" (4:2). This warning is immediately followed by a personal prayer request since he knew the value of prayer. Paul always prayed for them and he wanted the same in return. They must give time to prayer and thanks and be careful how they lived for Christ.

James wrote about prayer. He said, "The fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). Two things are most important:

1. That a man be righteous in God's sight.
2. That he gives time to pray with passion and also with compassion.

God will answer that person's prayers!

Extracted from "PHILIPPIANS and COLOSSIANS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2023.

Weekend of 17th/18th February 2024

Hebrews 3: *Entering into the promised rest of God*

The family of Jacob (Israel) failed to rejoice at the mighty works which God did to bring them out of Egypt. They did not trust His salvation plan for them. They marched through the desert and grumbled. No fresh water! No vegetables from Egypt! No cooking pots full of lamb and goat meat!

They rebelled against God and tested His patience. They proved that the more they grumbled, the harder their hearts became. They were stubborn.

So their children entered the Promised Land instead and received the promises of God. God wanted to show mercy. He spoke to them very clearly in the wilderness. He wants to speak to all of us if we are ready to stop and listen.

However, God did not allow a whole generation of His people to enter into the Promised Land of Canaan. They did not enjoy the rest that God had promised while they lived as slaves in Egypt (3:18). That was because they did not believe God's promise (3:19; Exodus 3:8). So they did not obey God. These two sins began with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:6).

But God does not love us only when we obey Him. He loves us all the time. His love is always the same. His love is faithful. But if we do not stay close to Him, our love for Him will grow cold. If we do not trust Him, we will lose the blessings He offers. If we do not obey Him, we will lose the rest that God has planned for us (Hebrews 3:18). Continue to believe (3:1,19)!

Extracted from "HEBREWS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2005, 2016.

Weekend of 24th/25th February 2024

James Chapter 4: *Oppose Satan and allow God to rule*

"So, obey God", James said. "Stand up to the devil, and he will run away from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you" (James 4:7-8). Do not give Satan a chance. Trust God to take care of you. "Those who are born again because of what God has done [through Christ] will not keep on sinning" (1 John 3:9). By opposing the devil in the name of Jesus, we can have victory over him and those who seek to do evil.

James wanted all believers to see God as Lord and King. He wanted them to allow God to rule in their lives, to receive His grace and strength. He wanted them to turn away from the sins of this world. We must leave our old ways (Ephesians 4:22-27). God will help us, but we must "make up our minds" and be willing to do our part. Also, "Make your hearts pure" (James 4:8).

God also wants us to be lifted up in our spirits. He wants us to be full of joy, walking in the freedom of His Spirit promised by Jesus our Saviour (Philippians 4:4). But we should be full of sorrow, crying and weeping when we disobey God and sin (James 4:9). "Bow down to the Lord. And He will lift you up" to live a useful life (4:9-10). Avoid the shame caused by sinning.

James then warned, "My brothers and sisters, do not speak [evil] against one another... Who are you to judge your neighbour?" (4:11-12). Paul said, "Judge yourselves so that you are not found guilty" (1 Corinthians 11:31).

Extracted from "THE LETTER OF JAMES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2000, 2020.

Weekend of 2nd/3rd March 2024

Revelation 3:7-13. *Promises and warnings*

In all the previous letters, Jesus warns each congregation to repent (2:2; 2:14; 2:22; 3:3). He does not warn the church at Philadelphia to repent.

He gives instead a promise of divine deliverance and help. "I will keep you from the time of suffering that will come to the whole world. It will test those who live on the Earth" (3:10). Jesus does not say that trials and troubles will cease. He means He will save them from Satan. This is another wonderful promise for faithful believers!

However, for all the churches, Jesus warns them that He will come suddenly, quickly and in judgment. For the church in Philadelphia, He uses these words of warning: "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have. Then no-one will take away your crown" (3:11). This is a key verse for all true believers which Jesus also gives in 2:10 and 2:25. Believers must remain strong under persecution and strong under temptation.

The troubles had left this little group of true believers weak in their faith. Whatever hurt them, Christ encouraged them with this further promise: "Then no-one will take your crown." But they must hold on to the faith they have in God. We must do the same.

Extracted from "MESSAGES TO SEVEN CHURCHES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2010, 2013, 2022.

Weekend of 9th/10th March 2024

Genesis Chapters 1-11. ALMIGHTY GOD: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Christians believe that God is in three persons: Father (Hebrew 'Yahweh'), Son (Jesus, Hebrew 'Yeshua') and Holy Spirit, three in One. We sometimes say this is God the **HOLY TRINITY**. This means that Jesus and the Holy Spirit of God were together with Father God at the beginning, as **ONE GOD**, before the world was made. This is why the Bible says:

- "Let US make man in OUR own likeness" (Genesis 1:26).
- "The man [Adam] has become like one of US" (Genesis 3:22).

Later on in the Bible, the same word "US" is used:

- "Come let US go down and mix up their language" (Genesis 11:7).
- "Who shall I send, and who will go for US?" (Isaiah 6:8).

Jesus also confirmed that He lived before Abraham (John 8:58).

This means that Jesus is God and Holy Spirit is God. Pray for wisdom to understand it and faith to believe it! Then God will show you the truth about Himself.

Are you ready to read the book of Genesis with an 'open mind'? Are you willing to give time to understand the origin and purpose of life given in Genesis? Are you able to ignore any false teachings that you have heard from those who do not know and love God?

Extracted from "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006.

Weekend of 23rd/24th March 2024

Genesis Chapters 11 to 22: *The promises of God are for us all*

Abraham looked up at the starry sky. Those stars were a picture of the people of all ages and all nations that God had chosen for Himself.

Paul said many years later, "You who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed. You will receive what God has promised" (Galatians 3:29). God's people would receive eternal life and would be as many as the stars, "a number which no one can count" (Revelation 7:9).

But Abraham said, "O Lord and King, how can I know that I will take this land?" (Genesis 15:8). How could Abraham be sure of a place for all these people, his children and his descendants?

God's new agreement with Abraham is called "the covenant of promise" or "the covenant with promise". It included these promises (Genesis 12:1-3), which have a special meaning for us all:

- A promise of many children and also a special "seed", which means one person (Galatians 3:16); this looked forward to his only son by Sarah (Isaac) and God's only son (Jesus).
- The promise of a land or inheritance, for God's special people, the Jews. The land also became the home for 33 years of Jesus through whom all the nations of the world are blessed.
- The promises of God to Abraham include all who believe God as Abraham did. This is why Abraham is the father of all who believe God: that includes Jewish and non-Jewish followers of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, born to the virgin Mary.

Extracted from "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2001, 2003, 2006, 2012.

Weekend of 30/31st March 2024

Genesis Chapter 26: *God provides for Isaac and his family*

"There was very little food in the land" (26:1). This famine was a test for Isaac. Was the Land of God's Promise not so promising after all? Trials and testing are part of this world, but we remember that Jesus said, "I have won the battle over the world" (John 16:33).

God told Isaac that he did not need to move down to Egypt to escape the famine (26:2). God would provide for him and his family in the land that He had promised to Abraham (26:3).

Many chapters tell of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph, but there is little about Isaac. Chapter 26 tells us what we know of Isaac's life. Many details match those of Abraham's life. We learn from this that God's promises are offered to each generation (26:4). God made the same promise to Isaac as He made to Abraham.

This promise we know applied especially to Isaac's son Jacob who was later known as Israel.

We also learn a little of Isaac's character. He was not a man of war or a man who demanded his rights. Isaac met trials in the Promised Land, but God was faithful. We therefore learn from this example that God will always give us peace in our hearts as we trust in His goodness and mercy, even in times of difficulty.

However, as we shall see, Isaac did not always learn from the mistakes that his father Abraham made. It is a sad fact that mankind does not learn lessons from the mistakes of history. This is because we are all born with a sinful nature. This is why God later prepared a Saviour for the world through the family line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This family line continued through Judah and King David to Jesus, Israel's Messiah.

Extracted from "ISAAC AND JACOB" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018, 2021.

Weekend of 6th/7th April 2024

Genesis Chapter 39: *Joseph remains faithful to God in Egypt*

Jacob still mourned the loss of his son Joseph, the firstborn of his favourite wife Rachel. He assumed Joseph was dead. As soon as they arrived in Egypt, the Ishmaelite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Joseph served Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, for many years. The LORD God Almighty was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did (39:2,3,5,21,23). Potiphar saw that everything was going well in his household, so he put Joseph in charge of everything.

Potiphar's wife liked having this handsome young Hebrew man in her house. She often tried to get Joseph alone, but he stayed away from her. "Make love to me," she demanded (39:7).

Joseph answered, "How could I do such a wicked thing as that [to my master]? How could I sin against God?" (39:9)

But one day, she saw her chance and took hold of his coat. "Make love to me," she said again (39:12). Joseph pulled himself away from her (39:12). As he pulled away, she took his cloak. Then she began to scream for help.

She told her husband that Joseph had tried to rape her (39:17). Potiphar was angry and put Joseph in prison. Normally the punishment for a slave would be death. But God kept Joseph safe. And Joseph kept on trusting in God. God allowed Joseph to be tempted by Potiphar's wife but he remained faithful to the LORD God Almighty.

Joseph was in prison for a long time, but God was with him. The chief jailer saw that Joseph could be trusted and he put Joseph in charge of everything in the prison. There, 'the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did' (39:23).

God blessed Joseph in times of danger, loneliness, hard work and temptation. God blessed him as a slave, a household manager and a prisoner, because God knew Joseph's heart.

Extracted from "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2002, 2018, 2023

Weekend of 13th/14th April 2024

Exodus 19: *God prepares the people to meet Him*

The people of Israel came to Mount Sinai and camped in front of the mountain. God spoke to Moses from the mountain and told him what to say to the family of Jacob (Israel). "If you obey Me and keep My covenant, then of all the nations you will be My special treasure. You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a special nation" (19:5-6).

God wants all believers to be priests and no special clothes are required. Through the sacrifice of Jesus it is now possible for us to be God's holy people. We can come to God at any time, tell Him what we need and what others need. He will listen to us.

The people at the time of Moses could not come close to God to talk to Him (Exodus 19:21). Only the priests that God chose could come near (19:22). Aaron, the chief priest, was the only one who went near the top of Mount Sinai with Moses to talk to God (19:24). Joshua was later allowed to

go near to God (24:13).

Today, God has made all believers holy by the sacrifice of Jesus so we can come near to God. Through Jesus we meet God. God raised Jesus from death and His Spirit now lives in all who believe in Him. This is why we say all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:9-10). We can come close to God at any time. We can pray to God for ourselves and for other people. We do not need another priest to help us to come close to God. God gives us this power to come to Him through believing in the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. This enables us to pray to God for ourselves and for others at any time and in any place through the power of the promised Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus.

Extracted from "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2007, 2013, 2021.

Weekend of 20th/21st April 2024

Numbers 19: *Moses sins against God*

The remainder of the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for another 38 years. Now most of the people over 20 years old at the time of the exodus from Egypt had died.

At times, they were far away from the Promised Land. Then at last Moses led them to the plains of Moab, where they camped near the Jordan River overlooking the Promised Land of Canaan. The city of Jericho was on the other side of the river. The people waited there to cross and take the land that God had promised their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) many years before.

God then tested the new generation when they had no water. They complained to Moses in the same way their parents did. It was a testing time for Moses, too, although they had lacked water before. Moses and Aaron fell face down before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. God's glory appeared and He spoke to Moses. "Take your wooden stick. You and your brother Aaron gather the people together in front of the rock... so that they and their animals can drink" (20:6-8).

All Moses had to do was to speak the words and water would come from the rock. But Moses was angry with the people. He did not obey God's command to speak, but hit the rock with his stick (20:9-12). Nor did he give the glory to God. "Will we bring water out of this rock?" Moses shouted in anger. He did not speak the holy name of Yahweh but hit the rock twice and water poured out of it.

God is full of grace and mercy. He gave them water to drink, just as He had given water before. He did not hold back His supply because of their sin and rebellion. But to Moses, God said, "Because you did not ... honour Me as holy in front of the Israelites, you will not bring this people into the land I give them" (20:12; Matthew 4:1-11).

Extracted from "THE GROWTH OF GOD'S NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris, © 2004, 2012, 2021.

Weekend of 27th/28th April 2024

Joshua 5: *Joshua meets the Captain of the LORD's army*

A few days later, Joshua walked near the strong walled city of Jericho. He waited for the LORD God Almighty to show him what to do. He looked up and he saw a man standing in front of him. The man was holding a sword. He was ready for battle (5:13). Joshua, the brave leader of Israel, went up to him to ask questions.

The stranger told Joshua that he was not one of his soldiers nor on the side of the enemy soldiers. "I have come as commander of the army of Almighty God" (5:14). God supports those who trust and obey Him.

Then Joshua knew this man was sent by God and bowed down with his face to the ground. He asked the man, "What message does my Lord have for me?"

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (5:15).

God spoke to Joshua in this way to show that he was in the right place for what would happen next. God was there at Jericho with Joshua and with his men. God showed Joshua that He, the Almighty God of Israel, was in charge. Joshua was right to trust and obey His voice and not trust in himself.

Many people today say that they are Christians, but they do not humble themselves to listen when God tells them to obey His word. To win the battle over sin and over the evil around us, we must take orders from our Commander, Jesus Christ. Then the enemies of God will see that we have His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, with us and within us (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 4:1).

So Joshua humbled himself before Almighty God by taking his sandals off and bowing down. He was in a new and strange place ready to start the battle of Jericho.

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