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**Daily Manna devotions: Editor's Choice  
Archive for 2019**

**Daily Old and New Testament teachings  
as requested by the late Fred Morris, author and founder of  
Manna Publications (USA)**

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

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**1st February 2019. Jeremiah 29:5-13.** This prophecy given to Jeremiah encouraged God's people to "build houses and settle down, plant gardens, eat what they produce, marry... increase in number. Also seek the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (v.5-7). "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you, plans to give you hope and a future" (v.11). **Luke 22:39-43.** Jesus went to the Mount of Olives where He had prayed many times before (v.39) and said, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will but Yours be done" (v.42). Heavenly Father, help us to gladly do Your will, even in times of despair, that we may see Your purpose and provision for our immediate and future needs and for our ministry to others, as we follow our Saviour wherever He leads. Amen.

**4th February 2019. 2 Chronicles 24:8-19.** The high priest Jehoiada and king Joash worked closely together and placed a collection box outside the Temple for its repair and for new equipment to be used in the worship of Yahweh, God Almighty, as required by the Law of Moses (v.9). "All the officials and the people brought their contributions gladly" (v.10). But after the death of Jehoiada, the people abandoned the Temple and worshipped idols (v.17-18). **1 Corinthians 10:1-13.** Paul teaches us from the Old Testament how God's people were blessed to be under His pillar of fire when they left Egypt and were "all baptised into Moses ... and all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual water" from the rock that is likened to Christ (v.1-5). "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with many of them and their bodies were scattered over the desert ... as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (v.5-6).

**5th February 2019. Jeremiah 32:42.** Through His prophet Jeremiah, Almighty God promised to cease punishing His people for their disobedience. "As I have brought all this great calamity on the people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them." This punishment for sin followed by God's mercy and forgiveness and blessing occurred 600 years before He chose to punish His own Son for the sins of the world. He then blessed the world through His promised salvation for all who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **2 Thessalonians 2:13-17.** Paul encourages the believers to stand firm in their faith, "because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through ... belief in the truth" (v.13,15). "May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word" (v.16,17). Amen!

**6th February 2019. 2 Chronicles 36.** During the Seventh Century BC, God sent messengers "again and again because He had pity on His people... But they mocked God's messengers, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets until the wrath of the Lord God Almighty was aroused against

His people and there was no remedy" (v.15-16). This resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of God's people to Babylon until the "the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia" (v.21-22). The king announced "Yahweh, the Lord God of Heaven ... has appointed me to build a temple for Him at Jerusalem" (v.23). **Revelation 22:10-12.** Jesus warned the apostle John, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near" (v.10). "Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with Me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (v.12). Thanks be to God for His warnings and promises!

**7th February 2019. Genesis 49:16-18.** Before he died, Jacob spoke prophecies about the twelve sons of Israel but paused to ask God for mercy when he pronounced his prophecy over Dan (v.18). Dan would "provide justice for his people" (v.16) but they would do ungodly things to their neighbours (v.17). They were allocated fertile valleys in the Promised Land but ended up living in the mountains. They were the second largest of the twelve tribes of Israel but disappeared from the records after the time of king David. This is a warning not to presume on God's mercy but to live holy lives and appreciate who He is and His provision. **1 Timothy 6:13-16.** Paul warns Timothy, "I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time." He concludes with the declaration that God is "King of kings and Lord of lords", lest we forget.

**8th February 2019. 2 Kings 22:11-20.** When, God revealed the neglected Book of the Law and its warnings of punishment for wrongdoing, king Josiah, Hilkiah the priest and Huldah the prophetess asked God what to do (v.13-14). They were told that God's punishment for rejecting Him in the past would still go ahead (v.16-18) but there would be a time of peace because of the king's repentance on behalf of his people (v.19-20). Heavenly Father, bring together our leaders of church, state and present-day prophets to seek your will and mercy at this time. Amen. **Revelation 2:18-27.** Jesus Christ praised the growing church in Thyatira for their good deeds, love, faith, service and perseverance (v.19). But He warned them to cast out those who followed immoral behaviour and teaching (v.20). He encouraged them to keep up their good work (v.24) and to share in Christ's authority over the nations (v.26-27). Lord, reveal Your truth and help us to be part of Your bigger picture!

**11th February 2019. Ezekiel 46.** The principle of weekly worship is established for the king and his people (v.2-3) and also daily offerings for sin though the blood sacrifice of an innocent lamb (v.13). **Hebrews 10.** The writer says, "The Law is only a shadow of the good things to come... It can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship" (v.1). "We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all" (v.10). "By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (v.14). The Holy Spirit also testifies... "I will put My laws in their hearts" (v.15-16). Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing Your divine principles for leaders and peoples of all nations. Establish Your truth and salvation today in and through the sacrifice of the innocent blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**12th February 2019. Psalm 96.** (Commended by Manna USA president 2012.) "Sing to the LORD [Yahweh, our Lord God Almighty] a new song; sing to the LORD all the Earth. Sing to the LORD, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all people. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise" (v.1-4). The psalm concludes, "He will judge the world in righteousness and ... in His truth" (v.13). **Revelation 22:12-16.** Jesus Christ told the apostle John, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me and I will give everyone according to what he has done... Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may go through the gates into the City [of God]" (v.12-14). Father God, encourage us to praise You that we are made righteous in repentance through the blood sacrifice of Jesus our Saviour.

**13th February 2019. Psalms 26 and 27.** King David pleaded with Almighty God, "Redeem me and be merciful to me" (26:11). Why? Because he longed to continue to "walk in Your truth" (26:3) "proclaiming aloud Your praise and telling of all Your wonderful deeds" (26:7) so that "in the great assembly I will praise the LORD" (26:12). Gaining in confidence, David said, "I am still confident of

this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (27:13). **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**. The apostle Paul told his readers to "run in such a way as to get the prize" (v.24) and not to "run like a man running aimlessly" (v.26). Lord Jesus, thank you for Your salvation through the cross which enables me to walk confidently – and run – in the merciful truth of God for His praise and glory as a testimony in the church assembly and as a witness to others. Amen.

**14th February 2019. Ezekiel 48:30-35**. This final part of Ezekiel's vision of the future Jerusalem includes its twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the promise that "Yahweh, the LORD God Almighty, is there". **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**. Paul shares his thoughts about living as if "the time is short" (v.29). He suggests that whatever things we buy people should live "as if it were not theirs to keep" (v.30) since we cannot take them with us after our time on Earth ends. Meanwhile, we should use our possessions wisely and thankfully but not overvalue them or be "engrossed in them" (v.31). Father God, help us to have our eyes fixed on Your eternal purposes and not to be attracted or distracted by the things of this world, in the name of Jesus. Thank You for your blessings in this world and hope of eternal life with You and with our Saviour and with Your people. Amen.

**15th February 2019. Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NIV)**. "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil My good promise to bring you back ... For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD God Almighty, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you." **1 Timothy 2:8**. Paul wants us all to "lift up holy hands [that is with pure hearts] in prayer without anger or disputing." Father God, help us to avoid disputes and grant us Your peace. Encourage us to reflect Your love for us back to yourself and not hinder the plans you have for us and our nation. Amen.

**18th February 2019. Genesis 49:29-33**. Jacob, whom God renamed Israel, gave instructions to be buried in Canaan, alongside his father and grandfather, Isaac and Abraham (v.30,31). The burial place was bought by Abraham around 1900 BC near Hebron, 25km from Jerusalem. Jacob's twelve sons and their families did as their father requested and travelled to Canaan with many officials from Egypt (50:7-9). Joseph, Jacob's eleventh son, also told his family to bury his own bones in Canaan, "the land God promised on oath for [the families of] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (50:24). **John 19:14-16**. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your King." The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." In rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, the Jews opened God's way for the death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world yet lost control of the Promised Land for nearly 1900 years. Lord Jesus, come back soon to Jerusalem and meanwhile enable both Jews and Christians to see God's bigger picture! Amen.

**19th February 2019. Psalm 150 (NIRV 1998)**. Whom do you worship? "Praise the LORD God Almighty... Praise Him for His powerful acts. Praise Him because He is greater than anything else. Praise Him by blowing trumpets. Praise Him with harps and lyres. Praise Him with tambourines and dancing. Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes. Praise Him with clashing cymbals... Let everything that has breath, praise the LORD." **Luke 4:5-8 (NIV 1994)**. "The devil ... showed Jesus in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to Him, "I will give You all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to Me and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship Me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Worship the LORD your God and serve Him only.'" Satan has authority to control or destroy but we who follow Jesus, worship God Almighty who is Lord of all.

**20th February 2019. The precious blood of Jesus. Leviticus 17:11**. God made it clear to His people that "it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" in the animal sacrifices at the time of Moses. They were instructed not to drink the blood of the sacrifices because it was precious to God. **1 Timothy 2:4-6**. Under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ gave His life to atone for everyone's sins. Paul said this in the context that God desires all people to be saved and to come to a full knowledge of His truth. *Give thanks to the Lord Jesus that He obeyed His Father God in sacrificing His life on the cross for us so that amazingly His blood was sufficient to pay for our sins for all of life when we*

*repent. Jesus instructed His followers, "This cup [of wine] is the New Covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).*

**21<sup>st</sup> February 2019. Jeremiah 29:30-32. Witnessing under persecution.** Jeremiah, the prophet of God, endured much persecution during his life of ministry. This passage records the time when Shemaiah, a false prophet, was trying to influence state and religious leaders with his lies. "The word of the LORD God Almighty came to Jeremiah" for the remnant of God's people in exile, that Shemaiah would end up without any supporters, "nor will he see the good things I will do for My people, declares the LORD". **Acts 22.** After Paul was beaten up and arrested in Jerusalem (21:30-33), he testified how he "persecuted the followers of this Way [i.e. Christians] to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison" (22:4). But then God told him that he would become His messenger for Christ to non-Jews in faraway places (22:21). *Father God, help us to remain strong under persecution and witness to those who will listen and be saved. Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019. All praise to God! Psalm 148:7-13.** The psalmist turns from praise for the LORD God Almighty in the heavens to praise for the LORD on earth: sea creatures, lightening, hail, snow, winds, mountains, animals, insects, birds, rulers, young and old people alike. "Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is ... above the earth and the heavens." **Mark 6:19-20.** This records the battle of wills between the evil intentions of Herodias and the good intentions of her husband Herod Antipas at the time of John the Baptist, whose ministry prepared the way for Jesus Christ. Herod "liked to listen to John" but was tricked into ordering his death. *Dear God, help us to understand from the Bible how the world You created is a battlefield between good and evil but the life, death and resurrection of Jesus prevailed for the salvation of all people who repent, for Your glory and praise on earth and in heaven.*

**25<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Walk in righteousness. Isaiah 51: 22-24 (NIRV).** Your Lord and King speaks... He stands up for His people. He says, "I have taken from you the cup of My burning anger. You will never drink from that cup again. Instead, I will give it to those who made you suffer. They said to you, 'Fall down flat on the ground. Then we can walk all over you.' Isaiah follows these words with "Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength and splendour" (52:1 NIV). **1 John 2:28-29 (NIV).** And now, dear children, continue in Him so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born [again] of Him. *Father God, help us to "walk tall" in Your righteousness through Your mercy provided in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Expect unexpected outcomes. Exodus 36:6-7.** There came a time when the faithful and generous people of Israel were asked to cease making gifts for the equipping of the sanctuary. Their offerings were "more than enough to do all the work". The outcome, when the preparations of the Tabernacle and its altar and its courtyard were complete, was that the glory of the Lord filled the place (40:33-34). **Acts 10.** God recognised the generous gifts of Cornelius, the Roman centurion. His "prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God" (v.2,4). An angel of God visited him to send for the apostle Peter (v.3,5). The outcome was that Peter learnt that God blesses all true believers, whatever their religious background, with His holy presence and Spirit power (v.44-48). *Father God, encourage and accept our offerings to the Church and its people with unexpected outcomes, to Your glory. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Faith with works. Psalm 10:17-18 (NIRV).** "Lord, you hear the longings of those who are hurting. You cheer them up and give them hope. You listen to their cries. You stand up for those whose fathers have died and for those who have been beaten down. You do it so that no one ... may terrify others anymore." **James 2:21-24.** "Our father Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar. Wasn't he considered to be right with God because of what he did? So you see that what he believed and what he did were working together. What he did made his faith complete... 'Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with God' (Genesis 15:6) ... So you see that a person is made right with God by what he does and not by faith alone." *Lord, hear our cries of faith and bless our works. Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Plans to bless. Jeremiah 20:10-14.** The LORD God Almighty confirmed through the prophet Jeremiah that He would bring the exiles in Babylon back home after seventy years (v.10) along with others from around the world (v.14). He would do this to fulfil His plans for His people to give them hope and a future (v.11). "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart" (v.13). **James 3.** In this chapter, James warns against misuse of the tongue which can be used to praise God or curse evil (v.10). Instead, he encourages us to seek "wisdom that comes from heaven" that we may become "peacemakers who sow peace [and] raise a harvest of righteousness" (v.17-18). *Dear God, grant us wisdom and understanding of Your plans to bless Your people and the world with hope and a future. Forgive our sins and accept our praise as we move forward. In Jesus' name, amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Right with God. Numbers 3:31-32.** The records show the appointment of certain Levites under Eleazar, son of Aaron, who were in charge of the Ark of the Covenant, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the articles of the sanctuary used in ministering, the curtain and "everything related to their use" in worship and the animal blood sacrifices for the sins of the people. **Romans 3:21-26 (NIRV).** "But now God has shown us how to become right with Him... It has nothing to do with obeying the Law. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe... Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. God gave Him as a sacrifice to pay for sins [of the people]." *Praise be to God for His/our righteousness. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2019. God's worldwide purpose. Jeremiah 51.** This restates the purpose of the LORD God Almighty against Babylon 600 years before the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ (v.12) and His favour on the descendants of Jacob (v.19) after their years in exile as punishment for worshipping foreign gods. In His mercy, God resolved to bring His people back to Jerusalem to be His witness to the one true God there and in every nation. **Romans 16.** Paul mentions here the essential unity among believers for the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ nearly 2000 years ago. He prepares the way for Phoebe (from Corinth) to be welcomed by the church in Rome (v.1-2) and asks them to extend fellowship to all his co-workers who lived there at that time (v.3-16) urging them to avoid divisions in the church (v.17) so that "all nations might believe" (v.26). *Father, bring on Your worldwide purposes for this generation in unity. Amen.*

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Our divine commission. Numbers 4:21.** Some of the people of Israel were to serve the Lord God Almighty humbly and with joy in the duties of the sanctuary in transporting and erecting the portable curtains and coverings for the Tent of Meeting under the direction of the priest. *May we delight to serve our Lord and Saviour in the humble duties we perform in our local churches under the direction of the appointed leadership, and in unity with other believers worldwide.* **Matthew 28:5-10 (NIV).** An angel told the two Marys, "He is not here... Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee." In Galilee, the risen Lord Jesus gave the disciples His Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (v.18). *Grant us an awareness of humbly serving the risen Christ as part of the global church.*

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Good over evil. Jeremiah 9:3.** God laments to and through His prophet Jeremiah that His people "go from one sin to another and do not acknowledge Me". That was because they no longer "know the requirements of the LORD God Almighty" (8:7) and had copied instead the evil ways of their heathen neighbours. **Revelation 2:12-17.** Jesus reports to the Apostle John that He knows how the church in Pergamum is in a wicked city but the believers have remained true to Him (v.13). He warns those tempted to eat the cheap food offered to idols, or by the sexual immorality in that place (v.14). He orders them to repent and listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying in order to overcome (v.16-17). *Father God, encourage us to listen and repent and re-establish Your truth and requirements in our land and among our children so that together we may overcome evil with good, as ever. Amen.*

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Isaiah 61. Preaching Good News.** The prophet of God acknowledges his role to preach the Good News, to minister to the broken-hearted and the prisoners, to herald times of favour and judgement with blessings instead of mourning and a "garment of praise instead of a spirit of

despair" (v.1-3). There will be a time of rebuilding, restoring and renewing (v.4) when God will "make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations" (v.11). **Romans 9:27-33**. Paul quotes from Isaiah because he sees clearly the fulfilment of Scripture regarding Jews and Gentiles, proving that righteousness is obtained by faith, not law, through Christ who was the "stumbling stone" to so many of God's people (v.30-32). But "the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" (v.33). *Thank You Jesus for suffering on the cross for us so that God's Good News can establish righteousness and meet the needs all people who live by faith in You. Amen.*

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:1-17.** God's guidance for holiness included a God-centred life of worship of Yahweh alone, the LORD God Almighty, and to respect His holy name without misusing it and to set aside a Sabbath day of rest and holiness. The guidance also included building righteous relationships with family, friends and neighbours through honouring parents, avoiding murder, adultery, theft, "false testimony" and envy of other's possessions. **1 John 3:12-18.** The Apostle John warns us not to be like Cain who disobeyed God, tried to worship Him in the wrong way, refused to respect his righteous brother and ended up murdering him (v.12). When we begin to love others, we know that we are passing from eternal death to eternal life (v.14) and become more like Christ who laid down His life for us (v.16). And as we begin to meet the needs of the poor we will show His love in both words and deeds (v.17-18).

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Salvation through Christ. Judges Chapter 3.** After Joshua died, the people of Israel sinned, then were punished by being taken over by other nations, then repented and were given victory through God's mercy. God allowed much suffering as a means to obtain repentance, obedience, peace and blessing. He also raised up a series of prophets to declare His truth, beginning with Deborah (Chapter 4). **Mark Chapter 6.** The last of the Old Testament prophets was beheaded by King Herod. John the Baptist had prepared the way for Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah. God allowed much suffering to happen to His Son, our Saviour, who trained His disciples to become apostles and then continue the ministry in the name of Jesus around the known world, verse 30. *Father God, help us to realise how much mercy you have shown down the centuries to establish Your truth, healing and salvation through Christ alone. Help us to remember and obey. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Liberty NOT to sin. Leviticus chapter 25, verses 10 and 18.** The Lord God Almighty made His desire clear to His people. He wanted to establish liberty for all inhabitants. If the people freely obeyed His laws, they would live safely, and enjoy much food from the land. These words from God were written down by Moses 3500 years ago. **1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 12 and 13.** Paul warns the Christians to be careful not to fall into sin. Every temptation is the same as others have experienced. But God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. He will provide a way out so that you can stand above sin. *Father God, thank you for making it clear to mankind how you intend to bless people who willingly obey You. Help us to see clearly Your sacrifice in Jesus, that offered full salvation to all who freely repent. Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Peace for today. Micah chapters 1 to 5.** The book of the prophet Micah laments that the wounds of his nation appear incurable as God's people writhe in pain, waiting for relief from the disasters allowed by the LORD God Almighty. They are destined to experience a time of calamity when people will ridicule them and offer false hope. But 700 years before the birth of Christ, Micah was given the divine message, that out of Bethlehem would come a great Shepherd, whose greatness would reach to the ends of the Earth, and He will be their peace. **Acts chapter 9, verse 15.** Luke writes that Saul, who persecuted the early Christians, would become Paul, a great apostle of Christ, to speak about Him in all the nations of the Earth. *Heavenly Father, reassure us that you are fully aware of world events, and will raise up great leaders of peace for these times. Amen.*

**14<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The purposes of God. Joshua chapter 6.** The capture of Jericho not only witnessed to the heathen nations the power of the One True God of Israel but also established the importance of the seven-day week. The priests and trumpet-blowers marched round the city once every day for six days, then on the seventh day they marched round seven times and gave a great shout of faith in the power of their Almighty God. The walls fell down and only Rahab the prostitute was saved, with her relatives, who became an ancestor of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the young virgin mother of Jesus Christ. **Matthew chapter 13.** When Jesus lived in Israel, he returned to his

mother in Nazareth where he had been a carpenter as a young man. The people in that town refused to believe He was the Son of God. *Grant us, heavenly Father, eyes to see Your power and purpose at work today. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> March 2019. *Walking in righteousness. 2 Samuel chapter 3 verse 39.*** Before David became king over all Israel, he readily admitted in public that although he was God's anointed future king, he was weak. He was not strong enough to overcome certain evil men in Israel. But he trusted God to do what was right and repay them for the evil they had done. **2 Timothy Chapter 2 verse 15.** Paul stresses the importance of behaving like someone who is anointed by God and who does not need to be ashamed. He says we should correctly apply the truth of God. We should not indulge in godless chatter with others in order to avoid becoming more and more ungodly ourselves. *Dear God, help us to realise that although we are weak, we are strong in You. May the changes in us through following Jesus our Saviour speak clearly to others about Your truth and righteousness. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2019. *Sin punished and prevented. 1 Kings chapter 21 verse 20.*** The ungodliness of King Ahab came to an end when God sent Elijah to say, "You have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD." Ahab and his family were punished because he had 'provoked God to anger and caused Israel to sin' (verse 22). **Hebrews chapter 2 verses 6 to 9.** The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8 to say that there would be a time when God would bring His future Messiah as a man, "a little lower than the angels", to end up "crowned with glory and honour and put everything under His feet... He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." *Thanks be to God that the solution to sin, through the suffering of Christ, was established for everyone, to restore peace between God and mankind and prevent others from sinning.*

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2019. *Strong and courageous. Joshua chapter 1 verses 6 to 9.*** God urges Joshua three times to be strong and courageous. Firstly, to fulfil God's purpose for all His people (verse 6). Secondly to obey the laws of Moses for his own personal success (verse 7). Thirdly, to prove "the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" without cause to be afraid or discouraged (verse 9). **Revelation chapter 2 verses 1 to 3.** The Lord Jesus himself praises the church at Ephesus for persevering in ministry to others, for rejecting false teaching and for not growing weary in difficult times. *Father God, thank You for reminding us it is your desire for us to be a blessing to other believers which demands personal holiness, awareness of false teaching and courage under persecution and other difficulties. Help us not to grow weary but to be strong in faith, words and deeds. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2019. *God's purpose for Jerusalem. 1 Kings chapter 11 verses 29 to 39.*** God declared, through His prophet Ahijah, His short- and long-term plans to bless Jerusalem. God called it "the city where I chose to put my Name" (verse 36). **Acts chapter 7.** In the city of Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ, the apostle Stephen spoke about the purposes of God through the ministry of Moses. At one time, the people of Israel rejected Moses before God used him as a saviour from slavery in Egypt (verse 35). In the same way their fathers resisted the Holy Spirit and rejected many prophets of God and "even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One [our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ]" (verses 51 and 52). *As we await the return of Jesus, may we declare the purposes of God for His return to Jerusalem to restore God's righteousness on Earth. Amen.*

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2019. *Repentance and ministry. Isaiah 30 verses 1 to 18 (NIV).*** God said, "Woe to ... those who carry out plans that are not Mine ... without consulting Me... You have rejected [My] message and depended on deceit... In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength... The LORD longs to be gracious to you... to show you [His] compassion." **Mark 1:14-39.** Mark records the early ministry of Jesus. He "proclaims the Good News of God" in Galilee, calls disciples to follow Him, teaches in the synagogues, orders evil spirits to obey Him, heals Simon's mother and many others who were sick, awakes before dawn to pray, before moving on to other villages to preach, saying "That is why I have come." *Holy Spirit, help us to keep clearly in mind both the example of the life of Jesus and the desire of Father God to show mercy to those who repent. Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. Faith with Spirit power. 2 Kings 18:1-8.** Hezekiah ruled as king in Jerusalem for 29 years. He did what was right by trusting in the LORD, the God of Israel. The LORD was with Hezekiah. He was successful in everything he did. He refused to remain under the control of the king of Assyria. **Galatians 3:1-14.** Paul wrote, "You foolish people of Galatia! You began with the Holy Spirit. Are you now trying to complete God's work in you by your own strength? Scripture says that those who are right with God will live by faith. Christ Jesus set us free so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Him." *Father God, help us to believe what you provided through Jesus to enable us to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in our own strength nor under the influence of other powers. Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Rebelling or submitting? Numbers 16:1-11.** On the way from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, some of the leaders of the people of Israel, who were "members of the council", rebelled against Moses and Aaron. Moses prostrated himself before the LORD God Almighty and Moses was told to say, "It is against the LORD [Himself] that you and your followers have banded together." **Galatians 3:24-29.** "The Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the Law." Paul says we needed the Law to reveal what was right and wrong but when we submit to Christ, we are set free to become true children of Abraham and of God (verses 26 and 29). *Heavenly Father, help us not to rebel but to submit to the way of righteousness that You have provided through faith in Christ alone.*

**27<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Concern for others. Job 1:1-5.** Job "was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil." After times of great feasting, Job purified his children in the sight of God for any sins they may have committed. He wanted them to be a blessing to Almighty God and not a curse. **1 Timothy 1:3-11.** Paul asks Timothy to protect the church he founded in Ephesus from false teaching and pointless debates. He commands them to do the work of God in love with a "pure heart and good conscience and sincere faith". He lists many evil things that are "contrary to the sound doctrine of the glorious Gospel" which God Himself entrusted to Paul. *Both Job and Paul took seriously the responsibility they had before God towards their families and their fellow believers. Lord God Almighty, show us clearly the responsibility You have given us in prayerful thoughts, words and deeds towards other believers – and non-believers. Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Unworthy made worthy. Isaiah 6:1-5.** Isaiah had an amazing vision of the Lord seated on a throne and surrounded by angelic seraphs who were calling out "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." The sound of their voices shook the Temple building. Isaiah's immediate reaction was that he was unworthy to see the Lord, "for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among people of unclean lips." **Philippians 2:12-16 (NIV).** Paul says, "Continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God at work in you... to act according to His good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God, without fault in a crooked and depraved generation ... [then you will] shine like stars in the Universe as you hold out the word of life." *Thank You that we are made worthy in Christ our Saviour.*

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Faith with repentance. Job 3:26.** Job became very depressed when Satan was allowed by God to bring many troubles into his life. "I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, only turmoil." Later we read Job's famous words of faith, "I know my Redeemer lives" (19:25) and later still he said the words, "I repent" (42:6). Satan was defeated in the life of Job and God blessed him greatly (42:12). **Romans 10:8-13.** Paul writes, "The word [of faith] is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart... It is with your heart that you believe and with your mouth that you confess and are saved... 'For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Joel 2:32)." *Confess today all fears and worries and seek God's forgiveness for yourself and hope for the stressful situation around you and walk joyfully in the light of His salvation and truth. Amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. Trust and obey. Malachi 3:6-18.** God reminds His people again, "Return to Me and I will return to you" (3:7). Do not rob Him of tithes and other offerings (3:8) so that He will bless His people for the world to see (3:12). Nor complain that evildoers prosper (3:15) but fear the Lord and see the distinction He makes "between those who serve God and those who do not" (3:18). **Revelation 22:12-14.** Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming soon! I will give to everyone according to



what he has done... Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to ... go through the gates [while] outside are those who practice magic, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." *Heed these words at the end of the Old and New Testaments to give our whole lives to God and trust Him for a blessed outcome.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. Unity in love. 1 Kings 5.** This chapter records the friendship between Israel and Lebanon at the time of King Solomon. Their skilled craftsmen worked together and "cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the Temple" in Jerusalem (5:18). They worked together in unity for the people to worship God. **1 Corinthians 12:12-13.** Paul teaches that the Christian church (the body of Christ) has many parts which form one body. We are all baptised by one Spirit into one body – whether we are Jews or non-Jews. He gives this example before explaining that the body of Christ must work together in unity and love (Chapter 13). *Dear God, may we live to see the time when the nations work together in unity and worship You in amazing ways through the salvation offered in Christ. Meanwhile, help us not to fear the present persecution of believers (Revelation 2:10). Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019. Teach and explain. Nehemiah 8:6-10.** The Israelites gathered together to hear Ezra read from the Book of the Law. The priests made the Law of God clear for the people to understand what was being read and they all wept and rejoiced. **2 Corinthians 4:1-6.** Paul encourages his readers never to lose heart (4:1). He warns them not to have shameful secrets nor to distort the word of God but to "set forth the truth plainly" even though it is "veiled to those who are perishing" (4:2-3). He said that we should preach Jesus Christ as Lord, for God put His light in our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ" (4:5-6). *Heavenly Father, may we be faithful in teaching Your truth in the Bible and in explaining the Good News of Your Son our Saviour for all who listen to understand. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Confession before worship. Psalm 51:1-15.** God's anointed King David confesses his sin which "is ever before me" seeking "Your great compassion" in forgiveness. He realises that his sin was against God Himself. He also believes in the desire of God to teach truth and wisdom and bring inner cleansing and joy. But he acknowledges that sin causes God to turn His face away from him and remove the presence of His Holy Spirit. David therefore pleads for a pure heart and "restoration of the joy of Your salvation" that will enable him again to "teach transgressors Your ways" so that "sinners will turn back to You", resulting in praise to Almighty God. **Jude 24-25.** "To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory through Jesus Christ our Lord ... now and for evermore. Amen."

**5<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The sacrifices of God and man. Genesis 4:1-8.** Cain knew God but he did not know God's preference for animal blood sacrifices instead of sacrifices of food (v.3-4). When the animal offerings of his brother Abel were accepted by God, and his own food offerings were rejected, Cain became angry with Abel. (v.5). In reality, Cain was angry with God and failed to understand the importance of blood offerings in God's salvation plan for mankind. His anger and refusal to join Abel in offering animal blood sacrifices, led him to kill Abel (v.8). **Acts 7:51-60.** Luke tells us that the death of the apostle Stephen was because of the anger of those who crucified Christ (v.52) who did not obey God's Law (v.53). *Heavenly Father, help us to understand Your purpose in animal blood sacrifices as a prelude to the ultimate sacrifice of the blood of Your own Son, Jesus Christ; also the deaths of Abel (the first God-loving martyr) and Stephen (the first Christ-loving martyr).*

**8<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Confidence in our Saviour and our Salvation. Isaiah 33:21-22.** Isaiah confidently states, "Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty, is our judge and lawgiver. He is our King and it is He who will save us." **Romans 10:9-15.** Paul confidently proclaims, "If you confess with your mouth [that] Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from death, you will be saved." He then quotes from Isaiah, "Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" and from Joel, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord God Almighty will be saved." Paul again quotes from Isaiah, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!" *Father God, grant us a fresh anointing that we may live, witness and speak out confidently these fundamental Bible truths in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Seek God's perfection. Genesis 28:1-9.** Isaac instructed Jacob not to marry Canaanite women – descendants of Noah's third son Ham. Instead, he sent Jacob to Laban's home to marry a descendant of Noah's first son, Shem. Isaac prayed for Jacob, "May God Almighty ... give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham." Jacob obeyed but his twin brother Esau had already married Canaanite women then chose another wife from the family of Ishmael to try to please his father Isaac, but without seeking God's blessing first. **Philippians 3:12-16.** Paul advises Christians who seek perfection to do as he does, "forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead... And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you." *Heavenly Father, forgive what is wrong and save us from living in our own strength without seeking Your blessing. For Christ's sake, make clear to us your perfect will at all times. Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> April 2019. God's amazing salvation plan. 1 Samuel 27.** When Israel's future King David was persecuted by King Saul, he went to live with the Philistines (v.1-2). Saul then stopped looking for David, prompting David to rid the Promised Land of more of the Canaanite tribes (v.8-9). **Acts 12.** When King Herod began to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem, he put Peter in prison, prompting the church to pray earnestly to God for Peter to be saved (v.5). An angel appeared to Peter. His chains fell off and he was led out of prison, freeing him to join the amazed and joyful believers (v.12-17). Soon after, God struck Herod down "but the word of God continued to increase and spread" (v.23-24). *Heavenly Father, we, too, are amazed at how You achieved Your long-term plan to establish the family of Abraham in Canaan, through whom Your Son, Jesus Christ, became Saviour of the world to those who believe and repent.*

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Now is the time. Genesis 18:20-33.** Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, Abraham asked God not to treat the righteous and the wicked alike but to spare the cities for the sake of his nephew Lot and family who lived in Sodom. God answered, "For the sake of ten [righteous people] I will not destroy it." **Acts 11:19-21.** Following the change of heart of the early Jewish believers in Jerusalem towards non-Jews, those who had been scattered by their persecution travelled as far as Cyprus and Syria, preaching the Gospel to both Jews and non-Jews. "The Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (v.21). *Whether it is judgement by God or persecution by man, help us Lord Jesus to spread Your Good News to all races and religions for the sake of those who will be saved while there is time. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Fulfilment in life. Ecclesiastes 2:17-25.** These famous words contrast the despair of a man hating life and its meaningless work with "doing nothing better than eating and drinking and finding satisfaction in his work that is from the hand of God." He concludes that "to the man who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness." **1 Timothy 2:8-10.** Paul desires every man to "lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing" and every woman to "dress modestly" engaging in "good deeds appropriate for women who profess to worship God." *Heavenly Father, influence our attitude to work, witness and worship in all the little ways that bring glory to Your name and honour to the Church of Jesus Christ, avoiding controversy and unrighteous reactions while appreciating the joy of fulfilment in Your abundant provision. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Faith in God through Christ. Psalm 62:5-12 (NIV).** "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation... Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge... Two things I have heard: that You, O God, are strong and that You, O Lord, are loving." **Mark 7:24-30.** Jesus ministered to a Syrian woman living in Tyre, demonstrating His loving response to her faith in His healing power for her demon-possessed daughter, without regard to the fact she was not Jewish. The final command of Jesus to His followers was to spread the Good News of God's healing and salvation to all people (16:15-20). *Increase our hope and faith in You, O God, that your power, love and mercy be experienced by people in all walks of life through the ongoing ministry of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Faith not failure. Jeremiah 44.** The men of Israel tried to convince Jeremiah that they were better off when offerings were made to idols of "the Queen of Heaven" (v.17).

Jeremiah pointed out that this was only true because of God's mercy and their present difficulties were due to the fact that the Lord God Almighty "could no longer endure your wicked actions" (v.22). **Acts 9:32-43.** Luke records these miracles. Ananias, a non-believer who had been bedridden for eight years was healed by Peter in the name of Jesus and the whole town of Lydda believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (v.34-35). Dorcas, a believer, had died and Peter prayed for her then raised her from death and many in the city of Joppa believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (v.40-42). *Father God, help us never to fail You by being deceived but instead grant faith to work miracles in the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.*

**17<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Faith and victory. Isaiah 37:14-20.** King Hezekiah prayed with great faith, "O LORD God Almighty ... You alone are God over all the kingdoms... You have made Heaven and Earth. Give ear, O LORD and hear... Deliver us [from Sennacherib] so that all kingdoms on Earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God." Isaiah then brought God's words of encouragement and promised victory to the king (v.21-35). **Revelation 2:12-17.** Jesus personally brought words of encouragement to the church at Pergamum. "I know where you live – where Satan has His throne. Yet you remain true to My name... To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna..." *Dear God, help us to remain faithful to You even in the darkest of times when Satan seeks to destroy Your reign and Your people. Grant Your people victory through the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, that all nations will know You as Lord. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Do what is right. Judges 1 & 2 (NIV).** After Joshua's death, the people of Israel failed to finish driving out the Canaanites from the Promised Land (1:19-36). God sent an angel to the people to tell them, "You have disobeyed Me... Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you" (2:2-3). The people wept, offered sacrifices to God, but did not change their ways (2:4). **Acts 10:34-48.** Peter testified to the church leaders in Jerusalem that "God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right" (10:34-35). "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify ... that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name" (10:42-43). *Lord, help us to do what is right and then testify of Your salvation as we remember Your Last Supper before Your crucifixion.*

**19<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Standing firm on the Word. Deuteronomy 8:1-5 (NIRV).** God warned Moses, "Make sure you follow every command I am giving you." He explained that He had "guided you in the desert for 40 years ... to make you humble. He wanted to put you to the test to know what was in your hearts... He let you get hungry then gave you manna to eat ... He tested you to teach you that man does not live only by bread. He lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD God Almighty." **1 Corinthians 10:1-12.** Paul says, "Our people who lived long ago ... all ate the same supernatural food ... but God was not pleased with most of them" and "things happened to them as examples for us... to warn us who are living at the time when God's work is being completed." *Father God, help us to stand firm lest we fall (10:12) and to trust in Your salvation plan on this anniversary of our Saviour's crucifixion.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. Listen and obey. Deuteronomy 5:22-27.** When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments (5:1-21), He spoke to them in a loud voice from out of the fire before writing them down on two tablets of stone (v.22). The frightened leaders of Israel asked Moses to go near and listen to all that the LORD God Almighty wanted to say. "Then tell us whatever He tells you and we will listen and obey" (v.27). **Matthew 23:37-39.** Jesus said, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You kill the prophets ... who are sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather your people together... like a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings. But you would not let Me!" *Father God, thank You for the rich heritage you have given to your people before and after You sent Your Son to die for our sins. Forgive us when we fail and help us always to listen and obey. For Jesus' sake, Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019. United in love. Proverbs 1:20-33.** Here Solomon speaks against the "simple ones" [immoral people, NIV footnote] and those who delight in mockery and the foolish who hate truth (v.22). He warns that there will come a time when they will call on God but He will not answer, and they will look for Him and not find Him (v.28). **Galatians 2:1-10.** Here, Paul speaks not against immoral people but against religious people who judged him for preaching to the Gentiles as well as

to the Jews, which was a big issue in the early Christian Church worldwide. However, they came to a common understanding (v.9) and agreed a common ministry to remember the poor and needy (v.10). *Father God, keep us ever watchful to guard against wrong ways of living or wrong ways of interpreting Your truth so that Your people will remain united in love within the church and in reaching out to others. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2019. *The mystery of Christ. 2 Chronicles 35:16-19.*** In the days of King Josiah, the people of Israel faithfully observed the Passover. This celebration was the first for over 500 years since the time of the prophet Samuel (v.18). The Passover was also the feast celebrated by Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper before His crucifixion and resurrection. **Acts 8:26-40.** The Holy Spirit sent the apostle Philip to talk with an Ethiopian official who had been visiting Jerusalem to worship God at the Temple. Philip found him studying Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 53 which describes the suffering of Israel's Messiah. Philip then explained the meaning of this Old Testament Scripture and "told him the Good News about Jesus" whom God sacrificed on a cross for the salvation of the people (v.35). *Father God, help us again and again to understand the "mystery of Christ" and your mercy for sinners so that we can explain this Good News of Jesus to others. Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2019. *Let the light shine. Isaiah 60.*** God's people are told to "Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the LORD God Almighty is upon you (v.1). Nations will come to your light (v.3)." Isaiah was also told, "I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler (v.17)... because the Lord will be your everlasting light" (v.20). **Acts 23:12-35.** The plot to kill the imprisoned Paul failed and instead he was brought to speak to Felix, who was the Roman Governor at that time. This led to a prolonged period of imprisonment for Paul during which time he testified in court several times of his faith in Christ and freely wrote many letters to the churches which have been read by millions of believers ever since. *Heavenly Father, thank You for the amazing ways in which Your truth and light prevail in the world, despite the persecution of Your people. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2019. *Prophecies fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled. Micah 5 (NIV).*** In this famous chapter, Micah prophesies about the coming Messiah 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem (v.2) whose "greatness will reach to the ends of the Earth" (v.4). And He will be their peace (v.5). Micah also prophesies that the "remnant of Jacob will be among the nations in the midst of many people" (v.8). **Revelation 22.** In this famous chapter, the angel of God spoke to the apostle John about the New Jerusalem. "No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb of God will be in the city and His servants will serve Him" (v.3). "They will see His face" (v.4). *Lord Jesus, help us to understand these prophecies knowing that You said to John, "Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book" (v.7). Amen.*

**Joshua 3:7&14. *Supporting righteous leaders.*** God assured Joshua, "Today, I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of Israel so that they will know I am with you... That day, the LORD God Almighty exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they revered him all the days of his life, just as they had revered Moses." **Acts 24:14-23.** Paul was held as a prisoner in Jerusalem for preaching about the Christian Way among the Jews (v.14). Due to the false accusations against Paul, he was held in prison for a long time but with freedom to talk to his friends (v.23) and to write many letters to the churches he had planted. *Father God, open our eyes to see and pray for the people You have called and anointed to uphold Your truth and in Your mercy exalt them even when falsely accused. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2019. *God's calling and provision. Job Chapters 40-42.*** God describes in great detail ancient creatures "which I made along with you". This prompts Job to declare again his faith in the LORD God Almighty (42:2) and confesses "I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know" (42:3). This leads to a full repentance by Job (42:6) and restoration of his ministry and provision (42:10-12). **Romans 2:13,16.** Paul tells his readers, "It is not those who hear the Law who are righteous in God's sight but it is those who obey the Law who will be declared righteous." He looks forward to "the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ". *Dear Triune God, our Heavenly Father and Saviour and Holy Spirit, forgive us when we fail to grasp the true wonder of your creation around us and within us. Enable us to start over again and know your calling and provision. Amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> May 2019. Deuteronomy 7:6-9 (KJV). *Special to God.*** God said this to His chosen people: "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth... Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." **Luke 15:20-24.** In the parable of the lost son, Jesus said, "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Heavenly Father help me to restore my love and respect for You and seek your forgiveness for hindering the special relationship You planned for all people through the death and resurrection of Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. Job 9:25-28. *Servants in adversity.*** Job says to God, "My days ... fly away without a glimpse of joy." He adds, "If I say 'I will forget my complaint; I will change my expression and smile', I still... know You will not hold me innocent." His so-called friend Zophar tells Job, "Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin" (11:6). *Neither Job nor Zophar realised how much God loved Job and was testing his faithfulness in adversity and longed for his obedience and worship.* **Revelation 22:1-6.** The angel of God showed the Apostle John "the river of the water of life... flowing from the throne of God" (v.1)... "His servants will serve Him. They will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads" (v.3-4). *Dear Father God, forgive our failure to serve and worship You in times of difficulty, for Jesus' sake who freely took away our punishment for sin to give us eternal life. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. *Confession and faith.* Genesis 42:1-5.** Jacob made the decision to send his eldest ten sons to Egypt at the time of the seven-year drought, in order to buy grain for making bread. His eleventh son, Joseph, was missing, presumed dead, and he refused to let his twelfth son Benjamin go to Egypt. *No-one in the family of Jacob knew these events were part of the fulfilment of God's plan for the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, despite the sinful actions of some of the family members.* **James 5:13-20.** James records for us the importance of prayer, praise, confession and righteous living (v.13-16). He draws attention to the example of Elijah regarding power over the weather through prayer (v.17-18). Above all, he encourages believers to help anyone who has wandered away from the truth of God (v.19-20). *Lord, forgive us when we sin and help us to trust You to fulfil Your purposes in our lives. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> May 2019. *Freedom with discipline.* Jeremiah 30:10-11 (NIV).** God tells the prophet Jeremiah that His people should not fear or be dismayed. "I am with you" declares the LORD God Almighty... "I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished." **Romans 3:21-24.** Paul speaks of the New Covenant when he says, "But now a righteousness from God... comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Old and New Testament writers speak of the everlasting love and mercy and justice of God for all who believe including Gentiles who and have faith to receive their salvation in Christ. *Thank you Jesus for suffering unto death for me, a sinner, that saves and frees me to be a child of God under discipline. Amen.*

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2019. *Nervously going forward.* 2 Samuel 5:17-19.** As soon as the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king, they went out in "full force" after him. David "enquired of the LORD" if he should attack them and was told, "Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you." *It was scary to suggest doing the right thing but God assured David that he would succeed.* **2 Corinthians 12:7-9.** Paul tells his readers, "To keep me from becoming conceited... there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan, to torment me... But God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness'." It is natural to worry when Satan tries to stop us going forward in God's promised purpose, provision and prosperity. *Lord God, keep our eyes open to the schemes of the wicked one and restore Your peace when we get nervous. Amen.*

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2019. *Doubts and complacency.* 1 Kings 20 13-22.** A prophet came to the king of Israel to say God would save Samaria from the Aramites, "and then you will know that I am the Lord

God Almighty." The prophecy came true that day but the prophet returned to warn the king to "strengthen your position... because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again" (v.22). This was a warning not to take God's provision for granted but to be on guard at all times against the attack of the enemy. **Luke 24:36-49**. Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, saying "Peace be with you." He asked "Why are you troubled?" They experienced doubts but also joy and amazement (v.41). Jesus then explained the Old Testament Scriptures again how "the Christ will suffer and rise from death" (v.46). *Heavenly Father, keep us on guard at all times lest we begin to doubt or become complacent. Amen.*

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Praise in suffering. Psalms 146 to 150.** The Book of Psalms ends with praise for Yahweh, our powerful Lord God Almighty who created the Earth and the Universe and everything in it. "Praise the Lord" is recorded ten times, which in Hebrew is written "Hallelu Yah". **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**. Paul explains that after pleading with God three times, he was told, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Paul explains that this was why, for Christ's sake, he delighted in weaknesses caused by insults, hardships, persecutions and other difficulties. "For when I am weak, then I am strong." He ceased complaining to God and suffered for the sake of Christ and for the sake of others. *We praise you Creator God for the example of Your own Son, who suffered so much for us all. Help us to meet the needs of others without counting the cost. Hallelujah! Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Praise for God and His Church. Psalm 136.** This psalm declares that God's love "endures for ever" 26 times! **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**. This letter from Paul extols the blessings of believers "who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.2) and whom God has "called into fellowship with His Son" (v.9). He sees them as "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy" (v.2) and gives thanks to God for their "grace in Christ... enriched in every way... not lacking any spiritual gift... eagerly waiting for our Lord" (v.4-7). Paul declares that God will keep them "strong to the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.8). Then Paul assures his readers that "God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, is faithful" (v.9). *May we be praising God for His everlasting love and faithfulness, testifying the privilege of fellowship with Christ and His followers.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. Portraying the wisdom of God. 1 Kings 3:1-28 (KJV).** King Solomon, who loved God (v.3) asked for an "understanding heart to judge Your people", acknowledging his lack of wisdom whilst so young (v.7-9). It pleased the Lord to promise Solomon much wisdom (v.12), which was soon put into practice when two women brought a baby to the king, each claiming it was theirs (v.16-27). Solomon's response to finding who was the true mother was so amazing that "all Israel... saw the wisdom of God was in him to do judgement" (v.28). **Hebrews 8:10-13**. The writer claims that God's new covenant in Christ will establish His laws in the minds and hearts of His people. "I will be their God and they will be My people." *Praise God for the wisdom He has given us today through His promised Spirit sent to His people through the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. May others see this in us. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. Follow truth, not lies. Jeremiah 13 (KJV).** The prophet of God is warned about the people of Judah who refuse to listen to His words but "walk according to the imagination of their hearts after other gods" (v.10). **1 Timothy 4**. Paul warns Timothy what the Spirit says about the "latter times" when some believers will depart from their faith, giving in to the "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils", and speaking lies without a conscience. They will discourage marriage and [even] the eating of meat, which God created as a special blessing (v.1-3). Paul goes on to tell Timothy to encourage the believers with words of faith and good doctrine and not to listen to "old wives tales" but to live godly lives (v.6-8). In so doing "save yourselves and those who listen to you" (v.16). *Lord, save us from sins ancient and modern and help us to live daily according to Your Bible truth. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Secure under persecution. Nehemiah 6-7.** Nehemiah finished rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (6:15) despite opposition from the enemies of the Jews (6:2). Some of the Jews were related to the enemies and informed them of Jeremiah's progress (6:17), which added to Jeremiah's problems by trying to scare him (6:19). After the walls were built, Nehemiah appointed honest men to be in charge of the security of Jerusalem (7:1-3). *Lord, help us to trust in Your*

*purpose to remove your people from 'Babylon' despite hindrances from within and without. Come, place Your chosen people in charge of the rebuilding! Acts 6.* The successful growth of the New Testament church brought problems within and without. Spirit-filled church leaders were appointed to meet the needs of the believers (6:18) as opposition outside the church grew (6:9-15). *Lord, help us to move on in Your purpose in faith, going forward freely in the power of Your Spirit and strong under persecution. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Acting "in the Spirit". Job 33:9-14.** Job was scolded by his friend Elihu for telling God he hadn't sinned and saying he was being treated like an enemy (v.9-10). Elihu said Job was not behaving justly; God is greater than man so why argue against the Almighty (v.12-13)? He also said that God speaks to us many times but we often ignore Him (v.14). *Lord, forgive me for the many times I think I am right when I'm not even listening to You! Acts 19.* In Ephesus, the Church grew and there were great miracles. At this time, Paul planned "in the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome (v.21). Before this happened, there was great opposition to the work of Paul in Ephesus (v.23-41). He left the town only after the persecution ceased (20:1). *Lord, help us not to be influenced by success or persecution but act only "in the Spirit". Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Truth brings victory. 2 Chronicles 18-19.** Chapter 18 records the death in battle of Ahab, the king of the ten wayward northern tribes of Israel. Chapter 19 records how Jehosaphat, king of the southern two tribes "returned in peace to Jerusalem" (19:1) from winning the same battle with Syria. Ahab had sought advice from 400 false prophets who only told him what he wanted to hear; Jehosaphat believed the advice of the one true prophet of God, Miciah. Despite his past sins, God forgave Jehosaphat and used him to bring the people "back unto to the Lord God Almighty of their fathers" (19:4). **Romans 1:32.** Paul reveals that people are not always ignorant of God's judgement deserving death yet carry on sinning and enjoying what they do! *Father, help us not to be deceived by worldly advice that suits us but accept Your righteous advice. Forgive our sins and grant us victory. Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Praise and service. Psalm 111 (NIV).** The psalmist is determined to praise the Lord God Almighty "with all his heart" wherever he meets leaders and worshippers because "great are the works of the LORD ... and His righteousness endures for ever". He says God is gracious, compassionate, a provider, promise keeper, powerful, faithful, just, trustworthy, steadfast, upright, a redeemer, holy, awesome... **1 Corinthians 16:13-16.** Paul's good advice appears in the midst of his final instructions: "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage... do everything in love." He also asks his readers to be prepared to submit to those who "devote themselves to the service of the saints ... and to everyone who joins in the work and labours in it." *Lord, help me to honour You in all ways amongst all people and work closely with others who serve in the church. For the sake of Jesus who suffered for our salvation. Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Ancient prophecies. 2 Kings 19:29-31 (NIRV).** The LORD said, "Hezekiah... this year you will eat what grows by itself. In the second year you will eat what grows from that. But in the third year you will plant your crops and gather them in... My great love will make sure that happens." **Revelation 17:1-14.** John wrote: "I saw a woman sitting on a bright red beast. It was covered with names that ... are displeasing to God... On her forehead, 'Mystery: the great city of Babylon...'" Then the angel said to me... 'The seven heads are seven hills that the woman sits on. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is ruling, and the other has still not come... They will make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb will overcome them because He is ... the greatest King of all.'" *Lord God, help us understand and apply Bible prophecies and their fulfilment.*

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. Longing for the truth of God. Nehemiah 8:1-6 (NIV).** The remnant of Jews who came out of Babylon "assembled as one man to ask Ezra to read aloud the Book of the Law of Moses which the Lord God Almighty had commanded for Israel" (v.1). So Ezra the priest read it aloud to the "men, women and all who were able to understand" (v.2). "All the people lifted their hands and responded 'Amen! Amen!' then bowed down to worship the Lord" (v.6). The people "wept as they listened to the words" (v.9). **Acts 18:24-28.** Apollos, a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, after further instruction on "the way of God", preached vigorously that Jesus was the Christ. *Father God, put the desire in our hearts for our nation to hunger for the "way of God" and*

*to be taught from Your Bible to bring repentance and worship of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**3rd June 2019. Law and faith. Leviticus 6:24-30.** These instructions for offering an animal to sacrifice before God in the Holy Place were most important in ancient Israel, originating at the time of Abel. They provided forgiveness and life for individuals through the shedding of blood. It is called 'atonement for sins' and enables us to understand today what the death of Jesus on the cross achieved. **Romans 3:9-31.** Paul declares that "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin" (v.9) but "no-one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the Law", through which we become aware of our sin (v.20). Paul says "the Law and the Prophets testify this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (v.21-22). *Thanks be to God for the Old Testament writings which make us aware of our need of forgiveness and salvation, which are achieved by personal faith in the sacrificial blood of Jesus. Amen.*

**4th June 2019. Truth and righteousness. Daniel 9:20-27.** While Daniel was in prayer confessing his sin and the sins of his people (v20), the angel Gabriel came to him and said, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding" (v.22). Then Gabriel spoke of the day when God's Anointed One would come and put an end to sacrifice and offerings (v.25). **1 Corinthians 11:17-34.** In Paul's valuable teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, he warns, "Whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (v.27). He reassures his readers, "When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world" (v.32). *Lord, help us to understand the words of Gabriel and Paul and to pray for Your purpose and righteousness in our lives in these final days before Christ returns. Amen.*

**5th June 2019. Working for an eternal reward. Psalm 89:33-37.** This psalm declares God's love and faithfulness for King David and His covenant promise that David's descendants will continue forever like the faithful witness of the sun and moon in the sky. This refers to the promised Messiah through David's line and the eternal impact He will have on all people and all nations. **1 Corinthians 9:24-27.** When Paul speaks of runners in a race, he says that only one gets the prize for coming first. In the Christian life, however, we all train hard like runners in the belief that we will receive a crown "that will last forever". Paul says that in this life he pushes himself hard to preach to others about Christ. *Heavenly Father, thank You that in Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Messiah, we are promised forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Help us to work hard to proclaim this to others. Amen.*

**6th June 2019. Safe in suffering. Psalm 6.** God's anointed King David cries out for safe keeping from his enemies. He shows faith and confidence in God Almighty to tell them to go away (v.6-7), "for the LORD has heard my cry for mercy and accepts my prayer" (v.9). **2 Timothy 11-18.** Paul explains how he suffers for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ (v.11-12). He has confidence to declare, "I know whom I have believed and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day", despite everyone deserting him in the churches of Asia Province, Turkey (v.15). Both David and Paul knew what it felt like to be alone and threatened but they declare their trust in God to keep them safe in their work for Him. *Father God, thank You for Your mercy in times of difficulty as we follow our Lord and Saviour's calling. Amen.*

**7th June 2019. New for old. Isaiah 43:18-28.** God warns Israel to "forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing" (v.18-21). **2 Timothy 3:16 to 4:3 (NIrV).** Paul declares, "God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right... 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 won't put up with true teaching... The teachers will say what the people want to hear." *Father God, involve us with the new things You plan to do in this age of false teaching and help us to put behind us the mistakes of the past. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*

**10th June 2019. Divine guidance and leadership. 2 Chronicles 34:29-33.** King Josiah called together all the elders and the priests and the people from the least to the greatest. He stood up and



renewed the covenant of the people to follow Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty, and keep His commands. He made everyone pledge themselves to the covenant which they did so long as he lived. **Revelation 22:12-17.** "Behold, I am coming soon! I will give to everyone according to what he has done. Blessed are those who wash their robes that they might have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates... I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." *Come, soon, Lord Jesus, and in the meantime send leaders who will encourage us to obey our Almighty God. Amen.*

**11<sup>th</sup> June 2019. 1 Kings 11:9-13. Gratitude for our salvation.** This is the sad record of how God Almighty decided to end the reign of King Solomon in Israel because he deserted the one true God in favour of worshipping the gods of neighbouring tribes. However, for the sake of his former servant King David, God gave Jerusalem and area to David's family forever. **Luke 17:11-19.** Jesus walked towards Jerusalem, avoiding Samaria where He was not welcome. On the way, ten lepers asked Him for healing. They acted in faith to go show themselves to the priest and on the way they were healed. Sadly, only one of the ten, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus. *Dear Lord, these Bible stories remind us how shallow our relationship with our God and Saviour can be at times. Forgive us our sins and lack of gratitude for Your love and mercy. Keep us humble, like the unworthy Samaritan. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Focus on Jerusalem. Ezekiel 16.** Ezekiel was given a prophecy regarding the downfall of Jerusalem because of the terrible sins of the people, who were worse than those who lived in Samaria to the north and Sodom to the south (v.46). "All those [nations] around you despise you" (v.57). God vowed to "deal with you as you deserve (v.59). Yet I will still remember the covenant I made with you and will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember and be ashamed" (v.60-61). **Romans 15:23-33.** Paul's worldwide ministry of preaching Christ focused for a time on Jerusalem, "in the service of the saints there" (v.25), bringing gifts from those who have "shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings" to the world, before moving on to Rome (v.27). *Lord, help us to be aware, like Paul, of the importance of events in Jerusalem, past, present and future, and what this means to the rest of the world. Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Suffering in God's will. Job 26:14-27:4.** Job, who suffered much in God's will, asked, "Who can understand the thunder of His power?" He continues, "As surely as God lives... as long as I have the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness [of the Almighty]." **Hebrews 9:6-14.** The writer reminds the Hebrews that "only the High Priest entered the inner room once a year ... and never without blood offered for himself and for the sins of the people" (v.7). "When Christ came as High Priest ... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but He ... entered once for all [time] by His own blood" (v.11-12). "How much more then will the blood of Christ cleans us!" (v.14). *May our faith in God Almighty remain strong like Job's, always aware of what Christ has achieved for us through His suffering for all time and also for all people. Amen.*

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Salvation in weakness. 1 Chronicles 3.** This chapter records the list of "sons of King David" 1000 years before the King of Kings was born to the virgin Mary as Israel's Messiah, through whom the "light of the world" brought the hope of salvation to every man and woman on Earth (John 1:9-14). David, Mary and Jesus were in the same family line of Noah and Abraham. **2 Corinthians 13:4.** Paul wrote: "Christ was crucified in weakness yet He lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in Him, yet by God's power we will live with Him." God's purpose has prevailed to bring His truth and light into the world that He created but which He destroyed at the time of Noah's Flood because of the sins of mankind. *Through the faithfulness of Noah, Abraham, David and Mary, we have a Saviour who is able to save the weakest of sinners. Praise be to God Almighty!*

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Serving God and mankind. Psalm 135.** "Praise the name of the LORD. Praise Him you servants of the LORD" (v.1). "For the LORD is good" (v.3). This unknown psalmist goes on to confirm his belief, "I know that the Lord is great" and "does whatever pleases Him" (v.5-6), "Your name O LORD endures ... through all generations" (v.13) with "compassion on all who serve Him"

(v.14). **2 Corinthians 1:12-13.** Paul boasts "that we have conducted ourselves ... in our relations with you in holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. For we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand." *Father God, make it our endless desire to worship You, in whatever circumstances that pleases You, so that we experience Your holiness and sincerity according to your grace and mercy in Christ through serving Him as we minister Your truth in love to others. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Little deeds and big rewards. Isaiah 65:13-16.** Isaiah describes what is in the heart of our loving God to bless His people. "My servants will eat... drink... sing with joy... for the past troubles [sins] will be forgotten and hidden from My eyes." **Revelation 2:23-26.** Jesus reveals to John, "I am He who searches hearts and minds and I will repay each of you according to his deeds (v.23b). "Hold on to what you have until I come. To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations (v.25-26). *Help me Heavenly Father to be quick to repent and fulfil Your promise, repeated through Your Son, to bless us according to our deeds so that we can have an impact across the world, however small. Amen.* **Revelation 3:11.** "I am coming soon! Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown."

**19<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Called to serve. Genesis 49:27-28.** Before Jacob died, he called his twelve sons together to bless them and prophesy over them (49:1). However, he had little good to say for the small tribe of Benjamin. Eventually, the descendants of Benjamin joined the tribe of Judah and became part of the Jewish captivity in Babylon before helping to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. From the descendants of Benjamin came Saul who was the first king of Israel and Saul who became the apostle Paul. **James 5:11.** James reminds his readers, "We consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." *Heavenly Father, thank You that from high or low beginnings, from good or bad reputations, from many blessings or sufferings in life, you chose us for your Kingdom work through salvation in Christ. Help us to persevere. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Come, Lord Jesus! Leviticus 17:11.** 3500 years ago, Almighty God looked forward to the time of the blood sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. He told Moses, "It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." **Revelation 22:17.** These words of Christ Himself invite all to "take the free gift of the water of life". This offer of free salvation and eternal life through His sacrifice on the cross for our sins is the fulfilment of the atoning work of God through the shedding of His blood on our behalf. The purpose and message of both the Holy Spirit and the Church [the bride of Christ] is that God says "Come" to Him through the sacrifice of Christ in order to remove the barrier of sin between the Creator and His creation. Our correct response is to listen to "the Spirit and the bride", repent and say "Come" to Christ who restores our relationship with God Almighty.

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2019. Showing compassion for spiritual and physical needs. Nehemiah 9.** After the return from exile in Babylon, God's people read from the Book of the Law, offering confessions and worship to the LORD their God (v.1-3). They said, "You gave them bread [manna] from heaven ... and water from the rock" (v.15). Despite the disobedience of their forefathers, God did not desert them but showed grace and compassion" (v.16-17). **Luke 5:17-26.** Jewish leaders from all over Israel eagerly came to listen to the teachings of Jesus. "And the power of the Lord was present with Him to heal the sick." The leaders were quick to criticise Jesus as soon as He began to minister to people who were sick or disabled by forgiving their sins and healing limbs. *May we be eager to listen and obey God's word and also expect miracles to happen especially when we confess sin or forgive the sins of others and show compassion for their needs.*

**24<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Faithfulness in service. Deuteronomy 11:13-16.** After receiving the Ten Commandments (Chapter 5), Moses received the call to faithful obedience to the word of God and to love and serve Him 'with all your heart' (v.13). This is quickly followed by the promise from God to provide for His people (v.14-15) and the warning not to be enticed by other gods (v.16). **Acts 9:20-31.** After Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus, he witnessed and preached the Good News of Jesus Christ. He became 'more and more powerful' (v.22) which stirred up opposition both in Damascus and Jerusalem (v.23-30). Yet the New Testament churches thrived at this time through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit (v.31). *Heavenly Father help us through the power of Your Spirit to*

*follow Your commandments and the teachings of Jesus in faithful love and service despite the threat of religious opposition and the enticement of other 'gods'. Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Free from captivity of sin. Jeremiah 51.** God spoke to Jeremiah about the suffering that will happen to God's people in captivity in Babylon as judgement for the sins of their fathers (v.34). But God added a prophecy that "Babylon will [become] a heap of ruins." (v.37). At that time, God's people must prepare to "come out of her (v.45) ... remember the LORD ... and think on Jerusalem" (v.50). **Hebrews 9:14 (NIrV).** Over six hundred years later, the writer of Hebrews said, "Christ offered Himself to God without any flaw... So how much more will His blood wash from our minds our feelings of guilt for committing sin! Sin always leads to death. But now we can serve the living God." *Lord, help us to realise we cannot be enslaved by old sins when we have confessed and are forgiven through Christ. Help us to think on a "new Jerusalem" and come fully out of captivity. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Confident under opposition. Psalm 27.** This is a psalm of confidence in the LORD, our God Almighty, who "is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" (v.1). "In the day of trouble, He will keep me safe in His dwelling" (v.5). "I will sing and make music to the LORD" (v.6). "I am confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (v.13). **Luke 5:27-32.** After Jesus was criticised by the religious leaders for forgiving sins as well as healing a lame man (v.17-26), Jesus was again criticised for eating a meal with 'sinners' (v.30). He explained that He had come to call sinners to repentance (v.32). *Father, we live in an age when the unrighteous are quick to criticise Your people for faith in Jesus and Your Bible. Protect us and make us confident when persecuted for sharing the Good News of healing and salvation in Christ. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Serving God faithfully. Isaiah 41:10-20.** The LORD God of Israel spoke through his servant Isaiah, "Do not fear, I am with you... I will uphold you with my righteous hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed" (v.10-11). "The poor and needy search for water... I will not forsake them. I will make... I will turn... I will put... I will set... so that people may see and know and understand that the hand of the LORD has done this" (v.17-20). **Matthew 25:14-30.** The parable of the talents speaks about those who are faithful servants to their Lord and Master. They will "share in your Master's happiness" (v.21,23). But those who disobey and refuse to use their talents to serve and delight their Master deserve punishment (v.24-30). *Heavenly Father, help us each day to use our talents for your glory that others may see the Spirit of Jesus at work in our lives. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019. Christ-like conduct. Ezekiel 7.** The prophet describes the terrible outcome of disobeying God 600 years before He sent Jesus Christ to save the world through His sacrifice on the cross for our sins. The warning from God remains to this day that He will deal with us according to our conduct. "Then they will know that I am the LORD God Almighty" (v.27). **Luke 20:20-26.** The enemies of Jesus sent spies who hoped to catch Jesus in something He said so that they might hand Him over to the governor. Jesus amazed everyone with His answer to their trick question: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." *Father, help us to walk in the light of Your truth at all times in order to respond in the power of Your Spirit as followers of Jesus so that all may know through our conduct that You are God Almighty. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Discipline in worship. 1 Chronicles 25.** King David established 288 trained musicians and singers as part of 'the ministry of prophesying' (v.1) who were 'skilled in music for the Lord' (v.7). They set to music the words of the Old Testament prophets as well as the psalms of David and Asaph. They were under close supervision for making the 'music of the temple of the LORD' (v.6). **2 Corinthians 1:20.** Paul says, "No matter how many promises God has made, they are all 'Yes' in Christ. And through Him, the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." Therefore, whatever God established in the past is now fulfilled in Christ for us, His servants, to declare and add our 'Amens' to the glory of God. *Heavenly Father, help us to establish the disciplines of preaching and singing to Your glory the eternal truths You declared from the beginning and fulfilled in Christ Jesus, our Saviour. Amen.*

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Watch and prepare! Job 31-37.** Job professes his innocence before God and mentions areas of life in which he knows others fail. He asks God to explain why life had been so

hard on him (31:35). He then stops talking and waits on God (31:40). His three so-called friends are also silent because they see that Job has become righteous in his own eyes (32:1). A fourth friend, Elihu, then prepares the way for Job to hear what God has to say, "for God does speak, now one way, now another, though man may not perceive it" (33:14). **Luke 21:8.** Jesus warned His disciples, "Watch out that you are not deceived. Many will come in My name... Do not follow them." *Dear God, in these Last Days, enable us to suffer gladly in times of trouble, faithfully trusting You alone, one way or another, as we prepare ourselves and others for the return of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.*

**8<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Leviticus 19.** God told Moses to speak "to the entire assembly". He began by saying "Be holy, because I the Lord your God am holy" (v.2). Next He said, "Respect your parents and observe the Sabbath day" (v.3) followed by warnings about making idols and instructions for sacrifices as part of worship (v.4-8). Next He gave advice how to help the poor (v.9-10). Finally, God gave Moses a list of 23 practical things the people must not do: "Do not..." (v.11-17). **Jude 20-23.** Jude gives his own practical advice for believers living in the Christian era: building faith in God; praying in the Spirit; welcoming God's love; waiting for eternal life; showing mercy to those who doubt; saving others from Hell; showing mercy; hating corruption. *Father God, thank you for the awareness of the things that displease You and the holy life-style that is possible for us to live through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Joy in God. Nehemiah 8:1-9 (NIrV).** Seven months after the return from captivity, the people gathered together in Jerusalem and asked Ezra to read aloud the Book of the Law of Moses. The people listened and praised the LORD. Then the Levites made clear the meaning of the Law and all the people wept. Afterwards, Nehemiah, their leader, said, "Go and enjoy some good food and sweet drinks. Send some of it to those who don't have any." **1 Corinthians 4:1-2.** Paul asks the Christians in Corinth to regard him and his fellow apostles as "servants of Christ" entrusted with the "secret things of God". *Holy Spirit, help us to trust those whom God has called to clarify and establish Bible truth old and new, with much joy in God and His Word. Prepare us to repent, to weep, to forgive, to reach out to others in need and to rejoice fully in God and Jesus our Saviour. Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Faith in God. 2 Chronicles 35.** King Josiah called for a great celebration of the Passover (v.18). Everyone was involved in Temple sacrifices and worship and those who had duties as musicians and gatekeepers were not overlooked (v.15). Sadly, Josiah refused to listen to the word of God from a stranger and ended up mortally wounded in a battle that was nothing to do with him or Israel (v.20-24). **Acts 28: 28-31.** Paul confirmed at the end of his life that the Good News about salvation through the sacrifice of God's Son is relevant to anyone and everyone in the world. "And they will listen." Paul's two-year teaching ministry in Rome has influenced millions over the years. Sadly, he died a martyr's death that others may live. *Heavenly Father, help me to see the "bigger picture" of Josiah and Paul, and learn that our faith in You this day depends on faith in Christ alone. Amen.*

**11<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Sacrifice with blessings Leviticus 9:22-24 (NIrV).** "Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people. He gave them a blessing. He had already sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the friendship offering... The glory of the LORD appeared to all of the people... They shouted for joy. They fell with their faces to the ground." **Hebrews 10:1-7.** "The Law is only a shadow of the good things that [were] coming... The same sacrifices [had] to be offered ... year after year... It isn't possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. So when Christ came into the world, He said, 'You didn't want sacrifices and offerings. Instead, You prepared a body for Me... Then I said, Here I am. It is written about Me in the scroll. O God, I have come to do what you want.' " *Thank you Jesus, for blessing us through the sacrifice You paid for our sins. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Living in God's will. Genesis 28-29.** Isaac instructed Jacob to go back to his relatives 500km away to find a wife before raising a family in Canaan, the land God promised to Abraham (28:1-4). When he arrived he met Rachel, whom he joyfully kissed "and began to weep aloud" (29:9-11). It was many difficult years later that Jacob returned with his large family to Canaan, which continued the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. **Matthew 25:1-13.** Jesus told the parable of the ten bridesmaids, five of whom missed the arrival of the bridegroom. This was a warning to keep the "oil" of the Holy Spirit in our lives at all times in order to enter fully into the joy

of knowing our Lord and Saviour and the calling He has for us. *Father God, help us to be in Your will and know the joy of Your fulfilment in our lives, despite difficulties ahead of us. Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Judges 4:1-9.** Deborah was a prophetess in the land of Israel. When the people of Israel ceased worshipping the LORD God Almighty, He allowed them to be oppressed by the Canaanites (v.1-3). Then the people cried out to the LORD, and Deborah sent for Barak to raise an army to defeat the enemy. She told him, "The Lord God of Israel commands you 'Go' " (v.4-7). However, Barak refused to trust God's deliverance unless Deborah went with him (v.8-9) so the honour went to her instead. **Philippians 3.** Paul warns against putting confidence in the flesh (v.3-4). Instead, he upholds a life of faith in Christ (v.9) and "fellowship with Him in sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him unto death" (v.10). *Heavenly Father, empower us to step out in faith as followers of Jesus, even if it involves risk of much suffering, to bring glory to You, and also blessings to others. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Job 30-31.** Job is distressed by his three 'friends' who mock what he says (30:1). He said, "I stand up in the assembly and cry for help" (30:28) but no-one befriends him. He then lists over a dozen sins common to man (31:1-34), claiming he is innocent (31:6), but no-one listens to him (31:35). Then a fourth friend warns him he is guilty of being righteous in his own eyes. This prepares the way for God to speak to him about the need for repentance before forgiveness and salvation.