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Daily Manna devotions: Editor's Choice Archive for 2020

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>

Bible quotations used by Fred Morris are mainly from the NIRV New International Readers Version (1998) published at that time by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London.
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Type "CTRL F" to search for key words or phrases

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Day 1. Do not to let Satan rob us of our joy. Joshua 13:1-6 records when Joshua was getting old and much land was left to conquer, God told him that He Himself would drive the inhabitants out before the Israelites (v. 6). Galatians 6:15 says Paul urges the focus to be on the new creation in Christ, not on old traditions.
Father, enable us to begin the new year with joy, focusing on the new things you will be doing. Amen.

Day 2. Deuteronomy 7:11, "Take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today."
Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, working as for the Lord."

Day 3. Genesis 30:17,22, God blessed both Leah and Rachel in producing the twelve sons of Jacob and so restored family *peace* as well as *progressing* His purpose for the twelve tribes of Israel. Colossians 4: Paul requests the righteous *provision (protection)* for all slaves and is quick to *promote* Tychicus (v.7) and Onesimus (v.9) who are all part of the extension of his ministry in revealing "the mystery of Christ" to the world, even whilst in chains for his faith (v.3). *Lord, grant peace, progress, protection, provision and promotion according to your purpose in revealing the mystery of Christ to the world.*

Day 4. In the days before the Messiah, skin diseases made people 'unclean' and they had to live away from everyone (Leviticus 13). In the days after Messiah came, the apostles taught that unfaithful believers must be prevented from causing trouble: 1 Timothy 6:3-5, "Suppose someone doesn't agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ... Then that person is proud and doesn't understand anything... It stirs up trouble all the time among people whose minds are twisted by sin." As with infectious diseases we must shun believers who refuse to admit the truth. *Lord, show us how to help people whose mental, physical and spiritual nature destroys fellowship with Yourself and with fellow believers.*

Day 5. 1 Kings 17 records the time when the widow's supply of flour and oil did not run out and she was able to feed her son and Elijah every day of the drought. Luke 17:3 (NKJV) says "If your brother sins against you,

rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him." *Lord, help me to go forward under your perfect provision and discern and reject what is wrong*

Day 6. Genesis 12:1-2, "The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's family. Go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. And I will bless you." After his arrival in the Promised Land, Abram and Sarai went to Egypt where there was more food, but he had to return to Canaan quickly for doing what was wrong. Jude 1:1, "You are loved by God the Father. You are kept safe for Jesus Christ." *Thank you Father God for keeping us on the right path of life even when we are tempted to turn aside. Thank you for Your love and salvation through Jesus.*

Day 7. "Know the word that sustains the weary" (Isaiah 50:4). Keep praying for them and trying to help them – don't give up on them – God hasn't! *May we be quick to encourage and slow to criticize.*

Day 8. Isaiah prophesies the return of a remnant that truly relies on the Lord God Almighty (Isaiah 10:20). Peter accepts the role Judas had to play in the suffering and death of Christ our Saviour (Acts 1:16). *Heavenly Father, forgive the sins of our nation and fulfil Your purpose through the remnant of believers now, whatever the cost! Amen.*

Day 9. Deuteronomy 20:17-18 warns we must obey God and cast out the enemy or we will sin against the LORD our God. Philippians 2:12-13 says, "As you have always obeyed... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling... for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose [pleasure, NKJV]."

Day 10. Joshua 3:6-7, the priests and the ark were sent ahead of the people and Joshua was informed he would be "exalted in the eyes of all Israel so that they may know I am with you, as with Moses". 2 Peter 1:19-21, "We have the word of the prophets ... not by the prophet's own interpretation... but spoken from God as they were carried along [moved, NKJV] by the Holy Spirit." *Lord, thank you for the Scriptures that reveal the righteous believers who were moved by the Holy Spirit and not by the words of men. Help us to hear and listen to Your voice today and share what You say for Your glory and purposes. Amen.*

Day 11. Psalm 146 says, "I will sing praises to my God as long as I live (v.2). He frustrates the ways of the wicked (v.9) [turns them upside down, NKJV]. The Lord reigns for all generations (v.10). 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 "I did not come with superior wisdom [excellence of speech, NKJV] ... except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I came in weakness, not with persuasive words but demonstrating the Spirit's power, so that your faith may not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power." *Lord, keep us from anger and resentful silence; and keep us from a superiority that does not glorify You. Amen.*

Day 12. Psalm 73 says "I am always with You; You hold me by my right hand." (v.23) "It is good to be near God [draw near to God, NKJV]... I will tell of all Your deeds" (v.28). Revelation 22:4 says that in heaven we will see God's face. Not even Moses was allowed this on Earth. *Father God, make us like the psalmist, always aware You are close to us so that we remain strong under temptation and assured of standing tall in Your presence among the saints. Amen.*

Day 13. 2 Samuel 23:3b warns that our relationships with others must be righteous [or just, NKJV] and conducted in the fear of God. James 3:9 says we have the choice to use our tongues to praise God [to bless our God and Father, NKJV] or to curse men. *God my Father, help us to know we are fully forgiven and live with joy in eternal salvation through Christ our Saviour and as a blessing to You and to mankind. Amen.*

Day 14. Isaiah 36-37 records prayer for deliverance from enemies "so that all kingdoms on earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God" (37:20). Jude 22 cautions us to be merciful to those who doubt. *Dear God, keep us safe and help us to show compassion to people and have faith to believe that our prayers can have a worldwide impact. Amen.*

Day 15. 2 Kings 8 records a period of evil kings from the family line of Ahab in charge of Judah until God told Elisha to anoint Jehu as king and destroy the family of Ahab (9:6). Philippians 1:28-29 says not to fear opposition, for you will be saved by God who has granted you faith in Christ and the privilege of suffering for Him. *Heavenly Father, thank you for helping us to realise Your work in us is not dependent solely on our efforts but You will intervene in anointing others to share or take over the work as needed. So help us to know the boundaries of our ongoing role and hand other roles to people you have chosen so that we are not discouraged by circumstances of people who hinder the work nor become a stumbling block to Your worldwide teaching ministry. Amen.*

Day 16. Job 2:13 says that Job's friends sat on the ground with him for many days and nights because of his suffering [grief, NKJV]. Luke 5:31-32 reminds us that Jesus came to minister to the sick (mind/body/spirit) and sinners to repentance. *Dear God, help us to have compassion for fellow passengers in life in order to minister to their needs and bring them to salvation through Christ. Amen.*

Day 17. Psalm 136 says, "Give thanks ... to the One who remembered us in our low [lowly, NKJV] estate – His love endures for ever (v.23)." John 17:20-26 records the prayer of Jesus for those who believe in Him and for those who believe in Him through them (v.20) ... "in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them" (v.26). *Lord, forgive my "low estate" and help me to joyfully believe and act on the truth that Your love "endures for ever" and dwells in me and will dwell in those I minister to. Amen.*

Day 18. Joshua 19:32-39. The allotment to the tribe of Naphtali in many ways was the best of all twelve tribes yet Jacob's personal blessing seemed insignificant (Genesis 49:21). The allotment included Capernaum and Bethsaida, popular with Jesus. Luke 21 gives many signs of the end times and warns us to be "always on the watch... and pray that you may be counted worthy... that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man" (v.36). *Lord Jesus, help us to be ever watchful and seek and know Your personal presence in our lives so that our worship is more 'real' and that others may see You in me.*

Day 19. Psalm 136:26 says, "Give thanks to the God of Heaven whose love [mercy, NKJV] endures for ever". Matthew 24:45-46, Jesus says it will be good to be found faithfully and wisely caring for those whom we have been given charge of. *Lord, develop in us both faithfulness and wisdom in building relationships with those we have a responsibility for.*

Day 20. Ezekiel 16:62 reminds us God will establish His covenant with us and we will know that He is Lord (Yahweh). He will do this and we will remember (our sins) and feel ashamed because He has made atonement for us (through Christ). "I will restore..." (v.53). Mark 3:13-18 records the calling of the disciples who Jesus appointed "to be with Him and so that He might send them out to preach and have authority to drive out demons". *Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save me and even though I feel ashamed at times, help me to play my part in preaching the Good News and encouraging faith in healing and speaking with authority. Amen.*

Day 21. Ecclesiastes 2:17-26. Solomon became discouraged by the work he had done. "For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all [his heritage, NKJV] ... to someone who has not worked for it (v.21). A man must eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work... which is from the hand of God... To the man who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness [joy, NKJV]" (v.24-26). Luke 3:21-37. At the baptism of Jesus, as He was praying the Holy Spirit descended on Him... "You are my Son, whom I love [beloved Son, NKJV]" This is followed by the genealogy of Joseph, His adoptive father, going back to "Adam the son of God". *Father, help us to believe You hear us as we pray and that Your Holy Spirit is upon us as you look on us as Your child. Help us to enjoy the work You have called us to do and prepare us to pass on this rich heritage to others.*

Day 22. Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments, includes God's promise to show His love [mercy, NKJV] to those who worship Him. Afterwards came thunder, lightning, smoke and a trumpet blast which scared the people and they asked Moses to speak to them, not God Himself! Luke 22:53, Jesus confirms there will be times when "darkness reigns" [the power of darkness, NKJV]. *Dear God, continue Your work of purification in*

us because of the darkness we experience of past sins as well as present sins and also help us in our attempts to worship You.

Day 23. Ezekiel 10, the vision of wheels within wheels (v.10), is in connection with God's glory departing from Jerusalem. Those who lament and renounce any connection associated with detestable things [abominations, NKJV] will receive a mark on the forehead to be spared punishment (9:4). John 17:20-26 (repeated from 18/1/20) records the prayer of Jesus for those who believe in Him and for those who believe in Him through them (v.20) ... "in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them" (v.26). May we heed both the Old and New Testament prophets. *Lord Jesus, in these last days, keep us aware of Your love and Your Father's love for us and enable us to reflect Your love back to You and to others. Amen.*

Day 24. 1 Kings 11. When Solomon turned away from God the way was prepared for enemies of Israel in Egypt and Damascus and also within Israel itself, but God spared Jerusalem and the tribe of Judah "for the sake of His servant David". Mark 8:33, Jesus warned Peter, "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." *Lord Jesus, whilst familiar enemies surround us and are at work within us, help us to fix our eyes on You in order to follow the ways of God, not of men, and be more effective in ministry. Amen.*

Day 25. Haggai 2:19 says that even for a defiled people "from this day on I will bless you". This is in the context of continuing to rebuild the House of the Lord, and God choosing Zerubbabel to rule at that time. Luke 16:31 is a warning to hear the Word of God through Moses and the Prophets in order to prepare us to trust in the One who rose from the dead. *Father, help me to value what You say in your OT prophecies and see clearly their fulfilment through Christ and also through You raising up leaders of Your choosing.*

Day 26. 2 Chronicles 36:1-3 warns us that God's leaders (Josiah and his son Jehoahaz) can be quickly deposed by outside influences (Egypt). *Lord, it is evident you allowed recent political leaders to be deposed. Open our eyes to what You are doing now in re-establishing Your role in our nation.* 1 Peter 2:24-25 warns we were like sheep going astray before Jesus "bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By His wounds [stripes, NKJV] we have been healed." *Dear Lord, help us daily to follow Your leading so that Your suffering was not in vain.*

Day 27. 1 Kings 11:21-25 records that from the outset, rebels positioned themselves after the death of King David to cause trouble for Israel in Solomon's reign, particularly from the direction of Damascus. Luke 17:5-10 records the disciples as apostles who asked Jesus to increase their faith to which He responded by saying they only needed a little faith to perform great miracles (v.6) but it was important to stay humble and say to themselves, "We are unworthy servants [unprofitable, NKJV]; we have only done our duty." *Lord, keep us faithful in times of change without fearing the gathering clouds of those who oppose the extension of Your Kingdom, nor taking credit for the miracles of Your grace and mercy. Amen.*

Day 28. Joel 2:17-19a says, "Let those who minister before the LORD (Yahweh) weep" (on the way to the altar). "Let them say, 'Spare Your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations [give Your heritage to reproach, NKJV]. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" ' Then the Lord will be jealous [zealous] for His land and take pity on His people. The Lord will reply to them [His people] ..." Luke 21:25-28 gives Christ's warning of the end times. *Lord, enable us to draw ever closer to You whilst showing prayerful and practical concern for family and church and nation and Israel and our calling in ministry. Amen.*

Day 29. Deuteronomy 11:13-21 advises us to "faithfully obey the commands ... to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and soul then (v.13) ... then I will provide..." (v.15). "Be careful or you will be enticed to turn away..." (v.16). "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds..." (v.18). "Teach them to your children..." (v.19). "Write them on your doorframes and gates so that your days and the days of your children may be many..." (v.20-21). 2 Corinthians 8:14 suggests if we give to others in times of plenty they will give to us in times of need. *Lord, continue your invitation to be generous in worshipping You in all circumstances and occasions and learn to be generous to others so that Your blessing may flow to and fro without hindrance.*

Day 30. Isaiah 65:22b-23 says (NKJV): "My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." *Thank you God for every new beginning in Christ. Amen.* Acts 17:17. Paul used language of the day to address Jews, God-fearing Gentiles and the heathen in Athens. *Lord, may we address others free from religious jargon in a way that relates to needs.*

Day 31. Isaiah 36:21, the people remained silent under provocation of their enemies from Assyria until God told them what to say (next chapter). Mark 3:31-34 says that Jesus declined to respond to His mother and brothers. *Lord, in seeking the way forward for ministry and our country, make sure we keep silent until you intervene for the wonderful things You have ahead for our nation, our churches, our families and our ministries the world over. Amen.*

Day 32. Joshua 6:24-27 records the final destruction of Jericho, the curse on anyone who tries to rebuild it, the salvation of Rahab & family and God's blessing upon Joshua. Hebrews 12:4-6 warns that if you struggle against sin you haven't resisted hard enough and forgotten you are a son of God. "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline... because He disciplines those He loves" (Proverbs 3:11-12) for whom Jesus was punished. *Dear God, forgive us for the times we still fail the discipline of Your salvation and righteousness. Thank you that we are your children and Your own Son is our Saviour who was punished in our place for our sins. Amen.*

Day 33. Psalm 72 requests God's blessings for the monarch to reign in justice and righteousness, defending the afflicted, saving the children of the needy and crushing the oppressor (v.1-4). "May people ever pray for him/her" (v.15). "All nations will be blessed through him/her" (v.17). Mark 3:11. Whenever evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down and cried out, "You are the Son of God!" *May the Spirit of Jesus reside in us such that evil spirits will depart from us. May this also be true of our leaders that they may reign victoriously in righteousness and with compassion for the needy so that their reign will be a blessing to all people and all nations. Amen.*

Day 34. Job 6:14-29 reveals how Job struggled with his relationship with God and his friends argued with him instead of being kind to him. Luke 22:37-38 Jesus predicted His suffering that was necessary for God's purpose to be fulfilled in Him and then told His disciples off for wanting to fight with swords against those who hindered the purposes of God. *Father God, help us to guard against wrong reactions when we struggle in fear of what lies ahead. Grant us trustworthy friends and family to grow together in faith and peace and joy.*

Day 35. 2 Chronicles 34:31-32 says that the king in Jerusalem made everyone promise to follow the Lord God Almighty and His commands. Revelation 12:12 warns that the devil knows the time is short and he is "filled with fury". *Father God, forgive our fear and dread of the end times and help us to share Your love and truth to family, friends and the rest of the world whilst there is yet time, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Day 36. Psalm 146 tells us to praise the Lord God Almighty – sing praises as long as we live. "Blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD [as] his God." Matthew 27:27-33. Not just one or a few but many mocked Jesus and derided Him for believing He was "King of the Jews". *Lord, while I have breath and freedom to do so, help me to praise You and not fear those who reject or mock the truth and hinder its proclamation. Amen.*

Day 37. 2 Chronicles 9:15-31 records the extent of Solomon's wealth and influence from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines to Egypt and Lebanon before it was lost after his death. 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 warns not to worship anything but God alone. *Father, keep me focused on worshipping you alone through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Help me to keep faithful to my calling and persevere to the end. Amen.*

Day 38. Numbers 21:34 (and elsewhere) Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty, said to Moses, "Do not be afraid". Matthew 9:9, Jesus spotted Matthew, a tax collector, and told him, "Follow Me". *Father God, You have called and appointed and anointed us in ministry; help us not to fear, but to go forward in faith with the loving kindness of Your Son, my Saviour, within us. Amen.*

Day 39. Deuteronomy 13:3-4 says "the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul... serve Him [only]." Luke 5:30-32 says that Jesus was asked why He ate and drank with sinners. His answer was to say He came to call sinners to repentance and meet the needs of the sick (in body, mind or spirit). *Father God, I want to love and serve You more whilst meeting the needs of others, so prepare us all to share in the life and calling of Jesus and then minister to the needy with love and patience. Amen.*

Day 40. Isaiah 42:10-13 encourages us to "sing to the LORD a new song... you islands and all who live in them... Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim His glory in the islands... With a shout, He will triumph over His enemies." John 14:28-30 encourages us to love Jesus and be glad that He came to Earth, suffered, died and returned in glory to His Heavenly Father so that we may believe in Him. *Father, help us to see clearly you have done everything for our salvation and pray for those who believe and yet fall short of understanding and end up being disobedient to Your will and provision. Show us how to minister to other believers in need, but only with your authority in the name of Jesus. Show us how to sing praises to You and how to pray for this to happen everywhere. Amen.*

Day 41. Psalm 106:12-23 tells how the Children of Israel believed God's promises and sang His praise but soon forgot the miracles He had done nor "waited for His counsel" but "gave in to their craving" such that God would have destroyed them but for Moses pleading "to keep His wrath from destroying them". Colossians 4:7-9 tells how Paul sent Tychicus and Onesimus to find out what was happening to the believers and to tell them of his own circumstances. *Father, forgive us when we ignore or wander from Your truth in a way that deserves punishment; instead, through your mercy in Christ, let us seek to understand and meet each others' needs in love but steer clear of those who you do not mean to be part of our life.*

Day 42. Ezekiel 48:14 instructs that the portion of land for the priests must not pass into the hands of others because it is holy to the Lord and is the best of the land. Acts 9:1-5 records how Saul met Jesus and was told where to go to wait for further instructions. *Lord, help me to rejoice in all things you have provided and wait on you for further instructions.*

Day 43. 1 Samuel 17:45-47 records what David said to Goliath and how "the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel and will see that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord God Almighty saves, for the battle is the Lord's." Luke 22:39-46 tells how Jesus prayed before his arrest and angels ministered to him but the disciples fell asleep. Jesus told them "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation". *Dear God, help us to remember always that the battle is Yours but we must remain alert and on our feet and in prayer at all times, ready to fight. And also enable us to be aware of Your ministering angels. Amen.*

Day 44. Jeremiah 30 speaks of the time when God will restore His people Israel (v.3). John 16:8 gives the promise of Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to "expose the guilt of the world" in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement. *Lord Jesus, in Your mercy and through Your Holy Spirit power, send revival and hope in troubled times. Amen.*

Day 45. 1 Chronicles 7:20-29 gives the line from Joseph, son of Jacob called Israel, and Joshua, son of Nun. 2 Peter 3:11-13 reminds us to live holy and godly lives as we look forward to the End Times and its destructive power and "a new Heaven and Earth, the home of righteousness". *Father, thank you for the records and teachings in your Bible: help us to remember important truths and events and to understand these things in these final days, to Your glory. Amen.*

Day 46. Jeremiah 23:3-4 is given the promise from God that the remnant of believers will be gathered together from scattered places and they will be fruitful. Luke 1:76-79 gives Zechariah's prophecy over John the Baptist who will prepare the way for the Messiah "to bring the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins because of the tender mercy of our God... and in the shadow of [His] death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." *Father God, bring these ancient promises and prophecies into fulfilment for Your glory. And keep reminding us of the value of prayer and fasting. Amen.*

Day 47. Daniel 11 was warned about kings who no-one can stand against (v.16) but they existed only until "the appointed time" (v.27). Matthew 19:18-19, Jesus quotes the words of the Torah, "not to murder, commit adultery, steal or lie but to honour your parents and love your neighbour." *Father, help us to be faithful to*

your word to the end, despite the battles around us, and live respecting others in the power of Your Spirit through the death and resurrection of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

Day 48. Psalm 145:19-20 says, "The Lord God Almighty fulfils the desires of those who fear Him. The Lord watches over all who love Him." Luke 10:38-42, Martha chooses to sit at the feet of Jesus to listen to what He has to say "and it will not be taken away from her". *Lord, keep us at it to listen and obey and complete the ongoing task of Your teaching ministry. Help us to take in what you convey to us as a blessing to Yourself and to others. Amen.*

Day 49. Leviticus 23:33-36. Observe holy days free from "regular work". Acts 7:55 Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, saw the glory of God with Jesus standing at his right side. *Dear God, help us to believe the best is yet to come in worship and service and suffering for the sake of the Kingdom that Jesus our Saviour established on Earth. Amen.*

Day 50. Psalm 68:32-35 says, "Sing to God, O kingdom of the Earth, sing praise to the Lord God Almighty... You are awesome..." Acts 8:14-17 records the conversions in Samaria of those who rejected the Jews but accepted the Jewish Messiah and they were baptised in water and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. *Father God, open our eyes to the amazing things You are doing in these days. Amen.*

Day 51. Numbers 15:30-31 reminds us that anyone who sins defiantly must be cut off from other believers and leave him alone with his guilt. Acts 11:19-21. The Apostles began to preach to the Gentiles as well as the Jews and "the Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed." *Lord, help us to be strong under temptation and effective witnesses to both believers and non-believers. Amen.*

Day 52. Daniel 9:15-16 tells how Daniel pleads with Almighty God to turn his anger away from Jerusalem and forgive their sins which have made them an object of scorn in the world. Hebrews 10:1-7 tells of Jesus Himself who said, "Here I am – I have come to do Your will, O God" (v.7), referring to the sacrifice of His own life that God prepared in place of animal sacrifices for forgiveness of sins. *Heavenly Father help us to enter fully into the provision of Your forgiveness and salvation and enabling in and through Christ's sacrifice and Holy Spirit power so that our calling and witness do not depend on our own strength and skills. Bless Jerusalem and prepare Your people to welcome their Messiah our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 53. Psalm 98:8-9 says, "Let the rivers clap their hands and the mountains sing for joy before God Almighty, for He comes to judge the Earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity." Luke 17:11-19 tells how the ten lepers met Jesus and called out to him, "Have pity on us!" and He told them to act in faith believing they were healed. (Only one of the ten returned to give thanks.) *Lord thank You for your word for today – help us to live by the power of Your Spirit, in praise of Your salvation and in faith for Your healing – with thankfulness. Amen.*

Day 54. Jeremiah 49 describes the downfall of Israel's enemies including Damascus. James 3:7-12 warns of the poison capable of the tongue, which praises God on the one hand but curses men who have been made in His image. *Lord, keep reminding us to show compassion to others and leave You to judge as and when needed. Amen.*

Day 55. Numbers 1 reveals at least 1½ million Israelites travelled to the Promised Land. Luke 9:57-62 tells us of the cost of following Jesus. *Lord, these Scriptures speak of many who started out on their journey in life but failed to complete. Help us to be faithful and endure and "overcome" (Revelation 3:11).*

Day 56. Ezekiel 23:27 God takes action to stop the longing for the remembrance of life in Egypt that corrupts His people. Luke 24:36-49 Jesus appears to His followers after his resurrection and "opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures" about Him (v44-45). *Lord, take action in our lives to make us more holy, to stop longing for things we must put behind us and continue to open our minds to the Scriptures regarding Your purposes in Christ. Amen.*

Day 57. Deuteronomy 30:1-6. God's promise of blessing to you and your family when you obey Him. Mark 13:11 Jesus instructs us to "just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking but the Holy Spirit. *Thank you Father for dealing with my past and establishing my future through Christ. Amen.*

Day 58. Psalm 150. "Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord!" Daniel 9:16-19 seeks God's forgiveness for all the sins of Jerusalem which has made His people an object of scorn and for His sake invites Almighty God to look with favour on the "desolate sanctuary" because of His great mercy and not to delay for the sake of the people who bear His name. Hear and act! *Amen to that!*

Day 59. Jeremiah 46:5 God confirms the enemies of Israel will flee in terror. This is after declaring to the moaning Baruch that He will bring disaster on all people but will spare His people (45:5). 2 Corinthians 1:1-2 gives Paul's blessing to "all the saints" through the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *Dear God, in these dangerous and confusing times, forgive our moanings and keep us faithful knowing you are all-powerful to destroy the works of the enemy and those who are against You. Help us then to be a blessing to Your people through Your grace and peace and that of Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Day 60. Micah 4:6-7 records the words of Yahweh which shows His concern for the "lame" (NIV) "halteth" [KJV] "crippled" [ICB] "disabled" [NIRV] "weak" [NLT]. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, God uses the weak and lowly to accomplish His purposes. Philippians 3:12-15 gives Paul's encouragement to live up to what we have already attained (v.15) by pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me (v.12), forgetting what is behind and straining for what is ahead (v.13) to win the prize (v.14). *Lord guide us not only to know how to relate to the KJV Bible but also what the other Bible versions say about possible ministry to the learning disabled and physically disabled. Amen.*

Day 61. Deuteronomy 24:9 says "You must follow carefully what I have commanded." Matthew 19:22 says that when the young man heard what Jesus had to say, he went away sad. *Lord, help us to distinguish between what You are saying and what others are saying to us and persevere with following Your calling whatever the personal sacrifice.*

Day 62. Daniel 9:13 calls us to repent – at the time of Coronavirus. Mark 3:34-35 says that Jesus regarded everyone who gathered round Him as important as His own family members. *Father, bring our nation and its leaders to repent and teach us to regard individuals as important in the way Jesus did.*

Day 63. Psalm 139:3-6 and 23-24 affirms the wonder of our Creator who sees and knows all things past, present and future including our innermost thoughts. "Search me O God; test me to see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way of everlasting life." John 12:27-28. Jesus wondered if he should ask to be delivered from "this hour" but knew how important it was to go ahead to bring glory to His Father. *Dear God, rid us of unnecessary thoughts, words and deeds and help us to persevere with Your calling, to Your glory. Amen.*

Day 64. 1 Samuel 2:6 Hannah says "The LORD brings death and makes alive." 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 reminds us that God has arranged the parts of our bodies "just as He wanted them to be" (v.18). *Lord, at this time of the Coronavirus epidemic, we put our trust in You for life, not death, and for Your nature to reside within in us to be a blessing to others and for Your glory. Amen.*

Day 65. Malachi 2 warns us to stay faithful to the God who created us in the same way a man should remain faithful to the wife of his youth, so "guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith" (v.15&16). John 15:14 Jesus said, "You are my friends if you do what I command." *Father, in these difficult and challenging times, help us to find ways to remain faithful to your eternal purposes and obedient to the call of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 66. Psalm 140:12-13 says the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy. 1 Thessalonians 1:2 records the strong opposition that occurred when "with the help of our God we dared to tell you the Gospel". Mostly Gentiles responded but also a few devout Jews at a time of strong opposition. *Father, at a time of great opposition to church meetings, help us to declare the Good News with Your daily instructions, that we might be salt and light to the poor and needy at a time when many will be out of work. Also to encourage the devout believers. Amen.*

Day 67. Isaiah 40 says, "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem that she has received from the LORD's hands double for all her sins (v.2)... and the glory of the LORD will be revealed and all mankind will see it" (v.5). "The grass

withers... but the word of our God stands for ever" (v.8). "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles" (v.31). James 5:15-16 is about effective prayer. *LORD, in this ever-changing situation caused by enemy attacks, reveal daily your plans for believers to withstand the darts of the enemy and be effective in prayer and action for our nation.*

Day 68. Numbers 33 gives the details written down by Moses of Israel's journey before entering the Promised Land. God told him to do it (v.2) for 40 years (v.38) with final instructions to possess the land and a severe warning to drive out all of its inhabitants (v.55). Luke 3:8-14. As part of his preparation for the coming of the Messiah, John the Baptist warns the people to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" followed by several examples of how different people can help others in different ways. *LORD, help us to note the things that matter to You and Your people and then take action fully and completely when instructed what to do. Thank you Jesus for Your sacrifice to save and empower us with Your Spirit. Amen.*

Day 69. Numbers 3:47 says some Israelites (273) were redeemed by paying money to the priests. The apostle Peter noted that we have not been redeemed "with perishable things such as silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Luke 22:38 shows the disappointment of Jesus when the disciples offered to fight for Him with their swords, not realising there was a spiritual battle being fought out, one in which God was in control. *Father God, help us to realise that serving You in Your army is not done with the help of money or with swords. We serve you through obeying the powerful work of Your Spirit in difficult times which is available to Your people today through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus – lest we hinder what You have purposed. May our nation's preparation to fight against the Coronavirus be considered in the light and the power unleashed through prayer! Amen.*

Day 70. Psalm 119:76-77 asks God for His unfailing love to comfort me "according to Your promise to Your servant and let Your compassion come to me that I may live, for Your Law [Word] is my delight." Luke 22:1-6 Judas plots to end the ministry of Jesus on Earth. Jesus said, "What is written about Me is reaching its fulfilment" (22:37). *Father, help us to appreciate Your Word and Your sacrifice in Jesus as the enemy seeks to destroy what You have planned from the beginning.*

Day 71. Exodus 5:22 records the plea of Moses to explain the purpose of God by asking, "Why have You brought trouble upon this people?" Moses receives the answer in 6:1. Luke 1:76-79 records the prophecy given for John the Baptist "who will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him." It goes on to say "...to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins because of the tender mercy of our God by which the rising sun will come to us from Heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death." *Father, forgive our sins for permitting much moral decline in our nation and hear and answer our pleas to remove us from trouble and enable us to be free as a nation under Your control. Encourage our leaders to speak when You are ready with a message of hope and to prepare the way of salvation through Christ alone. Amen.*

Day 72. Haggai 2:6-19 warns that God will "shake all nations" until Messiah comes (v.7). Haggai also warned that "a person is defiled by contact with a dead body ... so it is with this people and this nation" (v.13-14). Yet God chose to bless His defiled people (v.19). Acts 9:28-31 records that for a time Paul had freedom to preach in Jerusalem but had to go back home when his life was threatened (v.29-30). Then followed a time of peace and encouragement for the church which grew in numbers and "lived in the fear of the Lord" (v.31). *Dear God, help us through times of persecution and danger and being forced to stay at home. Also, bless us with times of peace and encouragement – and a willingness to honour and respect You in good times and bad, witnessing, and experiencing church growth, while looking for Messiah's return. Amen.*

Day 73. Isaiah 47:15 says God warns His people not to depend on those they have "laboured with and trafficked with" since their lives are "in error" and there is "not one that can save you". John 19:38-39 proves that Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus and despite fearing the Jews, arranged with Pilate, with the help of Nicodemus, to place the body of Jesus in his own tomb. *Dear Father God, deliver us from yielding to sin so that our secret lives will be blessed by You and serve Your purposes in establishing Your Kingdom on Earth through the death and resurrection of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, as with Joseph and Nicodemus. And may our nation quickly separate itself from trading with those who are "in error" with their hidden agendas. Amen.*

Day 74. Joshua 8 confirms that the enemy was defeated at Ai by obeying God's word (v.2). Luke 9:46-48 tells how Jesus wants us to welcome immature believers into our lives and in so doing we welcome Him. *Lord, help us to obey and defeat the enemy when You give the prompt. Also, help us to respect what others say in case I am rejecting You and Your word.*

Day 75. Deuteronomy 9:26-29 tells how, on the way to the Promised Land, Moses pleaded with God not to destroy His special people (v.26) but, for the sake of the faithful in past times, to overlook the stubbornness of the people, their wickedness and their sin (v.27)... "for they are Your inheritance that You brought out by Your great power" (v.29). *Lord, help us as a nation to remain focused on the way to our Promised Land; forgive us and overlook those who have turned away from worshipping you and for the sake of those Christian leaders of our nation in times past, fulfil your purposes now in this nation. Amen.* Acts 12:1-5 records a time of great persecution and death for some (e.g. James) and imprisonment for others (e.g. Peter) ... "but the church was earnestly praying to God" (v.5). *Dear God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, forgive the terrible sins within and without Your church and heed the prayers of the faithful few to release us from premature death and lockdown and bring about Your revival for Your glory and to restore Your purpose for us in blessing the world, especially Your people Israel. Amen!"*

Day 76. Joshua 12&13 records Israel's defeat of the tribes east of Jordan (12:1-6) and west of Jordan (12:7-24) and how many tribes were left to defeat when Joshua had grown old (13:1-5). God then told Joshua, "I Myself will drive them out but be sure to allocate the land to Israel for an inheritance" (13:6). *Thank You God for this example of Your intervention in sweeping away ungodly people. Enable your people to clarify "core convictions" and fully inherit these favoured islands and highlands in Your name. Amen.* Acts 27:27-32 records Paul's shipwreck after huge storms had driven them from Cyprus to Malta. The men took soundings as they approached land, then dropped anchor and prayed (v.28-29). They also obeyed Paul and did not try to escape in the lifeboat but instead ate food and let the shipwreck happen through which all 276 lives were saved. *Lord Jesus, may Your own experience and that of Paul's confirm we are safe in every storm if we follow what God, through the Holy Spirit, is saying through our spiritual leaders, not through men who do not know You. Raise up Your godly men and women today to keep us safe with good advice and awareness of your provision as we "take soundings" and so save us all. Amen.*

Day 77. Job 5:16-17 gives a statement of faith by Job that the poor have hope against injustice. Also, "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." *Father God, teach us daily to have faith in and fellowship with Jesus, Your Son, my Saviour and prepare us to live by faith in hope even under Your correcting Spirit.* James 5:20 warns us to take seriously our yes's and no's. *Again, Father help us to grow in faith and in fellowship with Jesus our Lord and take seriously our calling to care for others by sharing the Good News.*

Day 78. Jeremiah 32 records the time of "sword, famine and plague" (v.24) when God delighted in telling Jeremiah to buy a field for his future residence as evidence of His everlasting love. Mark 7:14 "Listen to Me and understand", confirms the importance of teaching the words of Jesus to understand the truth of God and the world He created and His provision of salvation for all who believe in His Son. *Father God, keep encouraging us with words of understanding to share with others and not to be dismayed by Coronavirus limitations but refocus on Bible teaching in new ways. Lord, encourage churches and ministries to use alternative technology to reach more people with Your truth in song and preaching from the Bible, unhindered by "sword, famine and plague".*

Day 79. Deuteronomy 8:1-5 warns us to "be careful to follow every command I am giving you" (present tense) ... during desert times "to humble you and test you and [for you to realise] what was in your heart" and "not to live on bread alone but on every word [manna] that comes from the mouth of the Lord God Almighty". Acts 10:9-23 records that God's vision on the roof top to Peter occurred three times and while he meditated, God brought the messengers from Cornelius to his house and the Holy Spirit instructed him to get up and go down and greet them, "For I have sent them". *Lord God, encourage me with repeated visions to get up and go so that I may prove what is the fulfilment of the vision You have confirmed to me many times, and to suffer gladly the times of testing which lead to understanding the word of God which is Your heavenly manna. Amen.*

Day 80. Joshua 3:7 "And the Lord God Almighty said to Joshua, 'Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of Israel, so that they may know that I am with you'." Acts 7:11-13 records how many people in Cyprus followed Simon the magician but when Philip preached the Good News, they were converted and baptised. Simon himself believed and was astonished by the great miracles. *Heavenly Father, send us great preachers of the Good News who will bring miracles and converts in the name of Jesus and exalt the names of believers in the eyes of the people to bring revival and glory to You. Yes! Amen.*

Day 81. Deuteronomy 9:26-29 tells how, on the way to the Promised Land, Moses pleaded with God not to destroy His special people (v.26) but, for the sake of the faithful in past times, to overlook the stubbornness of the people, their wickedness and their sin (v.27)... "for they are Your inheritance that You brought out by Your great power" (v.29). *Lord, help us as a nation to remain focused on revival, and forgive us and overlook those who have turned away from worshipping you and for the sake of those Christian leaders of our nation in times past, fulfil your purposes now in this nation Amen.* Revelation 12:10-12 provides hope of victory over the devil who is "filled with fury because he knows that his time is short" (v.12) He will be overcome "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of testimony" of believers who did not "shrink from death" (v.11). This will bring "salvation, power, the Kingdom of God and the authority of His Christ" (v.10). *Wow! Bring it on, Lord, in these days of great punishment and persecution!*

Day 82. Believe that the impossible is possible with God. Micah 6:13-15 warns that God "has begun to destroy you... because of your sins... You have observed the practices of Ahab's house." Note, however, that God will "bring me out into the light" (7:9). *Dear God, forgive our leaders for observing the practices of other religions in the name of multifaith unity. Help us to re-establish the Ten Commandments in our nation and to look forward to the days of Your enlightenment.* Acts 7:53-54 says Stephen accused the religious leaders of not obeying the Mosaic Law. They were furious when they heard this. *Lord, shorten the days of fury caused by leaders who refute Your truth and re-establish the days of obedience through repentance and revival. Amen.*

Day 83. 2 Kings 9:36 to 10:36. The wife and family of Ahab died as prophesied, along with "ministers of Baal". (Note yesterday's OT reading.) *Heavenly Father, do not let us go back to worshipping false gods and leaders whose end is death but uphold those who have walked in the power of your Spirit in past times whose legacy is life.* Luke 24:53-27 confirms the importance Jesus attached to the OT writings regarding the fulfilment of God's purpose in Himself. *Dear God, keep us faithful in Your Word to proclaim that Jesus is the focus of the whole Bible and we need to reject those who teach or practice otherwise.*

Day 84. Establish a "God place" in our lives for prayer and praise. Deuteronomy 15:16 instructs us to bless those who are freely devoted to you. *Lord help me to appreciate those who are devoted to me – open my eyes!* 2 Timothy 3:1-9 speaks of the last days with its "terrible times" with people who love money and influence but not God, who "have a form of godliness but denying its power" (v.4-5) plus those with "depraved minds" e.g. terrorists, whose "folly will be clear to everyone" (v.8-9). *Help us Lord Jesus to know You more so that others will be challenged by what Jesus thinks of them instead of what we see in them. Amen. Pho*

Day 85. Seek a fresh understanding of the importance of the cross which demonstrates both the cost of sin and the cure for sin: Christ did it for me. Ezekiel 3:2 tells that Ezekiel was made to eat the Word of God written on scrolls before being transported to the remnant of Israel in exile to challenge them with the truth. The letter to Philemon by Paul tells him the truth that his former servant is now a follower of Jesus and should be forgiven for anything done in the past and accepted as a brother in Christ (v.16). *Lord Jesus, help me to realise that your death on the cross brings not only forgiveness and salvation but fellowship amongst believers. Father God, bring Your transforming truth into our lives, our marriages and relationships, family and friends, church, town, nation, the world, through the power of the cross in compassionate ministry and fellowship, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 86. Maundy Thursday. "Oh dearly, dearly, has He loved, and we must love Him too, and trust in His redeeming blood, and try His works to do." "Ask God for opportunities to share the importance of the cross with others." Exodus 25:31-40 describes the design of the lamp stands to be used in the Tabernacle and later

in the Temple which is part of John's vision in Revelation 1 on the light of Christ. John 16:8 describes the purpose of the Holy Spirit to "guide you into truth" including "what is yet to come".

Day 87. Kneel at the foot of the cross. Malachi 3:6,18 says "I the Lord do not change." ... "You will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked." James 4:8-10 says, "Come near to God and He will come near to you... Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up." *Everlasting Father God, help me to join others who find comfort at the foot of the cross and receive strength to go on believing and witnessing and caring – as Jesus did for those around Him to the very end of His sacrificial life, even on the cross.*

Day 88. Paul reminds us "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." Nehemiah 5:12-13 records how the rich people of God gave back what they had taken from the poor in money, grain, wine and oil and promised not to tax them again. "The whole assembly praised the Lord God Almighty." Acts 9:1-6 says how Paul at first persecuted the believers and took them as prisoners but Jesus stopped him on the road to Damascus and told him, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." *Lord Jesus, help us to realise that it is You that lives in us and forgive the times we have been unkind to fellow believers. Let Your compassion for the poor and needy flow out from us in love and resurrection glory. Amen.*

Day 89. Judges 16:23-31 records how Sampson killed more enemies of Israel when he died than when he was alive. *Spare us O God the destructive work of the enemy in order to help save the righteous in fulfilment of Your calling.* Luke 21:25-28 warns about the signs in the skies and the roaring sea in the last days when "your redemption is drawing near". *Heavenly Father, do not let us become demoralised in the last days but ever watchful, that we may be able to stand firm before Jesus our Messiah when He returns (v.34-36).*

Day 90. Numbers 23-24. Four times Balaam refused to obey Balak and curse God's people Israel, then he prophesied to Balak that in years to come, "a star will come out of Jacob ... and crush Moab" (24:17). John 6:24-27 says how the crowds were searching for Jesus, but He knew they were seeking after more food to eat. He told them, "Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life..." *Lord Jesus, feed us on the everlasting food You give from the Father and help us to be a blessing to Your people with visions of hope for the future. Amen.*

Day 91. Numbers 20:15-21 shows how Moses witnessed to the Edomites what God had planned for Israel, but he was refused entry on the way to the Promised Land so went another way (v.21). 2 Peter 1:3-21 records Peter's determination to remind fellow believers of their calling (v.5-7) so long as he lived, "that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things" (v.15)... which "men spoke from God as they were carried along [moved, NKJV] by the Holy Spirit" (v.21). *Father God, help guide us by Your Spirit into faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness and love listed by Peter, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, with assurance of knowing Your plan and the safe way for our life day by day. Amen.*

Day 92. 1 Samuel 30:24-25 says that King David did not listen to those who were unkind to their fellow Israelites who had been too weary to go to battle against the Philistines but instead made a statue to share the spoil from wars equally amongst all his men. Hebrews 10:1-10 teaches that "the Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming" (v.1), quoting from Psalms about Messiah: "I have come to do Your will, O God" (v.6b) meaning the offering of His life as a sacrifice for all and for all time (v.10). *Heavenly Father, thank You again for recording divine principles in the Old Testament that are fulfilled through Christ in the New. Help us to show equal compassion to all believers and seekers. Amen.*

Day 93. Isaiah 26:20-21 warns of the need to go indoors until God's wrath has passed by ... to punish the people of the Earth for their sins. (These same words were sent in by Penny Byrne, Manna UK co-founder, 22nd March.) John 18:31-32 explains why the Jews sent Jesus to be tried by Pilate "so that the kind of death He was going to die would be fulfilled". *Father God, enable us always to see Your "bigger picture" to understand what Your profound purpose is for punishment and suffering and how You prevail on circumstances to ensure the fulfilment of salvation through Christ's death and resurrection for this age. Amen.*

Day 94. Job 17:8-9 believed strongly that "the innocent are aroused against the ungodly [and] the righteous will hold to their ways and ... will grow stronger." Acts 8:12 records that when Philip "preached the Good News of the Kingdom of God [in] the name of Jesus Christ, [the people] were baptised, both men and women." *Dear God, help us, like Job, to recognise and reject poor advice and, like Philip, to witness faithfully to non-believers of Your saving grace through Christ alone. Amen.*

Day 95. 1 Samuel 12:12-13 records the moment when Samuel presented Israel with God's choice of a king they craved for, with the warning to remain faithful in serving God. 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 gives Paul's testimony that he did not visit the church to bring superior wisdom "except Jesus Christ and Him crucified". *Dear God, help us to submit to others who are more experienced than we are but always to recognise our calling in life is to worship and follow Jesus who sacrificed His life for our sins. Amen.*

Day 96. 1 Chronicles 2:3-17 records the ancestry of King David through Judah, Perez, Boaz and Jesse, preparing the way for Israel's Messiah and the Saviour of the world. John 16:5-11 records the words of Jesus to prepare His followers to expect His Holy Spirit power to expose the guilt of the world regarding sin and the need for God's righteousness and also with judgement of His enemy "the prince of this world [who] now stands condemned". *Father God, may we continue to read in Your Holy Word the history of Your created world and its chosen people, to know Your purpose in Jesus Your Son our Saviour to establish Your righteousness and to stand firm as the enemy, who is condemned, tries to attack God's people. Amen.*

Day 97. Numbers 26:52 lays down the principle that God's provision is according to our needs. Mark 15:42-47 notes that Pilate was surprised that Jesus died so quickly on the cross which permitted time for Joseph of Arimathea to transport His body to a tomb for burial before the Sabbath, as witnessed by two women. *Thank you Father for caring for Your own flesh and blood to shorten the suffering of our Saviour on our behalf and providing Him with a borrowed tomb. May we trust in Your love at all times, in joy and in sorrow, that Your provision throughout life will always be adequate and according to our needs. Amen.*

Day 98. 1 Chronicles 1 gives the complete genealogy of the three sons of Noah down to Abraham and Abraham's offspring through Hagar and Keturah, known to us as the Arab descendants of Abraham, and his offspring through Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, known to us as the Israelite descendants of Abraham. Luke 24:36-49 records the words of Jesus after his resurrection: "Peace be with you" (v.36); "Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds?" (v.38); "Touch Me and see" (v.39); "Do you have anything to eat?" (v.41); "This is what is written [in the Scriptures] that the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (v.46-47); "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (v.49). *Father God, help us to understand your love and mercy in saving, through Noah, the world You had created and in saving for eternity, through Jesus, all those who believe in Him. Grant us Your peace and forgive us our doubts and fears and empower us to "preach to all nations" Your Good News. Amen.*

Day 99. Judges 8:28-35 says that "during the lifetime of Gideon the land [of Israel] enjoyed peace for forty years (v.28). "No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the gods of Baal ... and did not remember Yahweh the Lord their God who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. They also failed to show kindness to the family of Gideon" (v.33-35). Romans 12:17-21 says "Live at peace with everyone" (v.18) and "do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good" (v.21). *Heavenly father, help us at all times to think of others in kindness and not entertain selfish desires that lead to evil ways. Help us to uphold what Jesus said and did in our daily living. Amen.*

Day 100. Genesis 50:17 says that Joseph wept when he received the message from Jacob, his father, to forgive the wrong done to him by his ten older brothers many years before, acknowledging they were all

servants of Almighty God. Acts 4:12-22 explains how the religious leaders were unable to stop the power and truth of salvation and healing in the name of Jesus "because all the people were praising God for what had happened" (v.21). *Heavenly Father, enable us to remove all hindrances to the power of the Spirit of Jesus at work in our midst by being kind and forgiving to one another and acknowledging we are all servants of Almighty God. Amen.*

Day 101. Psalm 59:12 says, "With God we shall gain the victory and He will trample down our enemies." 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says "Never tire of doing what is right." *Dear God, forgive us for the times we become discouraged during Coronavirus lockdown. Thank you that Your word encourages us to keep the faith and to overcome (Revelation 3:11,12).*

Day 102. Jeremiah 39 records the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple because the king criticised and refused to obey the words of God through the prophet Jeremiah. Matthew 21:12-17 records the anger of Jesus over the desecration of the Temple by money changers who had made God's house a den of thieves (v.13). He made it clear that His Father's house was intended for prayer (v.13) and praise (v.16). *Lord, help us to offer you our prayer and praise and not our criticism of people and circumstances. So help us to avoid the punishment we deserve and instead build righteous and loving relationships with Yourself and others at all times and in all situations, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 103. 1 Kings 15 contrasts the good and evil kings of both Judah and the ten northern tribes of Israel. Luke 24:38 records the second thing Jesus said to His confused followers after His resurrection, "Why are you troubled and why do you doubt?" *Father God, encourage us to continue to pray for righteous leaders and to give all our troubles to You so that we may find joy in serving the risen Saviour in faith, free from doubts about His victory on the cross or concerns over the events that are happening around us. Amen.*

Day 104. 1 Chronicles 9:33 explains the importance of musicians in the Temple who were "exempt from other duties". Hebrews 10:15-18 confirms that the Holy Spirit, through Jeremiah, said "I will put My laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds... Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:33-34). *Thank You Father for wanting to use to the full the gifts we have in serving You and in encouraging other believers to worship You. Captivate our minds and thoughts as well as our hearts and feelings. Empower us to put our sins firmly behind us as we trust in Your total forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Day 105. Psalm 22:27-28 tells us that all the families of the nations will turn to Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty, since He has "dominion over all". Acts 7:35-36 gives the words of Stephen who reminded the Jewish leaders that Moses, who was sent by God to be their ruler and deliverer, was rejected by many of the people. *Heavenly Father, thank you for forgiving us through Jesus our past rebellion and now fill the Earth with families of faithful believers under the leaders of your choosing. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 106. Genesis 4:6-7 tells us that God asked Cain why he gets so downcast, for if he does what is right, God will accept him and there is no place for anger towards his brother Abel. Matthew 12:50 reminds us that Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." *Help us Father to always first listen to You in fulfilling our calling with family, friends and neighbours and not to despair or get angry with those closest to us. Amen.*

Day 107. 2 Chronicles 34:30-33 records how King Josiah arranged for "all the people from the least to the greatest" to listen to the reading of the Covenant of Almighty God and got them to obey the words and also to remove all the "detestable idols from all the territories belonging to Israel". Titus 3:11-14 gives Paul's explanation of the grace of God, "to say 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our

great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and purify to Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good." *Father God, establish Your word with authority across our nation for all to obey, from the least to the greatest, and remove false gods and teachings and give assurance of forgiveness, salvation and eternal hope through the victory of Jesus our Saviour, who suffered on the cross for our sins. Amen.*

Day 108. 2 Chronicles 6:16-33 is the prayer of Solomon for Almighty God to fulfil His promises (v.17) even as he expresses his doubts that God will choose to "dwell on Earth among men" (v.18). Yet he perseveres in prayer for God to pay attention to what he asks as he pleads for mercy (v.19), and for God to punish the guilty and be fair to the innocent (v.23). He asks that the nation will confess their sins and ask to be forgiven when defeated by an enemy or when there is famine or plague (v.26,28) even to answer the prayer of one individual (v.29) to "hear from Heaven... so that they will fear You and walk in Your ways" (v.30-31). Solomon also prayed this prayer for the foreigner in their midst so that God would show them mercy and "all the people of the earth may know Your name and fear You" (v.33). The Epistle of Jude ends with the doxology (v.24-25) to remind everyone that it is through Jesus Christ we are able to stop falling into sin so that we can be presented before the glorious presence of God Almighty "without fault and with great joy... now and for evermore! Amen." *Heavenly Father, thank you for Your word and for Your promises and loving faithfulness to our nation in the past. Hear the prayers of your people, whether in isolation or in large numbers, to forgive us for all that is wrong in our nation now that deserves Your punishment and to bless us with good times and to re-establish Your righteous judgement as You dwell among us, that even the foreigners in our midst will testify of Your mercy so that all the world may know You and through Christ our Saviour be in Your presence for evermore. Amen.*

Day 109. Numbers 16 gives the account of Korah and 250 others who did not want to go to the Promised Land and rebelled against Moses and against God. They were destroyed by an earthquake. Then the rest of the people complained against Moses (v.41) and God sent a plague until Aaron "made atonement for them... but 47,000 people died" (v.46-49). Philippians 3:10-13 says "I want to know Christ and the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His suffering... forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead." *Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for making atonement for us. Show us in this ungodly age what You have already done and will do to help us turn our backs on sin and rebellion and go forward with our Heavenly Father's calling and purpose, whatever the personal cost during times of persecution or punishing plague. Amen.*

Day 110. Ezekiel 15:7 warns God's people that even if they survive the fire, there is a risk that the fire will yet consume them because of their unfaithfulness. Revelation 22:12-18 testifies that Jesus says "I am coming soon! My reward is with Me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done... I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds [changes] anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book." *Father God Your word often mentions plagues and other forms of punishment for unfaithfulness. Re-establish Your reformation through the preaching of Christ's eternal hope and salvation in His resurrection power! Amen.*

Day 111. Jeremiah 9:12-13 warned of much destruction "because they have forsaken My Law which I set before them; they have not obeyed Me" (v.13). "What man is wise enough to understand this?" (v.12). Romans 13:8-10 gives Paul's instruction to "love one another... for love is the fulfilment of the Law." *Heavenly Father, help us to understand why Your people often fear the attacks of Satan more than the punishment of God Almighty. Help us to repent and live truly in Your will and provision, obeying what is right and righteous, with Jesus as our example and solution. Amen.*

Day 112. Malachi 3:6-12 says that "I the Lord do not change ... [but] you have turned away from My decrees. Return to Me and I will return to you... Then all the nations will call you blessed." John 8:16 Jesus said, "My decisions are right because I am not alone. I stand with the Father who sent Me." *Thank you Jesus*

for setting us the example of standing with God our Father so that all things we do will be right and not risk separation from His blessings - for ourselves or for others.

Day 113. Leviticus 11:43 warned Israel not to "make yourselves unclean or be made unclean" by failing to follow the word of God. Romans 3:9-24 reminds us that both "Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin" (v.9) and "the way of peace they do not know; there is no fear of God before their eyes" (v.17-18). "But now righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe... for 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" (v.22-24). *Thank you Father that You uphold the need for us to have faith in Your written word and faith in Christ the living Word. Enable us then to have faith in what we hear and understand Your Spirit is saying as we read the Bible and follow Jesus.*

Day 114. Jeremiah 47:4 records God's freedom from invasive Philistine forces, having promised Israel "I will discipline you, but only with justice", including punishment (46:28). 1 Corinthians 2:16 declares "We have the mind of Christ." *Father God, prepare us to have faith in the light of Your word to anticipate Your justice in all situations along with any necessary suffering for what we have done wrong or failed to do, so that we can drive out any invasive thoughts and more fully experience the mind of Christ through Your Spirit of Wisdom and peace He promised to all believers. Amen.*

Day 115. Psalm 106:28-33 explains how God's people provoked Him to anger "by their wicked deeds and a plague broke out among them" (v.29). "But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked" (v.30). Later, they angered the Lord God Almighty again and even wrong-footed His chosen leader Moses (v.32-33). Colossians 2:8-10 reveals Paul's concern that "no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." *Father God, in these days of stress and temptation to listen to human solutions, send a Phinehas among us to trust in Your divine wisdom and avoid wrong-footing your chosen leaders of today. Amen.*

Day 116. 1 Samuel 31 records the tragic end of the Old Testament Saul after going away from God's calling in life. Acts 9:1-5 confirms that the New Testament Saul sought permission at first from religious leaders to oppose the early evangelists who were being persecuted for their faith (9:2). This had the effect of moving them out from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria (8:1) in part fulfilment of God's purpose for them to "be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (1:8). However, Jesus stopped Saul's persecution plans in Damascus (9:3) and told him to wait there for instructions from God before joining the other Christians in evangelising the Gentiles in the rest of the world (9:15). *Lord Jesus, through Your Spirit, stop us from going away from God's purposes and encourage us instead to seek Him for our way ahead rather than trying to persuade others to fulfil our personal ambitions that might be contrary to your perfect will. Amen.*

Day 117. 1 Kings 6:11-19 records that God Almighty spoke to Solomon during the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, "If you follow my decrees ... and obey them, I will fulfil through you the promise I gave to David your father" (v.12). God also promised He would live among the people and not abandon them (v.13). Solomon finished building the Temple and created an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place (v.14-16) for the Ark of the Lord (v.19). Acts 24:17-19 explains that over 1000 years after Solomon built the first Temple, the apostle Paul came to Jerusalem to bring gifts and offerings but was accused falsely of breaking the Jewish Law and ended up having to appeal to Caesar to go to Rome for a fair trial (25:11). *Help us heavenly Father to understand from the events in history that despite conflicts caused by disobedience and religious traditions, the preaching of the Good News and true faith in You will prevail in the end. Show us how to find Your "inner sanctuaries" where we can regain Your promised peace and presence before going out to impact this rebellious world in the name of Christ. Amen.*

Day 118. Joshua 20:1-3 records how God established the need for “cities of refuge” for those who were unfairly persecuted when things went wrong. Revelation 22:12 confirms that Christ is returning soon and will give “rewards to everyone according to what is due.” *Father God, thank You for revealing 3500 years ago Your desire for us to find places of refuge. Meanwhile, we look forward to the return on Earth of Your Son, our Saviour, with blessings according to our works of love for You and Your people. Forgive the times we have disobeyed You or grown weary as we wait. Be our refuge for strength in times of trouble orchestrated by the enemy. Amen.*

Day 119. Ezekiel 17:22-24 prophesies how God will raise up His big plans from tiny shoots and destroy the big plans of mankind. Acts 7:30-36 tells how God raised up Moses to save His people from Egypt where he had been rejected forty years earlier. *Father God, You saved Moses as a tiny baby to achieve great things, so help us to trust You to bring fruit from the small things we can do in establishing your Kingdom. Help us to do this in the power of the Spirit of Christ who was born a helpless child destined to save us and the world from the sinful plans of mankind! Amen.*

Day 120. Deuteronomy 6:1-7 records the instructions of God given to Moses to teach and obey “so that your children after you may fear the LORD your God as long as you live... and be careful to obey, so that it might go well with you” (v.1-3). This must be done out of love for the LORD “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (v.5) and we must impress upon our children the Ten Commandments He gave in Chapter 5. “Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (v.7). 2 Corinthians 3:3 reveals in Paul’s letter his desire that his readers become “a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.” *Heavenly Father, change us through Your love in the sacrifice of Christ experienced for our sakes, that we become more like Him in fulfilling Your commandments to love You and to love others, especially our children. Amen.*

Day 121. Isaiah 37:20-22 records Hezekiah’s prayer to God Almighty to deliver His people from their enemy “so that all kingdoms on earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God.” Then through the prophet Isaiah, God said, “Because you have prayed to Me, this is the word the LORD has spoken...” Acts 28:30 confirms through Paul that “God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen! Boldly and without hindrance he preached of the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.” *Dear Lord God, there are many times in the Bible where your salvation was given to those who believed and asked. Thank you for your purpose from the beginning in Jesus, your Son, our Saviour. Raise up righteous people today to pray in faith for deliverance against evil and against plagues in the name of Jesus and for Your glory in all nations. Amen.*

Day 122. Ruth 1:6-22 describes how Naomi was convinced how the Lord God Almighty had allowed tragedy in her life. Yet events proved she was in the Lord’s will to start life over again by returning to Bethlehem in Judea (v.7). She also agreed that her daughter-in-law Ruth should go with her because of the love between them was stronger than the human sense of staying behind in Moab (v.16-18). Ruth promised that “Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.” 2 Timothy 2:19 confirms that despite arguments in the churches about Christian teaching, “God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription, ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ and everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” *Father God, Help us to admit our mistakes and make the right decisions in life and also encourage others to walk in the light of Your truth who have a strong sense of Your calling and not be distracted by human thoughts and ideas of what is right and wrong. Amen.*

Day 123. Proverbs 11:11 says, “Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.” Acts 25:5-6 records what Paul said on trial that “according to the strictest sect of our religion, I have lived a Pharisee and now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that

I am on trial today." *Father God, give hope to Your persecuted people that Your righteousness will prevail through them in our cities and nations to stop the destruction of our society by wicked people who refuse to walk in the light of Your truth. In the name of Jesus Christ and for His sake. Amen.*

Day 124. Malachi 3:6-12 records the words of God, "I, the Lord God Almighty, do not change... Return to Me and I will return to you" (v.6-7). God then invited His people to test His faithfulness by giving everything they had to Him to see how He would pour out much blessing (v.10-11). "Then all the nations will call you blessed" (v.12). 2 Corinthians 7 1-13 teaches us to realise that "sorrow leads to repentance... as God intended... Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret" (v.9-10). *Lord God, we sense from Your word that You just long to bless Your people. Forgive us for not obeying You. Enable us to return to You by committing everything in life into Your hands and then receiving Your salvation without regrets. Thank you for enabling us to prove your unchanging faithfulness since giving our lives fully to following Christ. Amen.*

Day 125. Deuteronomy 8:1-5 clarifies God's warning to "follow every command I am giving you, so that you may live and increase" (v.1). He also reminds us of the need for Him to "humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart" (v.2). "Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you" (v.5). Acts 2:42-47 gives us a summary of how the early Christians met together, "devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe and many signs and wonders were done" (v.42-43). They shared their possessions with those in need and met together daily in the Temple courts and in their homes, "and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (v.45-47). *Thank you Jesus for establishing your church in the way that Father God intended from the beginning. Forgive us when we fail to obey You. Help us to understand You in our hearts, so that we portray a holy lifestyle, enjoying Your blessings and the favour of others, with many signs and wonders and converts. Amen.*

Day 126. 1 Chronicles 9:13-34 lists the men who were responsible for ministering 24 hours a day in the new Temple after the 40-year exile and included priests, gatekeepers, those in charge of articles used in worship, bakers and musicians. They were encouraged to focus on their specific duties and "were exempt from other duties" (v.33). 1 Corinthians 7:26. Paul gives personal advice (in the context of marriage plans) that "because of the present crisis, I think it is good for you to remain as you are." *Father God, enable us to know your will and purpose to serve You and others in the days to come but to act only when the time is right and then to be fully focused on fulfilling Your calling, crisis or no crisis. Amen.*

Day 127. 1 Chronicles 7:20-29 records the family line which God blessed from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through Joseph to Joshua and even mentions the role of His special places of worship, Bethel and Shechem, that God blessed before establishing Jerusalem (v.28). Romans 9:30-33 confirms the role of Jesus Christ as a stumbling-stone in the lives of the Jews who became righteous through works, not through faith (v.32). Paul quoted Isaiah 28:16, confirming "the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" (v.33). *Heavenly Father, thank You for the many examples recorded in Scripture of your righteous people who lived by faith in You. Help us to do the works of Jesus our Saviour through faith in His Spirit who guides us and empowers us and even establishes us in the places where we can live and worship by faith and not in our own strength. Amen.*

Day 128. 2 Chronicles records the moment when Solomon praises God for keeping His word before claiming any personal credit for completing the Temple "built for the name of the Lord God Almighty" which housed the Ark and the Covenant of God. Revelation 2:12-17 records the praise of Jesus for the church in Pergamum which remained faithful in the place where Satan lived. Even so, they had taken part in collective sins and needed to repent collectively. *Father God, during these days of isolation during the pandemic, keep us faithful*

to Your word and to Your church which glorifies Your name. Show us how we can repent collectively with other believers and to overcome the wicked plans of the enemy surrounding us and see Your purposes revive in our land.

Day 129. Jeremiah 32:33-38 describes God's complaint about His people turning their backs on Him and not listening or responding to discipline (v.33). But God promises that despite His furious anger, "I will let them live in safety and they will be My people and I will be their God" (v.37-38). Revelation 4 records the worship in Heaven before the throne, "You are worthy our Lord God to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being" (v.11). *Almighty God, forgive us for turning away from You. Help us to live righteous lives in adoration of Your creation and of Your mercy towards us. May we choose to be obedient in expectation of your love and safe keeping in our salvation through Christ who took our punishment upon Himself. Amen.*

Day 130. Numbers 24 records how Balaam blessed Israel and their God Almighty when he heard the words of God (v.4), which prompted him to say, "May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed!" (v.9). Hebrews 10 describes how under the new covenant, Jesus Christ offered Himself "for all time one sacrifice for sins [then] He sat down at the right hand of God" (v.12). The writer then confirms what the Holy Spirit testifies, that "this is the covenant I will make with them... I will put My laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds" (v.15-16). *Thank You Father for confirming through Your word the special regard and love for Your people Israel we need to have and Your provision for changed hearts and minds through their Messiah in the new covenant that He established for all. Amen.*

Day 131. Nehemiah 3 records the many men & women who helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, even those with more specialist trades (v.8) and some of the women (v.12), except certain noblemen who proudly declined to do the work (v.5). 1 Corinthians warns us to avoid the wrong things done by God's people in the past written down by Paul as examples (v.5-11) but to stand firm under temptation and trust in God's way out. *Lord, help us men and women to work alongside others in building Your church on earth and trust You in providing the way forward that frees us from pride and sin and failure. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 132. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 reminds us there's a right time for the fulfilment of everything in life. Luke 6:46-49 records the warning of Jesus to obey Him and build a life with secure foundations as in the parable of the house built upon a rock. *Father God, encourage us to regard each and every day as a precious time for growing in faith and knowledge of Your word and to obey the teachings of Jesus by following in His footsteps. Amen.*

Day 133. Joshua 1:1-9 gives God's orders to Joshua to get ready to cross the Jordan and take and own what He had promised. "I will never leave you or forsake you" (v.5). God also said "Be courageous" three times (v.6-7,9). Acts 10:1-20 records the separate visions of the Roman centurion and Peter. God told Peter three times, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (v.15-16). Peter learned from this lesson with the outcome that the Holy Spirit convicted and blessed several Gentiles who were then "baptised in the name of Jesus Christ" (v.44-48). *Heavenly Father, encourage us with triple visions and guidance to believe You are always with us and ready to bless our ministries in extending Christ's Kingdom on Earth, to whosoever You choose. Amen.*

Day 134. Numbers 26 records the 600,000 men left to fight for Israel who survived the seduction of Moabite women and the plague that followed (25:1-2, 18). Hebrews 10:16-18 quotes Jeremiah 31 on the promise of a new covenant with God to put His truth in our hearts and minds with the promise to forget our "sins and lawless acts". *Dear God, help us to fellowship with those who are godly and wise and choose to benefit from*

Your forgiveness and salvation in Christ Jesus. Encourage the people to refuse to go down the familiar route of immorality followed by plague. Amen.

Day 135. Psalm 10:17-18 encourages the weak-hearted not to fear, for "You hear, O LORD... You listen ... defending the fatherless and the oppressed..." Mark 6:34 records the compassion of Jesus for the crowds "because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them many things." *Father God, forgive our doubts and fears and encourage us through the teachings of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Day 136. Jeremiah 30:18-22 confirms the intentions of God Almighty for the salvation and safe-keeping of Israel with "songs of thanksgiving" (v.19). "I will add to their numbers... I will bring them honour... I will punish all who oppress them. Their leaders will be one of their own... So you will be My people and I will be your God." 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, says that the person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. "We know the mind of the Lord God Almighty" (Jeremiah 40:14) for "we have the mind of Christ" (v.16). *Father God, thank you for the words of Your prophet Jeremiah. We offer songs of thanksgiving for our salvation in Christ alone. Enable us to discern the things of Your Spirit to live wisely and at peace until Messiah reigns. Amen.*

Day 137. 1 Samuel 11:6-15 tells how the Spirit of God came upon Saul to direct the people of both Israel and Judah to defeat their enemies the very next day. This led to forgiveness of those who doubted God's provision (v.13) confirmation of God's purpose for Saul to be king and was followed by great celebrations (v.15). Acts 10:15 records the moment when Peter had a vision in which God confirmed to him not to call anything impure that God has made clean. This was quickly followed by Peter and his Jewish friends ministering to the Roman Centurion and his household, who were then saved, worshipped God and received Holy Spirit power. They were then baptised and the Jews stayed on for a few days with the Gentiles to rejoice together (v.44-48). *Heavenly Father, help us to move on to a greater understanding of Your purposes and provision, unhindered by old doubts and fears and traditions, and unite with others in your plan of salvation for all mankind with much rejoicing.*

Day 138. 1 Samuel 31:13 records how Saul and his sons were honoured after death and people remembered them for the good things they did under God's purposes and provision (see also 2 Samuel Chapter 1). 1 Corinthians 11:23-34 gives Paul's description of the Lord's Last Supper and advises that believers should prepare themselves to gather together for food and fellowship in a worthy manner, free from the guilt of "sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (v.27) so that "when you meet together it may not result in judgement" (v.34). *Heavenly Father, we take time to thank and worship You for Your loving kindnesses and forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice. Enable us to put our old life behind us and join with others in like manner to remember Your sacrifice for our eternal salvation and so be remembered for the good works You have called us to do here on Earth. Amen.*

Day 139. 1 Samuel 15:12-26 tells how Saul disobeyed God and sought glory for himself (v.12) and also sought to please his soldiers (v.21), which led to God taking away his position as king. Confession and sacrifice did not change matters. Samuel told him "Stop! ...To obey is better than sacrifice" (v.22), which King David later remembered in Psalm 51:16. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Paul says, "My message and my preaching were not with wise words and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power." *Help us heavenly Father not to fall into the trap of making decisions based on what we think and hear of other's opinions, but on the inspiration of Holy Spirit power. In Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen.*

Day 140. 1 Samuel 30 tells the outcome of the enemy's destruction of the land belonging to Judah and Caleb which so distressed the future King David and his men (v.4). However, fear was overcome by faith in the Lord God Almighty (v.6) whom David asked for help and he was given assurance of success (v.8). 1 Corinthians

2:3-5 states how the apostle Paul came to Corinth in "weakness and fear and with much trembling. [However] my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power." *Thank you Father for reminding us that even your greatest Bible characters experienced times of distress and fear but personal faith plus Holy Spirit power brought victory and blessings time and time again.*

Day 141. 1 Samuel 10:9 records that God changed Saul's heart before he was appointed as the first king of Israel, just as Samuel prophesied (v.6). 1 Corinthians 11:32 records the experience of the apostle Paul that when we are judged and disciplined by the Lord "we will not be condemned by the world". *Heavenly Father, change us morally and spiritually to prepare us to serve You better in the world by transforming us through Your judgement and discipline to become righteous followers and ambassadors of Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 142. 1 Samuel 20:13 records Jonathan's love for David even when his father Saul and family members did not. However, his chief concern was clear when he said to the future King David, "May the Lord God Almighty be with you." 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 records Paul's advice to try to remain free from "affairs of the world" and be "concerned about the Lord's affairs" to avoid division of interests. Commitment to friends or partners is good but commitment to God is better. *Grant Lord that our close relationship with friends and relatives glorify You and do not distract us from serving You and others You have called us to serve. Amen.*

Day 143. 1 Samuel 14 records how King Saul enquired of God for direction concerning attacking the Philistines, but no answer came (v.37). Events followed that confirmed he should withdraw at that time (v.46). However, later on, he defeated even more enemies of Israel: the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Zobahites as well as the Philistines (v.47-48). 1 Corinthians 9:14-15 claims that preachers have the right to "receive their living from the Gospel" but Paul said he always declined to use any of these rights. *Dear Lord God, when we ask You to bless what we seek to do in spiritual warfare, help us always to be wary of doing what is obvious and right in our own eyes and instead open our eyes to pursue actions that give you the greatest glory. Amen.*

Day 144. 1 Kings 15:1-4 says that Abijah became king of Judah but "his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord God Almighty as David his forefather had been. Nevertheless, for King David's sake, the Lord his God gave him a light in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him ... making Jerusalem strong." His son Asa reigned for 41 years "and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord God Almighty as his forefather David had done" (v.9-11). Acts 10:17-20 records how Peter wondered about the vision God gave him which happened at the same time that men were on their way looking for him. The Holy Spirit confirmed that three men (Gentiles) would visit him. "Do not hesitate to go with them for I have sent them." *Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing in the OT how You longed to establish Your light and truth in Jerusalem for the sake and name of Your servant David. Thank You for revealing in the NT how you revealed Your light and truth in Jerusalem through Your Son our Saviour, who sent us Your Holy Spirit to share the Good News to the rest of the world. For the sake of Jesus, and in His name, may we be fully devoted to emitting the light of Your truth for the world to see and to know Your Salvation in Christ alone. Amen.*

Day 145. Psalm 37 encourages us with many righteous words of action: do not fret (v.1,7,8); trust in the Lord (v.3); delight in the Lord (v.4); commit your way to Him (v.5); be still before Him (v.7); refrain from anger (v.8); turn from evil and do good (v.27); wait for the Lord (v.34). It ends with the declaration that "salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord God Almighty ...because they take refuge in Him" (v.39). 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that it is because of God that we are "in Christ Jesus". Paul claims that He is "our righteousness, holiness and redemption". *Father God, we thank You for clarifying, through the OT writings of King David, the actions of the righteous life You long to see in those who seek refuge in You. And thank you for clarifying through the NT writings of Paul how these things are found "in Christ Jesus". Lord, help us to*

depend on Your promised resurrection power of the Holy Spirit to do these things in Your strength and not our own. Amen.

Day 146. Ezekiel 38 records the time when God will say to the enemies of His people Israel, "Get ready; be prepared" (v.7). "From your place in the far north, you and many nations with you... will advance against My people Israel... I will bring you against My land so that the nations may know Me when I show Myself holy through you" (v.15-16). "Then they will know that I am the LORD [Yahweh, God Almighty]" (v.23). 2 Corinthians 4:14-15, Paul writes to the church in Corinth, "We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us, with you, in His presence ... so that [divine] grace, that is reaching more and more people, may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. *Heavenly Father, equip us for the difficult times ahead that we may see your hand at work in preparing your people Israel to receive their Messiah, who is Jesus Christ, our Saviour of the world. Meanwhile, may more and more people believe and overflow with thanksgiving to Your glory. Amen.*

Day 147. Judges 16:23-31 gives the story of how Samson suffered humiliation at the hands of the Philistines yet prayed to God for divine strength. He then resolved to sacrifice his life, so killing more enemies of God's people in his death than in the whole of his life (v.30). 1 Corinthians 2:15 reveals Paul's conviction that "the spiritual man makes judgements about all things but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement, for... we have the mind of Christ." *Heavenly Father, thank You that through the resurrection power of Christ at work in us, we have divine strength to rebuff the wickedness around us. Enable us also to have the mind of Christ to fearlessly discern the personal sacrifices that will save many lives from the destructive work of the enemy. Amen.*

Day 148. Genesis 49:29-33 tells how Jacob took seriously the responsibility to instruct his family regarding the care of his remains after death. This included establishing a memorial in the plot of land his grandfather Abraham bought that was close to where Jerusalem would become the capital of Israel centuries later. 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 gives the words that Paul said were the focus and reason for his ministry on Earth: "Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the Gospel [and] not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." He knew and proved that the message of the cross, though foolish to some, is actually "the power of God" at work among believers. *Heavenly Father, help us to testify of the power of God at work in our lives here on Earth through what Jesus our Saviour accomplished on the cross for us all. And may we take seriously the testimony that You want us to leave after our departure from this world. Amen.*

Day 149. Malachi 3:6-18. One hundred years after returning from Babylon and four hundred years before the time of Christ, God's people began to lose their enthusiasm for worshipping Him and obeying His Law given through Moses. The prophet Malachi warned them that God said, "Return to Me and I will return to you" (v.7). "Then all the nations will called you blessed" (v.12). To "those who feared the Lord" (v.16) God also promised, "You will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not" (v.18). 1 Corinthians 1:30 reminds us that "Christ Jesus ... has become for us wisdom from God - that is our righteousness, holiness and redemption." *Dear God, thank you for the indwelling presence of Jesus our Saviour and the spiritual wisdom in seeing You at work in these wicked days, whilst living under Your righteousness as we wait for Christ's return. Enable those who fear the Lord God Almighty to discern and support the righteous among the wicked today. Amen.*

Day 150. Genesis 42:14-22 records the time when ten of the brothers of Joseph met him in Egypt without recognising him. Joseph acted in the name of Pharaoh and put them in prison for three days, accusing them of spying. Then on the third day Joseph testified of his faith in Almighty God and told them what they must do next (v.18-20). This prepared the way for the ten brothers to repent over their wrong behaviour to Joseph many years before (v.21-22). It also began the fulfilment of God's promise to raise up the descendents of

Abraham in Egypt for 400 years before settling in the Promised Land of Canaan. 1 Peter 2:11-12 urges us not to live like the pagans around us but to live good lives to glorify God. *Heavenly Father, forgive us for the times we live worldly lives, "acting in the name of Pharaoh" and failing to glorify You. May the decisions we make and the good things we do testify of our faith and love for You and bring You glory. May our repentance and Your righteousness change us and the world around us according to Your purposes. In the blessed name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Day 151. Psalm 41 confirms how King David had faith to believe that the Lord God Almighty would deliver him in times of personal weakness (v.1). He asks for healing and forgiveness (v.4), strongly believing that "You uphold me and set me in Your presence for ever". This revealed his insight to the purpose of God not only in salvation for himself (v.12) but also prepared the way for salvation through God's mercy for other believers in the nation, then and in the future. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 states how the believers have been taught to love each other. "Yet we urge you to do so more and more." *Grant, dear Lord, a growing conviction of eternal salvation through Your healing and forgiveness as we take more and more seriously the commandment of our Lord and Saviour, and His first-century apostles, to love each other. In our personal weakness, may we share in bringing healing and salvation to our nation and in so doing, prepare the way for Messiah, as in David's time. To Your glory, Amen.*

Day 152. Joshua 20:1-6 describes God's instructions to establish places of refuge for innocent and wrongly accused believers. Galatians 6:9-10 says "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." *Heavenly Father, thank you that the Bible confirms it is in Your heart to protect believers who are wrongly persecuted when problems arise. Help us not to give up doing good and strongly believe we will see a rich harvest of souls to Your glory. For the sake of, and in the name of, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Day 153. Ezekiel 46:8-10 warns the leaders of Israel they must stop controlling the people of God by force and also to be honest in business affairs. Luke 2:25-32 records the words of Simeon who had been waiting in faith to see God's Messiah (v.26). When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem for the first time, Simeon praised God for enabling him to see "Your salvation which You have prepared in the sight of all people. A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel" (v.30-32). *Heavenly Father may leaders of church and state today stop trying to control and restrict the people and instead unite to focus on what You are "preparing in the sight of all people" for Your righteousness to prevail in readiness for Messiah's return. Amen.*

Day 154. Job chapter 3 records the time when Job despaired over the terrible things God allowed Satan to do in his life and in the absence of faithful friends. Acts 12:4-7 records the time when King Herod put the apostle Peter into prison "but the church was earnestly praying to God for him" (v.5). The night before Peter's trial, "an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in his cell... and his chains fell off" (v.7). Psalm 68:6 says, "He brings out those who are bound with chains." *Father God, in Your mercy, encourage your church to pray against Satan's attempts to control or destroy the lives of believers and instead release the chains that bind us and that prevent us from sharing the light of Your truth in these dark times. For Christ's sake. And thank you for faithful friends who pray for Your righteousness to prevail over evil. Amen.*

Day 155. 1 Chronicles chapters 2 to 8 deal in detail with the descendants of Jacob after quickly mentioning the descendants of Jacob's twin brother Esau (1:35-54). The descendants of Jacob, later called Israel, covers first the important tribe of Judah, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, including the whole of chapter 3 devoted to the royal line of King David. These amazing records are important to Christians as well as to Jews, which provide the ancestry of the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus Christ, which go back in time through King David and back further to Abraham (1:27) and back still further to Noah and Adam (1:1-4). This ancestry is confirmed in Mathew 1:1-16 and Luke 4:23-37. Luke 8:4-15 describes the parable of the sower that led Jesus to explain to His followers that "the knowledge of the Kingdom of God has been given to you" (v.10). Those who receive and understand the eternal purposes of God through the teachings of Christ "produce a good crop" (v.15). *Heavenly Father, thank you for confirming everything in your written word sufficient to understand our eternal inheritance in the Living Word, which is Christ our Saviour. Accept our adoration and*

praise this day for receiving these things and enable us to extend the fruitfulness of the Kingdom of God through the ancient power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, while there is time. Amen.

Day 156. 2 Kings 8:25-27 records the short reign of one year of King Ahaziah over God's people in Judah, who was related to the evil King Ahab and Jezebel. During this time, God used His prophet Elisha to anoint Jehu as king (9:2-3) who then brought peace and the fulfilment of prophecy for the destruction of Ahab and Jezebel's family and their evil worship of idols and witchcraft. Jehu reigned over Judah and Israel for 28 years, restoring the dynasty of King David in Jerusalem in preparation for the ministry there of Jesus, the King of Kings, nearly 900 years later. King Jehu was probably Israel's best king yet in fulfilling God's calling he still failed to follow God faithfully with all his heart. Hebrews 10:15-27 records the words of the Holy Spirit through Jeremiah, "I will put My laws in their hearts and will write them on their minds" (v.16). Through the confidence we have "by the blood of Jesus" (v.19) "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (v.22). "Spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together ... but let us encourage one another... as you see the Day approaching" (v.24-25). *Heavenly Father, keep us ever aware of Your eternal purposes and also the warnings recorded for us before the time of Christ in the Old Testament and at the time of Christ in the New Testament. May our hearts be full of His pure love and true faith as we await His return to establish Your Kingdom. By Your grace and through the work on the cross, may we keep faithful to our calling in ministry. Amen.*

Day 157. Genesis 1:1 clarifies that in the beginning was God and also that in the beginning God was Creator and also that in the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. Then He said, "Let Us make man in our image ... and let them rule..." (1:26). Romans 1:18-32 depicts what is happening today. "The wrath of God is being revealed from Heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth" (v.18). "Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities... have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (v.20). "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (v.25). "Because of this, God has given them over ... to do what ought not to be done" (v.26-28). "They not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practise them" (v.32). *Heavenly Father, thank You that the Bible confirms that from the beginning, you are our triune God and creator of our wonderful world and its inhabitants. We acknowledge that we all deserve Your righteous judgement. In Your love and mercy, forgive us and send Holy Spirit revival fire to cleanse us and use us to establish Your Kingdom and prepare us as we wait for our Messiah's return. In His name. Amen.*

Day 158. 1 Kings 11:26-39 reveals what the prophet Ahijah said regarding the separation of ten of Israel's tribes from Jerusalem and Judah. God did this when King Solomon and his people turned away from Him. God blessed Jerusalem and Judah "for the sake of my servant David", Solomon's father (v.32,34). This was further fulfilled 1000 years later through the ministry and sacrifice there of Israel's promised Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:9-16 warns John not to worship angels or prophets but God Himself and the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (v.10). Jesus is our victorious Saviour, the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (v.16 and 17:14). *Heavenly Father it is amazing how Old and New Testament writings again and again point towards Your divine purpose for Jerusalem in salvation through Christ alone. Open our spiritual eyes that we might get excited in worshipping You because of what Christ has done on the cross and in understanding Your further purposes established centuries ago unfolding today as we share in preparing the way for His return to Jerusalem. Amen.*

Day 159. 1 Chronicles 9 records the number of God's people returning to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon. 690 were from the tribe of Judah (9:6). This confirms the extent of the near-destruction of Judah which is the 'royal line' from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah via Perez (9:4) that led to King David and to Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:6-14 says that Abraham "believed God... The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham that 'all nations will be blessed by you' " (v.6-8). Christ then "redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (v.14). *Heavenly Father, it is amazing how You came to bless all nations who trust in the God of Abraham and the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to take it in that through the survival of a Jewish remnant, all things today are still fulfilling the promised extension of Your Kingdom as we prepare to welcome Jesus our Messiah back to Jerusalem in times of great evil and destruction. Amen.*

Day 160. 1 Samuel 17 tells how David went to meet Goliath but first obeyed his father by arranging for someone to care for his flock of sheep (v.20). He also gave his travel items to the keeper of supplies to look after (v.22) before gaining helpful knowledge of the enemy from his brothers (v.23-27). David's oldest brother, however, was angry with him for wanting to get involved in the war with Goliath and the Philistines (v.28-31) and King Saul also discouraged him at first (v.33). But David said, "The LORD God Almighty who delivered me from the paw of the lion and bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (v.37). James 5:1-9 gives a warning to rich farm owners who fail to pay their workmen. "The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty" (v.4). Instead, we should be like the farmer who "waits for the land to yield its valuable crop" as we patiently seek the coming of the Lord (v.7). "The Judge is standing at the door!" (v.9). *Heavenly Father, help us to prepare ourselves for the battle ahead as we await the return of Christ, through seeking support from those around us who love You and love us. Overrule those who judge and condemn and hinder Your eternal purposes and provision out of greed, anger, ignorance or fear. Amen.*

Day 161. Psalm 75:6-9 says "No-one from the East or the West ... can exalt a man. But it is God who judges. He brings one down; He exalts another... As for me ... I will sing praise to the God of Jacob." 1 Corinthians 11:31 says "If we judged ourselves we would not come under judgement." *Lord God, help us to serve You under good or bad leadership, judging our own unrighteousness first and leaving You to judge others. Grant wisdom how to pray, and the desire to worship You, surrounded by difficult, sinful, even dangerous circumstances, believing You are in control of all conflicts. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 162. 1 Samuel 17:46-47 says how the Philistines would be handed over to the future King David "and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. And all those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD God Almighty saves; for the battle is the LORD's." Acts 11:19-21 explains how the beginning of the persecution of the early Christian believers led to the preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ in Cyprus and Antioch (Syria) both to Jews and non-Jews. "A great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (v.21). *We thank you heavenly Father for confirmation that when Your people are under attack the battle is Yours. Help us not to feel overwhelmed by personal or national events but to persevere in the ministry you have called us to do in the name and power of Jesus and for Your glory. Amen.*

Day 163. 1 Samuel 30:22-24 tells us that despite God's blessing of a victorious battle against the Amalekites, in which everything that had been lost was restored, David experienced troublemakers in his followers who grumbled against those who said they were too tired to join the battle. David ignored them and insisted that those tired but faithful men should share "what the LORD God Almighty has given us" in the same way as the other men. James 4:4-6 warns us not to adopt ways of the world that make us enemies of God. "The Spirit He caused to live in us... gives us more grace." James quotes Proverbs 3:34, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." *Father God, thank you for all the victories and blessings you give us in life. May we not grow proud of what we have and do but humbly acknowledge your kindness and mercy and behave in the same way toward others. In Christ's name. Amen.*

Day 164. Ezekiel 16 describes how low Jerusalem had sunk 600 years BC, provoking Almighty God to anger because their immoral behaviour was worse than Sodom (v.47). Ezekiel said, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you as you deserve... Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you and ... establish an everlasting covenant with you.... and you will know that I am the LORD God Almighty" (v.59-62). Luke 18:7-8. Jesus the Christ, who is Son of God and Son of Man asked, "Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on Earth?" *Lord God, save Your people from yielding to sin and corruption and judge the nations justly so that many will gladly repent and welcome our Israel's Messiah when he returns to Jerusalem. Thank You for Your eternal love for Your creation and the assurance that You hear and answer the prayers of your chosen ones who accept Christ as Saviour now. Amen.*

Day 165. Numbers 26 records the census of adult Israelite males after the plague that followed their sins with the Moabite women. The census was done to allot the land fairly in Canaan according to their needs (v.53). Romans 3:9-23 declares that all have sinned (v.9,23) and there is no fear of God (v.18). But Paul says that "righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (v.22). *Almighty God, forgive our nation which has sinned and there is no fear of You even during the pandemic. Help us to understand your desire from the beginning of time in preparing a land in which we will survive and be blessed*

according to our needs. Bring revival and establish Your righteousness through faith in Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Day 166. Joshua 18:10 says that Joshua cast lots for the tribes of Israel in the presence of the LORD God Almighty for the distribution of the land according to their tribal divisions. James 5:16 says "the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." *Heavenly Father, encourage us at all times to pray and trust You with decisions large and small in life, to prove how ready You are to reveal and fulfil Your will and provision for Your people. In the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 167. 1 Samuel 22:13-23 says how King Saul's jealousy of the future King David drove him to accuse others of "conspiring against me" despite their denials, such that he issued many death threats, even against the priests of God Almighty (v.17). David, however, expressed confidence in God for his own safekeeping (v.23). Luke 24:25-26 tells how Jesus rebuked His followers after his death for their lack of faith and understanding of how the Old Testament prophets had spoken about Him and His Kingdom. *Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see in Scripture the protection of the 'royal line' of King David for the preparation of Your birth, ministry, death and resurrection for our salvation. Grant us confidence in God Almighty, as with King David, despite the persecution of Your people that prevails against us as individuals, nations and races. Amen.*

Day 168. Psalm 101 declares King David's intent to punish evil in the land of Israel (v.3-5) and care for the faithful (v.6). Acts 13:26-41 gives Paul's view of the blessings of God through the Good News of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, which were promised to King David (v.32-34) and confirmed in Isaiah 55:3. *Father God, establish leaders who are prepared to punish evil and to care for those whose faith is in You. May the Good News of salvation through Christ alone be freely taught and preached throughout the lands. Amen.*

Day 169. 1 Samuel 10:6-9 records that God changed Saul's heart before he was appointed as the first king of Israel, just as Samuel prophesied. "You will be changed into a different person" (v.6), adding, "Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do for God is with you" (v.7). Galatians 4:14 says that Paul was welcomed by the believers "as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus Himself." *Father God, may we experience Your calling, anointing and changing power at work in our lives as we minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to other believers and to those who You are seeking for His Kingdom. Change our hearts into His likeness so that we can serve You in love, knowing You are always with us. Amen.*

Day 170. Lamentations 4:11-22 laments that no-one believed that the enemy could enter and destroy Jerusalem (v.12). "The Lord God Almighty Himself has scattered them and deserted them. Even the priests and elders are shown no favour" (v.16). "We thought that the Lord's anointed people would live under His shadow" (v.20). They were left with the hope that their "punishment will end" (v.22). 1 Corinthians 1:17 gives Paul's focus in mission, "to preach the Gospel – not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." *Father God, we sometimes behave as if Your power has departed. Keep reminding us that the purpose of our salvation is to act and speak in the power of Christ's Spirit. So enable us to uphold and realise the hope that Your punishment for failing to watch and pray over our nation will soon pass. For Your glory. Amen.*

Day 171. 1 Samuel 23:1-14 records how the future King David enquired of the Lord God Almighty again and again for guidance in serving the people of God (v.2,4,11,12). During this time, God saved him from the hands of the jealous King Saul (v.14). 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 explains how "the Holy Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God... no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have [received] the Spirit who is from God [so] that we may understand what God has freely given us." *Father God, thank you for the detailed accounts of lives lived in faith and prayer, as David whom you saved many times from his enemies whilst serving Your people. Thank you Jesus for Paul's account of how followers of Christ benefit in the same way through the power of Your promised Holy Spirit to understand the things of God and gain divine wisdom under persecution or distress. Amen.*

Day 172. 1 Samuel 24 tells how the future king David spared the life of King Saul who had become his enemy. David promised not to harm Saul (v.10) and left it to God to "judge between you and me" (v.12). Saul wept and said, "You are more righteous than I... May the LORD God Almighty reward you well" (v.16-19). 1 Corinthians 2:13 records Paul's conviction that born-again believers "speak not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words." *Father God,*

help us to allow for Your purposes at work in the lives of other believers so that we do not make false judgements. May everything we say be prompted and empowered by the Holy Spirit for Your glory. In the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 173. Malachi 2:1-9 delivers this rebuke of God to the priests who served in Jerusalem in 400 BC: "You have not set your heart to honour Me" (v.2). "My covenant was with Levi, a covenant of life and peace... True instruction was in his mouth... He walked with Me in peace and uprightness and turned many from their sin" (v.5-6). "But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble" (v.8). Luke 4:7 records that "the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath." *Lord Jesus, we know that the heart of our Father God longs to see the leaders of Your Church today honour Him by applying the teaching and good works you ministered for three years while training Your disciples. May we all relearn from the Bible what is true instruction and walk in peace and uprightness for the salvation of many in these days of persecution, to Your glory. Amen.*

Day 174. 1 Samuel 23:15-18 records that Jonathan, King Saul's son, went to the future King David and helped him to find strength in God. He said, "You shall be king over Israel and I will be second to you" (v.17). Jonathan was correct to support David but was proved wrong to assume he would have an important place in David's future kingdom. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 teaches that each part of the human body is important to the whole body and so is each member of the church important to the whole church, since together we are "the body of Christ" (v.27). *Father God, help us to realise we can each play an important part in the extension of Your Kingdom but not to assume responsibilities that are not part of your purpose. Forgive us when we fail to see things from your viewpoint and make commitments that are outside your perfect will. In the name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen.*

Day 175. 1 Kings 12 records the time when Rehoboam, son of Solomon, became the new king of all Israel and he chose to establish an even harsher rule of the people in the sixth century BC (v.11). Because of this, his rule became unpopular and only the tribe of Judah [with Benjamin] remained loyal to him (v.17). The outcome was that this was the beginning of the separation of the ten northern tribes from their brothers in and around Jerusalem. Also, under Rehoboam's control, "the people of Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord God Almighty" (14:22). 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 mentions much opposition to the Good News of Jesus (v.2). Paul said "We could have been a burden to you but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her children" (v.7). He goes on to testify how he and his fellow missionaries in the first century AD were "encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God" (v.12). *Lord Jesus, may we take notice of how Your early apostles and missionaries were not harsh with believers or non-believers but established kind and gentle leadership qualities wherever they travelled under the guidance and power of Your Spirit of truth and salvation. Help us to avoid wanting to force or control people and to live lives to the glory of our heavenly Father, suffering persecution, avoiding division and so encouraging others to do the same by example. Amen.*

Day 176. 1 Samuel 13:11-14 records the disobedience of King Saul in worshipping God without waiting for Samuel to arrive and the prophet Samuel's prediction that God will replace him by "a man after His own heart." James 2:17 gives a strong warning from James that "faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead." *Father God, help us to heed these verses from the Old and New Testaments to worship You and to express our faith in you with love, obedience and divine wisdom that we might not fail You in the devotion and service we offer. For Your Kingdom's sake and to the glory of Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 177. 1 Samuel 14:45-48 records how Saul's warriors refused to let him put his own son Jonathan to death who unintentionally disobeyed his unrighteous order (v.27), despite Jonathan winning a battle against the Philistines. Saul's men said that Jonathan "did this today with God's help". Saul listened to his men and understood that God was with Jonathan, so he was not put to death. After that, Saul won many battles against the enemies who surrounded Israel. James 4:2-4 says "You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives... Do you not know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God?" *Father God, spare us from making foolish and unrighteous decisions in life that hinder your Kingdom work and even risk the lives or wellbeing of those closest to us. Help us to recognise worldly behaviour and attitudes and steer clear of making foolish remarks and decisions that cannot*

glorify You and Your purposes. In Your mercy, may we see the positive outcomes of asking You first, with godly motives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 178. Judges 8:12 records how God fulfilled his promise to totally destroy the Midianites after his angel appointed Gideon as a great warrior (6:14-16). All this became necessary because "the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and for seven years He gave them over into the hands of the Midianites" (6:10) until they cried out to the LORD to deliver them (6:7). 1 John 2:28 encourages believers to "continue in Him (Christ Jesus) so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming." *Heavenly Father, thank You for reproducing Yourself as Israel's Messiah in human form, destined to suffer and die to provide a way for us all to stop sinning and receive eternal salvation. Help us to avoid the consequences of yielding to sin when we are tempted, so that we may be "confident and unashamed" before Your Son when He returns in glory to Jerusalem. Amen.*

Day 179. 1 Samuel 31:11-13 tells how "valiant men" of Israel went by night to take the dead bodies of King Saul and his son Jonathan from enemy territory to a safe place east of Jordan. The future King David declared a day of mourning (2 Samuel 1:12) and 35 years later, he moved the bones to the tomb of Saul's father near Jerusalem (2 Samuel 21:14). 1 Timothy 6:11-12 records how the apostle Paul encouraged Timothy in "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness [and to] fight the good fight of faith." *Heavenly Father, we see the desire of both David and Paul to encourage other believers to be remembered for their righteous and faithful lives – in life and in death. Help us to be valiant men and women to do our part in serving and honouring those you have anointed in leadership or ministry. Amen.*

Day 180. Ecclesiastes 5:16 asks, "As we come, so we depart, and what do we gain?" Later on, the writer says, "God gives us wealth and possessions and honour so that we lack nothing our hearts desire, but God does not enable us to enjoy them!" (6:2). In the final chapter, the writer advises, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them' (12:1), and also "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind" (12:13). Acts 8:14-16 testifies of the need for new believers who have "accepted the word of God" and "been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus" to receive prayers "that they might receive the Holy Spirit". *Creator God, spare us the prospect of receiving Your blessings in life without enjoying them! Instead, help us to be focused on honouring and obeying You. May we also experience the power and wisdom of Your Holy Spirit as we accept Christ as our Saviour and receive baptism and the devoted support from the prayers of God's caring people. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 181. Ezekiel 16:60 records for Israel that despite all their undisciplined thoughts, words and deeds, God Almighty would "remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you." Romans 15:1-4 records for Christians that in caring for the weak (v.1), Paul believed "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of Scripture we might have hope" (v.4). *Thank you Heavenly Father, that the apostle Paul saw clearly the importance of Old Testament Scriptures to both Jewish and Christian believers. Help us to value Your long-suffering love down the ages, especially for the weak. Enable us through the resurrection power of Israel's Messiah, to care for others with an everlasting love as He did in the ways recorded in the New Testament gospels. Help us also to live disciplined lives and in the eternal hope expressed by Paul and others in the New Testament epistles. Amen.*

Day 182. 1 Chronicles 25:6-7 records clearly the importance of music ministry for whole families in the Temple worship at Jerusalem. It was under parental supervision, "all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord". Romans 14:17-19 reminds us that "the Kingdom of God is ... of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because everyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by mankind. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." *Help us Father God to build each other up in the faith in serving Jesus in the church and in society that we may experience righteousness, peace and joy through Your Holy Spirit. Help us also to use the musical talents we have in our families in worship "for the Lord". Amen.*

Day 183. Job 32 records where Job had become "righteous in his own eyes" and was counselled by Elihu, who brushed aside Job's three friends who had failed to help him (v.1-3). Elihu then prepared the way for God to speak to Job by saying many righteous things to him, warning him not to claim he had wisdom but to

listen to God, not man (v.13). Matthew 13:36-43 gives the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the harvest field. Jesus, the sower of good seeds in the parable, explains how the good seeds that produce a harvest are like the children of God's Kingdom (v.38) who "shine like the sun" (v.43). The weeds at harvest time are from "the enemy", the devil, and will be destroyed (v.40-42). *Heavenly Father, keep reminding us that our wisdom comes from You alone. Help us to remember the teachings of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, and to prepare the way for others to yield fruitful lives, with hearts open to the good seed He sows so that they, too, can "shine for Jesus". Amen.*

Day 184. Job 16:4-7 laments that God had "worn me out", confirming that when He tests us (even when we have done nothing wrong, like Job), we can become devastated (v.7) instead of an encouragement and blessing to others (v.5). Acts 26:31-32 confirms that Paul had done nothing wrong and could have been set free from prison but instead was sent to Rome for trial before Caesar. *Father God, help us not to lose faith in You when we fail to understand our circumstances or Your purposes in life. Help us to remember that both Job and Paul ended life fully within Your will and to trust you with our present needs and Your way forward for us and so become a blessing to others as well as a witness to You. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 185. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 records the amazing fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy that Israel would return from exile in Babylon after 70 years and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its Temple would commence. God made this possible through Cyrus of Persia, the new Gentile king who took charge of Babylon in the first year of his reign, who said, "Yahweh, the LORD God of Heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the Earth and He has appointed me to build a temple for Him at Jerusalem in Judah." 1 Corinthians 2:11-12 confirms that "no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we may understand what God has freely given us." *LORD God of Heaven, keep us faithful in trusting You through difficult times so that You can amaze us in establishing Your will and provision for all believers through people of Your choosing and in Your timing. So grant us a fuller discernment of Your thoughts and purposes that we me pray in the power of Your Spirit and in the blessed name of Jesus with greater conviction, to establish your reign here on Earth. Amen.*

Day 186. Ecclesiastes 3 declares that God "has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of mankind. Yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (v.10-11). So the writer despairs that "man has no advantage over the animal" and that "everything is meaningless" (v.19-20). Acts 9:1-6 records how Saul (later called Paul) was "breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples" (v.1). However, "as he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him" (v.3) which began for him a new life with Christ his Saviour who called down, "Go into the city and you will be told what you must do" (v.6). *Heavenly Father, the beautiful world You created includes men and women, made in your image, with Your eternal purposes on their hearts. So in Your mercy, save us from meaningless disobedience or despair and come and shine Your light upon us. Enable us to begin a new life ready to do what You want us to do through the calling of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 187. 1 Samuel 22:13-16 records how King Saul no longer trusted David, Israel's future king, nor the people who supported him. Saul acted against God's purpose for David and Israel by threatening to destroy him and his supporters. James 3:6 confirms how the tongue can be like wild fire. "It corrupts the whole person and sets the whole course of life on fire." James says that the fire comes from Hell! *Heavenly Father, help us to avoid doing the 'destructive work of Hell' by keeping our thoughts, words and deeds in line with your purposes. Encourage us to support those You have appointed to lead, now and in the future. Grant us the spiritual discernment to reject "the course of life" that comes from the enemy and to promote what comes from You through the Spirit of Christ who died to establish Your 'constructive work of Heaven'. Amen.*

Day 188. Psalm 25 contains many personal prayer requests from King David. It covers a declaration of his trust in God Almighty not to be "put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me" (v.1-2). It includes a request to "show me Your ways... guide me in Your truth and teaching, for You are my Saviour and my hope is in You" (v.4-5). Then he invites God to "remember Your great mercy and love [but] remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways" (v.6-7). He seeks forgiveness "for the sake of Your name" (v.11) and ends with a prayer for his people Israel (v.22). Romans 7:6 records how Paul, a devout Jew, declares he is no longer bound by the sins listed in the Old Covenant but has been released to serve God under the New Covenant through the power of the Spirit of the living Christ. He says, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:25). *Father God we add "Amen" to Paul's expression of faith in New Testament teaching but*

acknowledge the importance of the guidelines for prayer and praise expressed by Your servant David. So inspire us with Paul's answer to David's request for 'Your truth and teaching'. Help us to understand and to believe that you have dealt fully with 'our shame, our enemies, our youthful sins and our rebellious ways' in Your mercy and love and through Christ our Saviour. For the sake of Your name and for Your people who put their trust in You. Amen.

Day 189. 1 Kings 11:14-43 describes how God raised up hostile enemies against Israel under King Solomon: Hadad the Edomite who settled in Egypt (11:14) and Rezon the Syrian who settled in Damascus (11:23-25). Then trouble began within Israel through Solomon's rebel official Jeroboam (11:26). Finally, the prophet Ahijah came to warn that the kingdom of Solomon would be broken up "because they have forsaken Me and worshipped Ashteroth... and have not walked in My ways, nor done right in My eyes, nor kept my statues and laws as David, Solomon's father, did" (11:33). Galatians 3:24-29 says "The [Old Testament] Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith... You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... You are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." *Heavenly Father, forgive us Your people for doing what is wrong in Your eyes and failing to keep Your laws, thus deserving Your punishment from enemies around and within. In Your mercy, send us Your prophets in the power of Your Spirit, to open our eyes to see things as You see them and for the need to repent that we, and our church, and our nation, can be revived as part of Your faithful Kingdom on earth as promised to Abraham. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Day 190. Proverbs 1:2-3 says the book of Proverbs is all about "wisdom and discipline" and for "doing what is right and just and fair." This is for the purpose of "giving prudence to the simple and knowledge and discretion to the young" (v.4). Therefore "let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance for understanding ... the wise" (v.5). Also, remember that "the fear of the Lord God Almighty is the beginning of knowledge, for only fools despise wisdom and discipline" (v.7). Immediately the writer gives advice about heeding parental instruction and warns us not to give in to the enticement of sinners (v.8-10). Colossians 2:6-8 says that "since we have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him... strengthened in the faith as you were taught... See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." *Heavenly Father, enable us to grow in divine wisdom that we may help the simple and teach the young Your truth. For Your glory and for the sake of Christ Jesus who died to save us so that we might live in Him. Amen.*

Day 191. Jeremiah 35 records how the Recabites, one small family in Judea, remained obedient to everything their father taught them including refusing wine and to remain as nomads (v.6-11). The prophet Jeremiah used them as an example of obedience when he spoke to the disobedient people of Judah who refused to obey the words of the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel (v.12-16). Jeremiah then told the Recabites that God would bless their families by ensuring their family line would continue – as with the 'royal family line' of King David (v.18-19). 1 Peter 1:1-8 reassures believers of peace "in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (v.2), whose "divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us..." (v.3). Peter then gives eight steps to become more effective in this knowledge (v.5-8). *Father God, thank You for the reassurance of your ongoing blessing for us and our families through living by faith in what we have been taught and believed of You and of Jesus. May faithful Jews and Christians prove to be examples of obedience and divine knowledge to the world. Amen.*

Day 192. Ezekiel 17 gives a parable of a tree cutting planted by two eagles, one produced only leafy boughs, the other produced much fruit (v.3-8). But Israel had been disobedient and so was defeated in battle and a remnant was taken off into Babylon (v.11-21). Then God said that He Himself would "take a shoot from the very top of a cedar plant" (v.22). He would plant it to become "a splendid cedar" and all would know that the Lord God Almighty will do what He says: "I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish" (v.23-24). This was a prophecy that God would bring down some kings of Israel and raise others up and the "splendid" family line of David would produce the Messiah, the King of kings. "I the Lord have spoken and I will do it." 1 Timothy 6:11-16 gives Paul's "charge" to Timothy to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,

love, endurance and gentleness" (v.11). "In the sight of God who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus... keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time" (v.13-15). *Heavenly Father, help us to see from the teachings in the Old Testament records Your perfect plan for the redemption of mankind as confirmed through the inspired teaching of Paul, the Jewish believer in Christ as Saviour. As with Timothy at the time of Paul, establish us in Your righteousness in readiness to welcome our Messiah when He returns to rule the world. Amen.*

Day 193. 1 Samuel 23 reveals how the future King David "enquired of the LORD God Almighty" about attacking the Philistines and He said "Go... and save Keilah" (23:2-3). David's supporters said, "Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more then if we go to Keilah!" (v.3). So "once again David enquired of the LORD and the Lord answered him 'Go!' (v.4) ... so David and his men went to Keilah ... and saved the people" (v.5). But "Saul was told ... and called up his forces for battle to go down to besiege David and his men" (v.7-8). But Saul failed to defeat David (v.26-29). 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 says that "God chose the weak things of this world to shame the strong... Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts, boast in the LORD.'" (Jeremiah 9:24). *Heavenly Father, Thank you for the encouragement to seek You at all times in making decisions and not to be discouraged by others who are fearful or weak in faith or threaten to stop us, as Your anointed servant David experienced. Help us to trust You even in our weakest moments, to bring about Your purposes for Your glory, and to witness (boast, even) of Your mercy and provision, especially in and through Christ Your Son our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 194. Esther 4 records how the destruction of the Jews by Haman at the time of King Xerxes was avoided by Esther risking her life to ask the king for mercy. 1 Corinthians 5 explains how Paul reminded the Corinthian church "even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit" (v.3-4) when he wrote to them and asked them to avoid corruption in the church by removing a man from their congregation who was living in sin (v.5). *Heavenly Father, thank you for these Old and New Testament records of how you saved a community of Jews and a community of Christians from destruction – from without and within. In Your mercy, raise up individuals who will stand against people who wield much evil power in the State and in the Church. Destroy their work and may others see Your intervention to Your glory. May we also remember the power of Your Spirit at work between true believers in Christ even when we are physically separated from each other. For His sake. Amen.*

Day 195. 1 Samuel 10:20-27 describes how God's anointed person, Saul, was chosen by the people to be their king. However, Saul hid himself but God revealed where His chosen person was and the people shouted "Long live the king!" Then "valiant men whose hearts God had touched" went along with Saul but some trouble-makers despised him. However, Saul kept silent. 1 John 5:1-5 reminds us that "everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Everyone who loves God loves His Child as well" (v.1). Also, "by loving God and carrying out His commands, we love the children of God" (v.2). Paul repeats: "Love for God is to obey His commands" (v.3). He then confirms that faith in Jesus as the Son of God enables us to overcome the world (v.4-5). *Heavenly Father, we read of the amazing way Your purpose was established in Saul as King and how he was able to ignore his enemies even though he later disobeyed You. You cared for him until he stopped caring for You. Thank You for the reminder to obey You and to bless others through our faith in Jesus as Your Son. So enable us to love You more and overcome the world in faith and obedience as You protect us from trouble within and without – to the end. Amen.*

Day 196. Psalm 11 records David's faith: "In the LORD God Almighty I take refuge" (v.1). But he goes on to ask, as many do today, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (v.3). David confirms his belief that "the Lord is on His holy throne" (v.4) and that God examines (tests and tries) the righteous but He hates the wicked and those who love violence (v.5). David concludes confidently with the words: "The Lord God Almighty is righteous and upright men will see His face" (v.7). 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 also records Paul's confident words: "It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is our righteousness, holiness and redemption." Paul then quotes from Jeremiah 9:24: "Let him who boasts, boast only in the Lord God Almighty." *Lord Jesus, thank you for the confidence we have in You and our heavenly Father seated in Heaven. Help us to know that God loves the righteousness You have established in our lives as He tests and tries us to prove our redemption. So keep us safe and faithful in these Last Days that our lives will "boast" only of Him and what He has done through You on the cross to redeem us. Amen.*

Day 197. Job 9 records that after unhelpful spiritual advice from his friend, Job professes faith in our amazing God and Creator in at least a dozen ways (v.4-10) yet cannot believe he can appear righteous before Him (v.2). He longed without hope for "someone to arbitrate between us" (v.33). 1 Timothy 5:17 praises church elders who "uphold the affairs of the church well ... especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." Paul himself gives Timothy many examples of spiritual wisdom in the same chapter. *Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus our Saviour, Your Son, to suffer and die for us, to save us and arbitrate for us, to enable us to be righteous before You. Save us from unhelpful spiritual advice and to heed only Your word and those who faithfully preach and teach it, under the guidance of Your Holy Spirit, for the needs of today. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 198. 1 Kings 6 records that only the finest stone blocks were dressed and used for building Solomon's Temple (v.7). The LORD God Almighty spoke to Solomon: "As for this temple you are building, if you follow My decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all My commands and obey them, I will fulfil through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and not abandon My people Israel" (v.11-13). James 4:4-8 warns "adulterous" (unfaithful) believers, that friendship with the world is hatred towards God." We were born with a spirit of envy, "But God gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says 'God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble' (Proverbs 3:34). Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you." *Father God, help us to resist the devil and obey Your commandments. Help us to build our lives with the finest materials so that Your grace, through our salvation in Christ, lives within us and glorifies you. Do not abandon us but come near to us and all whom we seek to serve in Your name. Amen.*

Day 199. 1 Kings 13 tells how a man of God prophesied to the sinful King Jeroboam of Israel that the day would come when the priests he and his descendants appointed would be sacrificed by Josiah on their own altar (v.2). This was because the priests were not appointed or anointed by God but were chosen by the king "from all sorts of people" (v.33). This human sacrifice would mark the end of the ten northern tribes of Israel (v.34) but God would raise up Josiah who would be "born to the house of King David" (v.2) through whom Israel's Messiah would come 1000 years later. Acts 9 records how Saul used the high priest in Jerusalem to write letters for him to imprison the early followers of Jesus, Israel's Messiah (v.1-2). Saul, later called Paul, was stopped by the voice of Jesus Himself on the road to Damascus (v.3-5) because "this man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (v.15). *Heavenly Father, thank you for the Old and New Testament records that reveal the folly of mankind to appoint people who do not have Your anointing. Spare our nation from ungodly leaders and appoint humble*

servants who will give glory to You and prepare the way for the coming of Jesus our Messiah back to Earth. Amen.

Day 200. 1 Chronicles 3 records the 'royal family line' from King David through Solomon, Rehoboam, Josiah, Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. After the punishment and exile in Babylon it records the descendants of Jehoiachin whom God saved and through whom God chose to carry on David's family line down to Joseph, the husband of Mary "of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ" (Matthew 1:16). In Joseph's family line recorded by Matthew, the New Testament name of Jehoiachin is given as 'Jeconiah' (Matthew 1:11-12). Through Jehoiachin/Jeconiah and the remnant of Jews from their exile in Babylon, God's purpose was fulfilled to establish the nation of Israel as His 'light in the world' through their Messiah, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:13-14 gives the apostle Peter's instruction to "submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king as the supreme authority, or to governors who are sent by Him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right." *Father God, we praise and thank You for these amazing records of how you punished the wrong and commended those who did right in order to realise Your divine purposes through Your people Israel and Your Son our Saviour. Open our eyes to what you are doing today in our nation and its leaders, and enable us to act and pray in line with Your perfect will to prepare us all for the return of Your Messiah. Amen.*

Day 201. Nehemiah 7 gives a record of the 50,000 Jews who returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon. Seven months after settling in their towns (v.73) the people asked Ezra the scribe to read aloud the Law of Moses (Chapter 8). Revelation 22:10-16 records the words spoken to the apostle John. An angel warned "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong... let him who does right continue to do right" (v.10-11). This is followed by the words of Jesus Himself: "Behold, I am coming soon! ... Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates of the city" (v.12-14)... "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches" (v.16). *Heavenly Father, it is amazing how these ancient writings have survived to record the numbers of people returning to rebuild Jerusalem and how they were eager to listen to the reading of Your commandments before the building of the Temple commenced. Thank You also for recording for us the words spoken by the angel and by Jesus to John that the righteous will enter the gates of the Heavenly City and that Christ Himself will come soon to establish His Kingdom. Keep us daily devoted to understanding Your holy writings and join with John in saying, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (v.20).*

Day 202. Deuteronomy 12:25-28 gives instructions to the people of God to do "what is right in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty" (v.25). He instructed them to "go to the place the LORD will choose" to offer sacrifices in repentance and worship (v.26-27). "Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God" (v.28). 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15, following warnings against idleness in the church, Paul wrote, "As for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him in order that he might be ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother." *Father God, help us daily to do what is good and right in Your sight and to put right what is wrong in our lives before attempting to correct other brothers or sisters in the Lord. May we never tire to worship, work and witness to Your glory nor become idle busybodies. For the sake of our families and in the blessed name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

Day 203. 2 Chronicles 36 records the fall of Jerusalem in 600 BC and the exile of a remnant to Babylon because the LORD their God had sent "messengers to them again and again because He had pity on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised His words and scoffed at His

prophets, until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against His people and there was no remedy" (v.15-16). The king of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and its people and "carried into exile the remnant who escaped the sword and they became servants to him and his sons until ... the seventy years were completed in fulfilment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah" (v.20-21). Then in the first year of the new reign of Persia over Babylon, God spoke to king Cyrus who announced, "The LORD, the God of Heaven... has appointed me to build a temple for Him at Jerusalem" (v.23). Revelation 20 reminds us that Satan will be bound for 1000 years to "keep him from deceiving the nations any more" (v.3). *Heavenly Father, thank You for these amazing records we are privileged to read. Help us to believe and understand Your purposes from millennium to millennium and experience Your love and mercy as we worship You and exalt the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our salvation. We look forward to Satan being bound and the rebuilding of the new Temple in Jerusalem as a focus for the world to glorify You and Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 204. Exodus 20:1-21 records the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai when the people "trembled with fear" (v.18). Moses, said, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning" (v.20). 1 Corinthians 10:1-6 warns us that the people of God 1500 years earlier were led out of Egypt and provided with spiritual food and drink "from the spiritual rock that was Christ" (v.3-4). And yet God was not pleased with them and all but two of the original Israelites died and their bodies were "scattered over the desert" (v.5). Paul wrote, "These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (v.6). *Heavenly Father, keep us ever mindful of the biblical records and the need to fear and obey You and Your commandments. Thank you for visiting us in human form through Christ our Saviour that enables us to love and worship You in righteousness and faith because of His sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. Grant us the "spiritual food and drink" in Christ we need today to lovingly maintain our worship, work and witness in extending Your Kingdom until He returns. Amen.*

Day 205. Psalm 80:4-7 pleads "O LORD God Almighty, how long will Your anger smoulder against the prayers of your people? ...You have made us a source of contention to our neighbours and our enemies mock us. Restore us O God Almighty; make Your face shine upon us, that we may be saved." Acts 11:19-21 records the time after persecution: "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen (7:54 to 8:3) travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message [about the Messiah] only to Jews. Some of them however... went to Antioch [Syria] and began to speak to Greeks [non-Jews], telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." *Heavenly Father, open our eyes to understand what You are saying to Your people during this time of pestilence. In Your mercy, hear the prayers of the faithful and restore Your church so that many will believe the Good News and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. In Your mercy, forgive us and empower us for Your glory and the extension of Your Kingdom. Amen.*

Day 206. Genesis 42 records how Joseph treated his ten brothers who had sold him as a slave to Egyptians 20 years before. "Send one of your number to get your [eleventh] brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison... to see if you are telling the truth." (v.16). After reflecting for three days, Joseph told his brothers, "I fear God. If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison while the rest of you go and take grain back to your starving households" (v.18-19). Acts 10 records how Peter learnt to treat foreigners kindly and "not call any man impure or unclean" (v.28). This lesson was learnt after God had shown Peter in a vision three times not to "call anything impure that God has made clean" (v.15). *Dear God, these Bible accounts remind us of how You go before us and prepare the way to achieve reconciliation and offer forgiveness to others whom we misjudge or even reject. Encourage us to reflect on long-standing opinions and show mercy and kindness to other believers and to those whom You are mercifully seeking and calling into the Your Kingdom. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 207. Job 41 records what God said to him before he repented. God spoke of dinosaurs, claiming "everything under Heaven belongs to Me" (v.11). Job confessed, "I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know" (42:3) and he repented (42:6) and the LORD God Almighty blessed him

greatly (42:12) and the rest of his life was a witness to that. Matthew 20:17 records the words of Jesus to the man who asked for eternal life: "If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." Sadly, he declined to do what Jesus said next: "If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor" (v.21). Instead, the man went away and there is no witness to his salvation. *Father God, again we ask to see things Your way and do what is right in receiving Your forgiveness and eternal life. Fulfill in us Your provision and purpose through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins and enable us to be positive witnesses in the power of Your Spirit to Your mercy and glory. Amen.*

Day 208. 2 Chronicles 35:18 records the celebration of the Passover using the blood and bodies of lambs as arranged by King Josiah which was the first time for 400 years since the days of God's first prophet Samuel. It was celebrated by all Judah plus any from the whole of Israel who were there with the people in Jerusalem. Hebrews 10:19-24 records, "Since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is His body, and since we have a great High Priest over the house [people] of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience... Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds." *Thank You heavenly Father for Your inspired words to believers down the ages to celebrate Your forgiveness through the sacrificial shedding of blood which was and is available for the whole of Israel and also for people beyond through Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour and Passover Lamb. Help us to fully understand these things and apply them today through the ministry and power of Your Holy Spirit for the benefit of others in love and good deeds. Amen.*

Day 209. Nehemiah 9 records seven months after returning from exile how the Israelites fasted, separated themselves from foreigners of alien faith, confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers and listened to the reading of the Book of the Law and then worshipped the LORD their God (v.1-3). They followed this with a reflection in the form of thanks and praise of their Creator for how He called Abraham out to settle permanently in Canaan and how He saved Abraham's grandson's large family from slavery in Egypt (v.4-37). Then all together they resolved to make a new agreement with God Almighty (v.38). 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11 says, "Let us not be like others, but let us be alert and self-controlled... putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet... Christ died for us so that... we may live together with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." *Father God, we note how Paul witnessed that the Thessalonian church were working together in love and faith just as Nehemiah must have witnessed the righteousness of the Israelites who had returned to Jerusalem with a new life before them. Thank you for the new beginning you grant us every day when our faith is in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Encourage us to care for one another and to reflect on Your mercy to believers in the past and pray for our nation today for repentance and forgiveness now and in the future for the extension of Your Kingdom on earth. Amen.*

Day 210. Nehemiah 8:17-18 records seven months after their return from exile, the Israelites "built booths and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated like this. And the joy was very great. Day after day, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God." This led up to the public confession of sins and worship of God Almighty (Chapter 9). Hebrews 9:7-12 says "Only the high priest entered the inner room and that only once a year, and never without blood which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance" (v.7). "When Christ came as High Priest of the good things that are already here... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption [for all believers]" (v.11-12). *Thank you Heavenly Father for the assurance of eternal salvation recorded in the Bible through the sacrifice of Your Son and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Encourage the public reading of Your inspired truth written down in the Old and New Testaments so that Your people will joyfully listen, confess sins committed in ignorance and worship You. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 211. Leviticus 19 provides a variety of God's righteous laws given to Moses 3500 years ago, most of which are relevant for today. Read them! 1 Thessalonians 1:7-12 sets out Paul's claim to be "gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well" (v.7-8). He said that God was his witness of "how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed... encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His Kingdom and glory" (v.10,12). Paul wanted so much to see the new Gentile believers changed into the likeness of Christ their Saviour knowing intimately, as he did, the Old Testament Torah teaching and how it had pointed all people of God towards righteous living through obedience to His Law. *Heavenly Father, help us to live worthy lives in sharing the Good News and caring for the believers. Thank You for establishing Your righteousness in our lives through faith in Jesus Christ alone so that we might receive the victory over sin won for us on the cross and live obedient lives without falling back into the sins recorded for us in Your Holy Laws under the old covenant. For His sake. Amen.*

Day 212. Jeremiah 23:25-29 declares God's anger against false prophets who "prophecy lies in My name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets? ...They think the dreams they tell one another will make My people forget My name... but let the one who has My name speak it faithfully... Is not My word like fire ... and like a hammer that breaks a rock to pieces?" Jude 3-20 warns against "certain men, whose condemnation was written about long ago, [who] have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men who change the grace of God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (v.4). "Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, 'In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.' They are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in the most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit" (v.17-20). *Heavenly Father, send Your purifying fire to keep Your people true to Your Word and open to the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit so that we are not deceived by seducing spirits or men with evil motives who detract from worship of our triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Day 213. Nehemiah 9:16-17 gives further details of how the Israelites publically confessed to God Almighty their sins and those of their forefathers who "became arrogant and stiff-necked and who did not obey Your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles You performed among them... But You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore, You did not desert them." Philippians 3:12-14, Paul encourages his readers to move forward and says, "Not that I have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me... Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me." *Father God, we pray that You will reveal to believers in our nation today their sins and they will confess them and the sins of their forefathers. In Your gracious compassion forgive us and do not desert us. Encourage us to be obedient and move forward with what lies ahead in Christ's calling to serve the church and the world we live in. For His sake, Amen.*

Day 214. Jeremiah 31:31-33 records the words of Almighty God to Jeremiah. "The time is coming when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and Judah... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be My people." Romans 3:22 gives Paul's teaching that "righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." Romans 4:13 also gives Paul's understanding of how the faith of Abraham established his righteousness, not the obedience to laws, which is why he is known as the father of all who have faith in God. *Thank you Father God that our faith in Your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ establishes us in Your righteousness so that we are joint heirs in the family of Abraham. May this 'mystery of Christ' be understood by Jewish and Gentile believers more and more in these last days of the New Covenant before our Messiah returns to Jerusalem. Amen.*

Day 215. Genesis 42:3-26 reveals that when Joseph's brothers met him in Egypt to ask for corn, they did not recognise him and Joseph also pretended not to recognise them (v.6-7). God brought to mind the dreams

he had had as a young lad but His conversation did not portray his faith in God Almighty (v.9). In fact, he witnessed his loyalty to Pharaoh (v.15-16). However, after three days, he repented and acknowledged his faith in God (v.18) and then began to issue instructions in line with God's will for the whole family of 12 sons of Jacob, called Israel (v.19-26). Acts 13:42-52 describes the great works of the Holy Spirit in Antioch (Turkey) through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas to the Jews and their converts. Almost the whole city turned up on the following Sabbath to hear the Good News of Jesus (v.42-44). But unbelieving Jews caused much trouble, so Paul and Barnabas turned increasingly to the ministry of being "a light for the Gentiles [to] bring salvation to the ends of the earth" in fulfilment of Isaiah 49:6 (v.45-47). The new believers joyfully "honoured the word of the Lord [which] spread through the whole region" (v.48-49). Paul and Barnabas moved on because of the persecution but the new converts "were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (v.51-52). *Heavenly Father, let us see clearly Your purposes for eternal salvation of many people worldwide, as did Joseph, Isaiah, Paul and Barnabas. Enable us to repent and publically acknowledge our faith in You and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ with much joy, even if it is contrary to traditional religions and risks persecution. Amen.*

Day 216. Isaiah 43 speaks the word of God to "everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made" (v.7). "You are My witnesses, declares the Lord God Almighty, that I am God" (v.12). Philippians 3 gives Paul's call to "Rejoice in the Lord!" (v.1). He continues, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things... not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ" (v.8-9). *Lord Jesus, through Your Spirit, speak to us Your people today, that we will be true witnesses of our God Almighty, who has done everything through His holy word and through You to establish His righteousness in us "whom He created for His glory". Help us to give up our selfish ambitions and fantasies and welcome and witness to the "surpassing greatness" of knowing You. Amen.*

Day 217. Jeremiah 48 describes God's judgement on the nation of Moab: "A curse on all who are lax in doing the LORD's work!" (v.10) This was because Moab "has defied the LORD" (v.26). Revelation 10:10-11 tells how Apostle John was given the word of God on a scroll by an angel who told him to eat it. "It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour." Then John was told he must prophecy about the terrible tribulation that was about to come upon the world. *Father God, empower through Your Spirit, the Church established in Christ our Saviour, to take seriously Your word for today and to proclaim it to the world, even if it turns over the stomachs of those who hear it and believe it. Help us to avoid being lax or lazy and ignoring or defying or even denying Your truth in these last days before the joyful and triumphant return of our Messiah. Amen.*

Day 218. 2 Chronicles 35:16-24 records how King Josiah celebrated the Passover. "None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah, with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were there with the people in Jerusalem" (v.18). However, the next action by Josiah cost him his life when he assumed wrongly that he should attack the Egyptians who were in battle to the east of Israel (v.20-24). Romans 1:17-18 declares that through the Good News of Jesus Christ, "a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written 'the righteous will live by faith' (Habakkuk 2:4)." Meanwhile, Paul says that "the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness." *Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunities to freely worship You and to encourage others to do the same. Through our repentance and Your salvation in Jesus our Saviour, help us to avoid promoting our own ideas of serving You and serving others, lest we hinder what you have purposed for our righteousness though living by faith "from first to last". May we also be quick to pray and to call others to prayer for our nation and against those who "suppress the truth". Amen.*

Day 219. Micah 2:6-7 records that, at a time of false prophets among God's people, God asked, "Do not My words do good to him whose ways are upright?" James 4:4 records that, at a time of disunity and

unfaithfulness in the church, James asked, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? *Heavenly Father, help us through the power of Your promised Holy Spirit to be more like Jesus in teaching and applying Your words of righteousness (uprightness) in love to others. Enable us to turn our backs on those who neither live out nor speak out Your truth but who tempt us with things of this world that cause You to turn Your back on us. Bring unity among true believers, for Christ's sake, who died to save those who believe He is the Son of God and who will return soon to meet the faithful. Amen.*

Day 220. 1 Chronicles 8 and 9 record the family line of Benjamin which included Saul, the first king of Israel. After the exile in Babylon, 956 people from the tribe of Benjamin returned to live in and around Jerusalem. They were with a remnant of 690 people from the tribe of Judah who produced the 'royal line' from Israel's second king, David. His family line prevailed to the time of Joseph and Mary who were used by God to support the birth and childhood of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah and Saviour of the World. Luke 22:39-41 says that after the Last Supper, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives "as usual" and prayed. Before praying, Jesus said to His disciples, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." It was night and they were all in a familiar and comfortable place. The disciples soon fell asleep instead of watching and praying for the new events in the ministry of Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God. *Lord Jesus, we see that there were only a few survivors from the exile in Babylon that resulted in Your birth on Earth to establish the Kingdom of God in a new and eternal way. Help us to stay alert and watch and pray what is happening as You prepare now the remnant of Your people for Your return at a time of much tribulation. Forgive us in seeking familiar and comfortable places to rest when we need to understand what Father God is saying and doing at this time to fulfil His purposes in You. For your sake and glory we ask. Amen.*

Day 221. Psalm 105 begins with the instruction to the descendants of Abraham to "give thanks to the LORD God Almighty; make known among the nations what He has done." It then records how God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (v.11) and the story of Joseph who was sold as a slave to Egypt to prepare the way for Jacob's family (Israelites) to live as aliens in Egypt (v.17,23). It then records the call of Moses and Aaron who did miraculous signs (v.26-27) to bring them back to the land God had promised to Abraham to "observe His laws. Praise the LORD!" (v.42-45). Hebrews 9:13 explains that, through the sacrificed blood of Christ, "He is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant." *Thank You merciful Father, God Almighty, in recording Your promises and commandments to the family of Abraham which gives meaning to the new covenant for all who respond to Your call to repent and be saved through the blood of Jesus, Your Son, our Saviour. Help us to "make known among the nations what He has done... Praise the LORD!" Amen.*

Day 222. 2 Samuel 8 to 10 records the many victories over his enemies that God gave to King David. He dedicated articles won in battles to the Lord God Almighty (8:11) and did what was "just and right for all his people" (8:15). He also blessed Mephibosheth, the lame grandson of King Saul (9:13). However, David failed to defeat the enemy within and seduced a beautiful woman, then plotted to kill her husband (11:15). The prophet Nathan rebuked David and he repented to God (12:13). David wrote Psalm 51 to seek mercy and forgiveness which remains to this day an important understanding of God's desire for righteousness and salvation through repentance. 2 Timothy 1:14 gives Paul's warning to Timothy to "guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." *Heavenly Father, thank you for the Old Testament record of man's sin and God's mercy through repentance. Keep us ever mindful of the sacrifice You made through Your only Son for the whole world to be saved if we humble ourselves as did*

David. Encourage us to defeat the enemy and nurture Your calling by welcoming Your Holy Spirit to work within us at all times to be a blessing to others. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Day 223. Proverbs 31:8-9 warns "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Luke 18:7-8;17 records the words of Jesus. "Will not God bring justice for His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you He will see that they get justice and quickly. However, when the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Jesus goes on to say "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." *Heavenly Father, forgive us for the selfish human wisdom that ignores the suffering of those who cannot speak up for themselves. Grant us the humility to seek Your divine wisdom with faith to believe You will hear and answer justly for the needs of our nation. Help us not to despise the weak and the young in faith but to encourage them to be like little children who ask in faith in the hope that many will receive Your justice, righteousness and salvation. We pray that this change of attitude will result in revival in time for many more to welcome Jesus when He returns to Earth in glory. Change us to change others! Amen.*

Day 224. Ecclesiastes 3:11-14 says "God has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live... I know that everything that God does will endure for ever... God does it so that men will revere Him." Jude 24-25 gives a doxology to remind believers that God is "able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy." Jude then concludes with giving glory to "the only God our Saviour... through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Dear God, forgive us for trying to make decisions in life and trust You have already made provision for us eternally! Help us to realise that Jude experienced the full truth that the writer of Ecclesiastes only glimpsed. We praise You that we are created with the potential of enjoying life to the full now and in eternity. This includes "doing good while we live" and in a way that "men will revere You". We thank You Father God that in Christ we also see how and why this purpose and provision is made fully clear to us and the whole of creation. Help us to "fathom" what You have done and provided in Your love and mercy and keep us from falling so that You may look on us "without fault" through Christ's sacrifice which You planned from the beginning for our eternal salvation and for Your glory. Amen.*

Day 225. Judges 11:23-27 records the time when Israel discussed with the king of Ammon the right to own the strip of land that used to belong to the Amorites. Jephthah said to the king, "Since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before His people of Israel, what right have you to take it over? ...Whatever the LORD our God has given us, we will possess." 2 Timothy 2:14-16 records Paul's warning to Timothy against "quarrelling about words: it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly." *Heavenly Father, in Your mercy confirm to those You have appointed to lead our nation the need to trust You in all discussions to establish Your righteousness and peace. Clarify Your purpose for all to see and accept what You have done or plan to do, so that we are able to stand firm and possess what is ours without shame or resorting to the use of ungodly speech. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 226. Ecclesiastes 7:25-29 says "I turned my mind to understand, to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme [reason and purpose] of things and to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly" (v.25). The writer concludes, "This only have I found: God made man upright but men have gone in search of many schemes [reasons and purposes]" (v.29). Revelation 2:11 gives the words of Jesus Christ. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." *Father God, in Your mercy, turn the hearts and minds of Your people fully back to You to hear what Your Holy Spirit is saying in*

these days of suffering. Help us to be faithful by standing firm without fear and to understand how rich we truly are in divine wisdom. Help us avoid searching after made-made solutions or schemes when we have the ability to overcome all things through the victory that Christ our Saviour won for us on the cross. For His sake we ask and in the power of His Spirit. Amen.

Day 227. Leviticus 19:23-25 gives instructions to plant new fruit trees and then remove and destroy the fruit in the first three years in order to encourage the tree to become fully established. In the fourth year the fruit must be regarded as holy and "an offering of praise to the LORD God Almighty. But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased." This is righteous advice long-term both for fruit-growers and for their crops of fruit, both spiritually and practically, through faith and good works. Romans 3:31 - 4:1-3. Paul asks if we nullify the Old Testament Law by faith in Christ. He answers his own question, "Not at all! Rather we uphold the Law." He follows this with his explanation of how Abraham and his family were justified by works and faith. "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." *Heavenly Father, show us how to benefit from the Old Testament records of Your righteous laws and of righteous people living by faith and works before the time of Christ our Saviour. Further, show us how to benefit You through offering You our first fruits in praise. Furthermore, help us to live by faith and works that will benefit Your people and those whom you seek for Your Kingdom. So enable us to be generous with the harvest of good things you have blessed us with in our lives. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 228. Psalm 106:40-48 records how the LORD God Almighty "was angry with His people and ... handed them over to the [surrounding] nations" (v.40-41). "Many times He delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. But He took note of their distress when He heard their cry; for their sake He remembered His covenant, and out of His great love He relented" (v.43-45). "Save us, O LORD, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name and glory in Your praise... Let all the people say, 'Amen!' " (v.47-48). Hebrews 10:1-10 confirms the Old Testament Law and its sacrifices were a "shadow of the good things that were to come" (v.1). The writer of Hebrews then teaches us, "When Christ came into the world, He said [quoting Psalm 40:6-8], 'Sacrifices and offering you did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me... Here I am – it is written about Me in the scroll – I have come to do Your will, O God' " (v.5-7). *Heavenly Father, help us to understand the heaviness of heart You feel when we, Your people, go astray from Your holy word and end up under the control of ungodly people and even nations. Thank You for Your mercy when You hear our cry and save us with the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, who submitted to Your will to die on a cross for our sins. Forgive us and grant us freedom from unholy control and renew Your Spirit within us in readiness to welcome our Messiah at any time. Let all the people say, "Amen!"*

Day 229. Job 38-41 records God's reply to Job's despair and complaints and hearing worldly wisdom from so-called friends in the previous 37 chapters. God warns Job, "Brace yourself like a man: I will question you and you *shall* answer Me" (40:7). God then asks Job three questions. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn Me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's and can your voice thunder like His?" (40:8-9). In chapter 42:1-6 Job repents. "I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted... I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know... My ears had heard of You but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent..." 2 Timothy 3:1-9 gives Paul's warning, "There will be terrible times in the Last Days" (v.1) but the wicked men "will not get very far because... their folly will be clear to everyone" (v.9). *Lord God, bring on the day when wicked people and false teachings are fully exposed, followed quickly by life-changing repentance and revival. Open our ears and eyes to hear, see and understand You. For Christ's sake and Your glory. Amen.*

Day 230. Numbers 32 records the time when the Israelites were encamped on the east bank of the River Jordan ready to claim the Promised Land of Canaan on the other side. Two of the tribes wanted to settle down where they were (v.1-5). Moses would not approve this action because it failed to support the other people of God and above all failed to do the will of God (v.6-15). However, the leaders of the two tribes told Moses that their men were ready to cross the Jordan and claim the Promised Land but they would return to

live east of Jordan "because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan" (v.16-19). So Moses told them to "arm yourselves before the LORD God Almighty for battle. But if you fail to do this you will be sinning against the LORD and you may be sure that your sin will find you out... Do what you have promised" (v.20-24). John 7:28-30 records the time when John the Baptist had baptised many of the Jews (even tax collectors). These righteous people accepted the teachings of Jesus (v.29). "But the Pharisees and experts in the Law rejected God's purpose for themselves" (v.30). *Merciful Father, help us to avoid judging the motives and beliefs of other believers lest we reject Your holy will, purpose and provision – for them, ourselves and for others. May these Old and New Testament writings help us to see clearly the bigger picture of the issues we face day by day and move forward in the power of Your Holy Spirit to obey You and to claim what You have promised, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and to be a blessing to You and Your people. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 231. Isaiah 43 records the words of Israel's Creator: "Fear not, I have redeemed you" (v.1) and He adds "whom I created for My glory" (v.7), and as "witnesses that I am God" (v.12). He then reminds His people of how they wearied Him (v.24) but He "remembers your sins no more" (v.25) even if it meant destroying many of them (v.26-28). God then reassured His people, "I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring" (44:3). 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 records Paul's reminder to the Jews who believed in Jesus as their Messiah that "our forefathers were all under the cloud" leading them out of Egypt and "all passed through the [Red] Sea" (v.1). "They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual water ... from the spiritual rock ... that was Christ" (v.3-4). "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (v.6). Paul said that these things were "written down as warnings for us on whom the fulfilment of the age has come. So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (v.11-12). *Father God, thank You for these timely reminders from the past so that we can stand firm in these Last Days, with sin and destruction around us. Enable us daily, through the Spirit of Christ our Saviour, to see Your judgement and salvation at work and to be quick to give You all the glory and witness that You are God. In the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 232. Ecclesiastes 8:14 sadly observes that "righteous men get what the wicked deserve and wicked men get what the righteous deserve" which leads the writer to conclude (9:1) that "the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him." 1 John 1:1-4 proclaims that "the eternal life which was with the Father has appeared to us" (v.2). John is assured that "our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ" (v.3). *Heavenly Father, we thank You that, unlike the Old Testament writer, we can sing, "I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold". Help us to realise that worldly riches are nothing compared to the riches in Christ our Saviour, in this world and the next. Help us to place our lives in Your hands and trust You for what lies ahead regarding earthly glory or suffering, in the assurance of fellowship for now and eternity with our Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank You that You sent Jesus to turn our hopelessness into hopefulness. Amen.*

Day 233. Proverbs 16:1-6 testifies that a man's "plans of the heart" seem innocent [clean, KJV] "but motives are weighed by the LORD God Almighty" (v.1-2). The writer admits that we must "commit to the LORD what you do and your plans will succeed" (v.3). We must also understand that "the LORD works out everything for His own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster" (v.4). It is "through love and faithfulness [mercy and truth, KJV] that sin is atoned for" and it is "through the fear of the LORD that a man avoids evil" (v.6). Hebrews 9:10-14 tells us that Old Testament regulations applied "until the time of the new order" (v.10). "When Christ came as High Priest of the good things that are already here... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves but ... once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" for us who believe (v.11-12). How much more then will the blood of Christ... cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (v.14). *Father God, forgive us for yielding to our "plans of the heart" without seeking You. Thank you for Your love and faithfulness towards us and Your longing for us to worship and honour You. Thank You that through Christ alone, "once for all by*

His own blood" You secured our salvation now and forever. Encourage us to trust You to "work things out" even through allowing disaster at this present time. Amen.

Day 234. Genesis 30:22-43 describes how God had mercy on Jacob's wife, Rachel. "He listened to her ... and she gave birth to a son and said, 'God has taken away my disgrace.' She named him Joseph and said, 'May the Lord God Almighty add to me another son' ". Jacob argued with his father-in-law Laban who sacrificed large numbers of his goats when Jacob took his family and flocks back to his father Isaac in God's Promised Land. Rachel later gave birth to Benjamin but sacrificed her own life giving birth (35:16-19) in the town of Bethlehem. This was where Jesus the Christ, son of Mary, was born nearly 2000 years later, whose husband was a descendant of Jacob (Matthew 1:2). 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 gives Paul's account of the purpose of remembering the Last Supper of the Lord Jesus. He warned the church members not to join together to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection until they had healed "divisions among you" (v.18) and to wait until all the church were gathered together, poor and rich, to avoid excluding anyone (v.33). In this way, they would not hinder the eternal salvation plan of God through the sacrifice of His Son. *Father God, thank you for revealing the sacrifice of those who were part of Your plan to redeem Your people Israel. Thank You for submitting Your Son, our Saviour, to live and die as the ultimate sacrifice for saving us from the punishment we deserve. Lord Jesus, thank You for suffering for me that I might live with You in this world and the next, through faith in God our Father and Your promised indwelling Holy Spirit. Bring unity in our churches at this time and respect for all believers, whatever their background, so that Your sacrifice was not in vain. Amen.*

Day 235. Jeremiah 44:1-10. The LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, sent Jeremiah to remind the remnant of Jews in Egypt how He was provoked into anger by His people in Jerusalem. They had found new opportunities to sin against Him, "worshipping gods that neither they, nor you, nor your fathers ever knew" (v.1-3). God said "they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness" (v.5). Jerusalem ended up in ruins (v.6). Jeremiah was told to warn the remnant of believers in Egypt that the same would happen to them (v.17-14). But they said to Jeremiah, "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD!" (v.16). Jude 1-5. Jude writes down his prayers for his readers but also warns them to "contend for [earnestly maintain] the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (v.1-3). He then speaks of "godless men who change the grace of God into a licence for immorality" hence denying "the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (v.4, KJV). Jude adds, "I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt but later destroyed those who did not believe" (v.5). *Father God, we pray for Your mercy this day to forgive our sins, old and new, that You may bless, not destroy, the wonderful world You have created which we have polluted, practiced immorality and worshipped unrighteous objects and objectives. Show us how to earnestly uphold, practice, maintain and contend for the faith we have in You and our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of Your Holy Spirit, so that the people of our nations reject new and old ways of sinning. May we all listen to You this day, for Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 236. 2 Kings 8:25 to 9:13 tells how the ungodly King Joram ruled in Jerusalem for just one year in 885 BC (8:26). He "did evil in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty" (8:27) and His reign suddenly ended through injury in battle. Then Elisha the prophet of God sent one of his young prophets to find Jehu to "pour oil on his head and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you King of Israel.' Then open the door and run!" (9:1-3). The young prophet, whose name we do not know, obeyed Elisha, then ran away (9:6-10). When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, he told them what the young prophet said and did (9:11-12). Amazingly, "they hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him... and shouted 'Jehu is king!' " (9:13). Jehu reigned for 28 years. 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 gives Paul's teaching to be careful to avoid using our faith and knowledge of God and His word unwisely and end up becoming a stumbling block to those who have a weak faith. "When you sin in this way... you sin against Christ" (v.12). *Heavenly Father, help us to heed Paul's warning in all situations so that we are an encouragement to young believers just as Elisha was to one of the*

young unnamed prophets of God. Show us how to establish Your truth in those we have a responsibility towards in such a way that they are not overwhelmed by the 'mystery of Christ' and His salvation for all who believe. Grant us the wisdom of Elisha to know what to say and do and then "run away" and wait and watch for You to fulfil Your plans for the extension of Your Kingdom in amazing ways! Amen.

Day 237. Isaiah 43:24-28 records the words of the LORD God Almighty spoken against His people Israel: "You have burdened Me with your sins and wearied Me with your offences. I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake and remembers your sins no more... I will consign Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn." God in His mercy, immediately follows this with a promise: "Do not be afraid, O Jacob, My servant... I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants" (44:2-3). Acts 7 gives Stephen's speech to the High Priest in Jerusalem in which he recalls how the promise of God to Abraham was fulfilled in Egypt to bring the children of his grandson Jacob into the Promised Land, now Israel. Stephen also said that during the journey to the Promised Land, Moses "received living words to pass on" from the angel on Mount Sinai. "But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him" (v.38-39). Then Stephen testified, "You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit... You have received the Law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." This was in addition to killing the prophets who predicted the coming of Israel's Messiah "and now you have betrayed and murdered Him" (v.51-53). This testimony cost Stephen his life (v.54-60). *Father God, protect and empower us to obey and uphold Your righteous Law and testify of your salvation plan in Jesus our Saviour, whatever the cost. In Your mercy, forgive our nation and do not let our leaders resist Your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Day 238. Genesis 19 records the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah but also describes how Lot recognised and protected two men of God ("angels") from the evil men who lived nearby. In turn, these men of God saved Lot and his wife and daughters "because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD God Almighty against its people is so great that He has sent us to destroy it" (v.13). Revelation 22:12-15 records the words of Jesus. "Behold I am coming soon! Blessed are those who wash their robes [do His commandments, KJV] that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the holy city of God. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic acts, the sexually immoral, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." *Heavenly Father may we take note of Your acts past, present and future to protect Your truth and those who uphold it, as we await the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Save Your people and innocent men and women from those who pervert Your creation and society and who encourage falsehood and false gods, and the destruction they deserve. Empower us to support those who declare Your Bible truth and salvation in Christ alone. Amen.*

Day 239. Job 23:8-12 records Job's complaint that in his experience he cannot find God when he searches east, west, north or south (v.8-9). He testifies, however, that God "knows the way that I take [and] when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." He claims "I have kept to His way... I have not departed from the commands of His lips. I have treasured the words of His mouth" (v.10-12). 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8 praises the believers who responded to the Gospel preached "with words and power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction... You became imitators ... of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers ... your faith in God has become known everywhere." *Dear God, we see in the faith and experience of Job how we can fail to realise our limitations and self-righteousness. Forgive us and minister to us afresh the full Gospel message and its words of Holy Spirit power. Convict us afresh to become true imitators of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, so that we become a model to other believers, and witness to life-changing joy in our nation midst suffering and testing. For Your glory and for Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 240. Jeremiah 29:1-10 records the words of Almighty God through his prophet Jeremiah to the exiled Jewish elders, priests, prophets and other Jews in Babylon. "Build houses and settle down, plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; increase in number... Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it because if it prospers, you too will prosper... Do not listen to those who are prophesying lies to you in My name... when 70 years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil My gracious promise to bring you back to this place." Revelation 22:10-12 gives the words of Jesus to the apostle John. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book because the time is near. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; let him who is holy continue to be holy. Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with Me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." *Thank you heavenly Father for these words of prophecy fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled. During these times of conflict and evil, deliver Your people from modern-day Babylon. Help us to do right and to live holy lives and to be a blessing to our land as we await the return of Your Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Day 241. Nehemiah 9:17-19 describes the gathering together for public confession and worship of the nation of Israel 450 years before the time of Christ (see v.1-3). "You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore You did not desert them [our forefathers] even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said 'This is your god' ... or when they committed awful blasphemies. Because of Your compassion You did not abandon them." Galatians 3:8-14 reminds us that the Old Testament scriptures "foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel [of Christ] in advance of Abraham" (v.8). "Christ redeemed us from the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree' (Deut. 21:23). He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (v.13-14). *Heavenly Father, thank You that we can read about revival under the old covenant before the time of Christ and that the Good News of Christ brings salvation under the new covenant to those Gentiles who receive Him as the Son of God. Do not abandon us but prepare the way for public confession and worship before Christ's return so that many more Jews and Gentiles will receive Your Spirit and do many acts of good works as an outcome of revival in these 'last days'. Amen.*

Day 242. Exodus 21:24 gives God's old covenant teaching on righteousness based on the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 speaks about Paul's Gospel message. "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God" (v.18). "The world through its wisdom did not know Him [but] God was pleased... to save those who believe" (v.21). "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called... [this is Christ, KJV] the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v.24). *Father God, we invite You to reveal Your power in righteousness and justice that upholds Your ultimate plan of salvation in Christ alone so that we are saved from the foolish plans of mankind and enfolded in the love of Your mercy and forgiveness. Prepare the way for Messiah's return and open the eyes of the world to see the wonderful things You are doing today under Your new covenant teaching. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

Day 243. Psalm 50:14-15, 23 records God's request for obedience and His promise of blessings for those who seek Him, with the instruction to honour Him. "Sacrifice thank-offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High; call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you and you will honour Me... He who sacrifices thank-offerings honours Me and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God." Matthew 25:1-13 gives the teachings of Jesus on the parable of the ten virgins who waited for the bridegroom to arrive. Five were foolish and did not have enough oil for their lamps (v.1-3). When the bridegroom arrived, "the virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was

shut" (v.10). Jesus warned, "Keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour" regarding His second coming (v.13). *Father God, through You Spirit, help us to heed the teachings of Jesus Christ to obey Him and remain alert to seek and honour Him in readiness for His pending return as we serve sacrificially in ministry to extend Your Kingdom on Earth. Thank You that You have fulfilled Your promise to prepare the way to show us Your salvation for those who worship, trust and obey our Saviour. Amen.*

Day 244. 1 Kings 21 records the events that led up to the punishment of the notorious King Ahab "who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty, urged on by Jezebel his wife" (v.25). It required the personal intervention of Elijah the prophet of God to prophecy the destruction of both Ahab and Jezebel (v.17-24). 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 records the events that led up to Titus visiting the church in Corinth with "much enthusiasm" (v.17) and with commendation by Paul "who was his fellow-worker" (v.23). It did not require the personal intervention of Paul nor to write in advance for everyone to work together as "an honour to Christ" and a "service to the saints" (8:23 & 9:1). *Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing to us the contrast between unrighteous and righteous leaders. Show us how to pray for leaders of church and state and be ready for personal intervention if required. For Your glory and purposes in the establishment of Your holy Kingdom, about which Jesus our Saviour taught us so much. Amen.*

Day 245. Psalm 148 encourages us to worship God and then looks forward to the coming Messiah: "Praise the name of the LORD God Almighty, for His name alone is exalted; His splendour is above the earth and the heavens. He has raised up for His people a horn [Strong One, Anointed King, Redeemer]." Hebrews 10:12-18 reminds us of the new covenant of God under His Messiah: "By one sacrifice He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy" (v.14). The writer then quotes from the prophet Jeremiah: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time says the Lord. I will put My laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds... Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more" (v.16-17). *Heavenly Father, thank You in these wayward days for Your faithfulness towards those who value Your written words and the Living Word who dwells among us. Come, Holy Spirit, revive Your church, as we look forward to the return of Israel's Messiah! Amen.*

Day 246. Deuteronomy 11:8 continues with the long address of Moses to the people of Israel to prepare them before entering the Promised Land. "Observe all the commandments I am giving you today so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land." 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 says "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgements about all things but he himself is not subject to man's judgement... We have the mind of Christ." *Heavenly Father, thank you again and again for our salvation in Christ alone and for the ability to walk in the light of Your truth that is spiritually discerned and not subject to the wisdom of mankind. In our obedience to Your commandments, may we have the spiritual strength to enter into the promises You long to fulfil in this land and see revival, so that the mind of Christ be established more and more, and "take over the land" here and abroad. For His sake. Amen.*

Day 247. Ezekiel 17:11-24 says, after reminding the "rebellious house" of Israel of their disobedience (v.11-21), "This is what the Sovereign LORD God Almighty says: 'I Myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it... on the mountain heights of Israel... It will bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it... I the Lord have spoken and I will do it' " (v.22-24). In this way God looked forward to Israel's coming Messiah 600 years later in whom people "of every kind" would find refuge and salvation. James 5:7. "Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming [return]. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains." *Lord Jesus, thank you that you suffered for our sakes to fulfil the purposes of Father God for our refuge and salvation.*

Forgive our rebellious and disobedient nature and keep us patient and vigilant in watching for Your return. Revive Your church so that many more people "of every kind" will welcome You on that great and glorious day. Amen.

Day 248. 2 Chronicles 32:24-26 records King Hezekiah's response to illness. "He was at the point of death. He prayed to the Lord God Almighty who answered him" (v.24). At first "he did not respond to the kindness shown to him" and God refused to bless him or Judea and Jerusalem. "Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem. Therefore the Lord's wrath did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah" (v.26). James 5:13-16 asks, "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord [Jesus]. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven... The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." *Lord Jesus, forgive us when You have answered prayer for healing and we have failed to respond. Forgive our arrogance and pride and may our leaders and our nation also give You glory in acknowledging Your mercy when they seek Your solutions to problems and needs. Amen.*

Day 249. Joel 3:1-17 gives the vision of the unknown prophet Joel. After the predicted "invasion of locusts" and the "call to repentance" (Chapter 1), Joel speaks of his vision about the restoration of Jerusalem after the judgement of the nations gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (3:1-2). "For there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side" (3:12). "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD God Almighty is near" (3:14). Mark 1:35-39 tells how Jesus rose early to pray and sensed the need to move on to preach elsewhere "to the nearby villages... 'That is why I have come' " (v.38). "So He travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons" (v.39). *Father God, may the nations heed Joel's warning to repent and seek Your mercy before it is too late. Meanwhile, may Your people follow the example of our Lord and seek You in prayer to fulfil our calling in teaching, preaching, healing and deliverance ministries in these last days, serving others in love, peace and compassion. For Christ's sake, who died to save the world from the sins of mankind. Amen.*

Day 250. Malachi 1:1-5 gives the word of the LORD God Almighty to Israel. "I have loved you." Regarding the enemies of Israel, the LORD God Almighty said, "They may build but I will demolish... You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the Lord, even [in the nations] beyond the borders of Israel.'" James 5:15-16 reminds us again that "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." *Thank You Father God for reminding us yet again of your purpose to bless the nations of the world through Your people Israel and their Messiah, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Also for reminding us through James that the outcome of our salvation through the suffering of Jesus is to cultivate faith and holiness with love, whilst caring for other believers around the world, and as we await our Messiah's second coming. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.*

Day 251. Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 claims, "A man can do nothing better than to eat, drink and find satisfaction in his work." Also, "To the man who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness." Mark 16:14-20 records the words of Jesus after rebuking some of his followers for their lack of faith in believing He had risen from death. "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Then He told them that in His name they will drive out demons, speak in tongues, pick up snakes, survive drinking poison, and heal the sick. "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it." *Grant Lord Jesus, that we live and work according to Your purpose and enable us to enter into Your provision of wisdom, knowledge and happiness. Forgive our lack of faith and prepare us to preach everywhere and experience the signs and wonders that You are with us and with those whom You are seeking for the Kingdom of God. Amen.*

Day 252. Judges 5 records the song of the prophetess and judge of Israel in 1300BC. "Hear this, you [neighbouring] kings! I will sing to the LORD God Almighty; I will sing. I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel" (v.3). She expresses much support for Israel: "My heart is with Israel's princes, with the willing volunteers among the people. Praise the LORD!" (v.9). She concludes, "May all Your enemies perish, O Lord! But may they who love You be like the sun when it rises in its strength." Then the land had peace for 40 years (v.31). 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Paul says, "When I came to you, brothers... I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified... My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. *Heavenly Father, raise up leaders in church and state who are spiritually strong, whose strength comes from Your Holy Spirit. May they give praise to You and to "willing volunteers among the people" with the certain knowledge that our wisdom must be from You and not from forceful people with "persuasive words". May our nations experience and witness Your peace through humble leadership who know personally Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. For His sake, Amen.*

Day 253. Joshua 24:32 records that the bones of Joseph 'were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob [his father] bought for a hundred pieces of silver.' This purchase happened before God sent Jacob and his family to Egypt for safe keeping and to prosper. Shechem is 60km north of Jerusalem and it was also the first place in God's Promised Land of Canaan that Abraham settled after being called by God to leave Mesopotamia (Iraq). The land was promised to Abraham's family, which he was given faith to believe without ever seeing it fulfilled. 'This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants.' Hebrews 10:23-25 says, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful" (v.23). This promise of God refers to the Redeemer that would be born to Abraham's family which was fulfilled through Mary the virgin mother of Jesus Christ. She married another Joseph who was a descendant of Jacob (Matthew 1:2). God also sent Joseph, with Mary and Jesus, to Egypt for safe keeping (Matt. 2:23). The writer of Hebrews also refers to the promise of God regarding Christ's return "as you see the Day approaching" (v.25). *Heavenly Father, help us to behold and understand all the Bible truths recorded over many centuries that fulfil Your promises and purposes in establishing the people of God and Your heavenly Kingdom on Earth. May we also hold fast to our faith and salvation in Jesus as we await His return. Amen.*

Day 254. Psalm 37:1-8 records King David's advice and his proven experience: "Trust in the LORD God Almighty... Delight yourself in the LORD... Commit your way to the LORD... Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him... Refrain from anger... Do not fret..." He ends with these words, "The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; He is their stronghold in times of trouble... because they take refuge in Him" (v.39-40). Revelation 22:1-7 continues with the angel's revelation to John of the New Jerusalem. "No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face and His name will be on their foreheads... And they will reign for ever and ever" (v.3-5). Then the words of Jesus are written down: "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of this prophecy in this book" (v.7). *Amen, Lord Jesus, to the words of this vision of our eternal salvation and the promise of Your imminent return! As we watch and pray, encourage us through Your Holy Spirit to trust in God our Father, to delight in Him, to fully commit ourselves to His calling, to be still and wait patiently and not to get frustrated, cross or even angry ... and not to fret! Thank you Jesus that your sacrifice on the cross establishes us in the righteousness of God who is our stronghold and our refuge in times of trouble. Amen.*

Day 255. Psalm 9:15-20 says "The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The Lord God Almighty is known by His justice [whereas] the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands." King David finishes with the words, "Let the nations know they are but men!" Mark 1:29-38 tells how Jesus went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 'Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever and they told Jesus about her. So He went in to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them' (v.30-31). 'Very early in the morning... Jesus... went off to a solitary place where He prayed' (v.35). He then told His disciples, "Let us go somewhere else, to

the nearby villages, so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come" (v.38). *Father God, we see the very situation that King David described where the nations today have fallen into their own pits and got trapped by their own nets. "Let the nations know they are but men!" And with much prayer, faith and compassion, may we see Your mercy in healing those with a fever so that they can get back to work, as with Simon's mother-in-law. Bring revival as we care for the needy and preach Your truth as followers of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. For His sake, who died to save the world from sin. Amen.*

Day 256. Job 31 states how he tried to justify himself only to end up righteous in his own eyes. He denied any sin regarding lust (v.1); falsehood, faulty scales, sinful steps, heart or hands (v.5-7); envy of his neighbour, denying justice to his servants or the poor and needy and orphans (v.9,13,16,19,21); putting his trust in gold or worship of sun or moon (v.24,26); rejoicing in the misfortunes of his enemies (v.29); or concealing secret sins (v.33). This self-righteousness resulted in condemnation by his friends (Chapters 32-37) and by God Himself (Chapters 38-41). Job repented and was blessed (42:6,12). John 15:18 records the warning of Jesus not to try to live in such a way that the world loves you. "You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." However, do not expect to be popular! *Lord Jesus, you died to save us from worldly ways and change us to be loving and compassionate people like Yourself, and ready to speak the truth from God our Father at risk of becoming unpopular even to the point of persecution. Help us to know what it means to be Christ-like! Amen.*

Day 257. Deuteronomy 11:1-12 gives more instructions from God via Moses after the Ten Commandments given in Chapter 5. "Love the LORD your God and keep His requirements" (v.1). He reminds them of the experience they had gained of God's discipline before their children were born, as if to say they should be taught about these things, both the good and the bad (v.2,5). This teaching was part of their preparation to inhabit the Promised Land of Canaan "flowing with milk and honey" (v.9). It was not like the land of Egypt "as in a vegetable garden" but "a land of mountains and valleys... It is a land your God cares for..." (v.10-12). 1 Timothy 4:8-11 gives Paul's teaching to Timothy. "Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come... We have put our hope in the living God who is the Saviour of all people and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things." *Lord Jesus, thank You that our hope is in You through Your sacrifice for our sins, enabling us to experience resurrection life with You. Father God, keep us physically and spiritually fit for the future demands ahead that You have planned and show us what to teach others, especially our families, about past and present experiences, good or bad, that testify of Your perseverance with Your people from the beginning and how You physically and spiritually sustain those who believe. Prepare us for future hardships, knowing it will not be like a well-watered vegetable plot or a bed of roses. Amen.*

Day 258. 2 Chronicles 34:30-33 records how King Josiah read aloud "all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the [newly renovated] Temple of the LORD God Almighty. The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant, in the presence of the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commands... with all his heart and with all his soul and to obey... then he made everyone [assembled] in Jerusalem pledge themselves to it." Hebrews 10:15-24 recalls the words of the prophet Jeremiah who lived at the time of Josiah. "I will put their laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds... Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more" (v.16-17). The writer of Hebrews continues, "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled [in the blood of Jesus] to cleanse us from a guilty conscience" (v.19-22). He then affirms the righteous outcome of salvation in Christ by urging his readers to "consider how we may spur each other towards love and good deeds" (v.24). *Heavenly Father may we continue to value and obey Your commands and praise You for our salvation through the shed blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And may we live righteously to fulfil Your purpose to do good deeds in love for those who believe and also to seek others to pledge themselves to faith in You through Christ before He returns to Earth. Amen.*

Day 259. Ezekiel 11 declares the word of the LORD God of Israel 600 years before the birth of Christ. "I know what is going through your mind" (v.5). "I will execute judgement on you at the borders of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord for you have not followed My decrees or kept My laws but have conformed to the standards of the nations around you" (v.11-12). Philippians 3:12-4:1 gives Paul's warning to "press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me... Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead... Only let us live up to what we have attained... That is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" *Heavenly Father, help us to hold on to the faith and salvation given us through the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour. Restore us into a holy nation and protect us at the borders and do not allow us to conform to the standards of the nations around us. You know our deepest thoughts, so enable us to forget the sins of the past and live up to what we have attained in and through Christ. Amen!*

Day 260. Job Chapter 9. Job asks "How can a mortal be righteous before God?" (v.2). Job finds a dozen good reasons he cannot argue with God (v.4-10) and asks "How then can I dispute with Him? How can I find words to argue with Him?" (v.14). Job concludes, "If only there were someone to arbitrate between us!" (v.33). Revelation 22:17 gives the words of Jesus Christ to John: "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." John recorded earlier the similar words of Jesus, "Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (John 7:38). *Father God, thank you for revealing the dilemma of Job in gaining a profound understanding of You without being able to approach You without an arbitrator. Thank you that we live in an age of greater understanding and experience in receiving forgiveness through Your Son, our Saviour, that establishes Your free gift of righteousness in our lives and enables us to approach Your throne of grace and be filled with Your Holy Spirit, which is the water of life. Amen. Amazing grace!*

Day 261. Deuteronomy 12:8-12 records the words of Moses before entering the Promised Land. "You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you... He will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety." 1 Corinthians 12:11-13. Paul declares, after listing many gifts of the Holy Spirit, "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines... For we were all baptised by [with, in] one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." *Thank you Heavenly Father for the many promises and gifts recorded in the Bible. Bless what we read, hear, say and do so that we can reach out to You in faith to inherit your righteousness, mercy and provision, whoever we are, through salvation in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Grant to us Your rest from our enemies to enter into Your freedom and safety to do the works of Your Holy Spirit with the gifts You have determined before we were born. Save us therefore from living as each one "sees fit". Amen.*

Day 262. Ecclesiastes 3:17 records the inspiration of the writer midst much despair regarding the meaninglessness of his life: "God will bring to judgement both the righteous and the wicked." This leads him to conclude, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind" (12:13). Tutus warns, "Pay no attention to myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth... They claim to know God but by their actions they deny Him" (1:14-16). You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (2:1). *Heavenly Father may this day re-establish your truth in the lives of believers by freeing us from despair in life and experiencing hope in following Your commandments. Help us to know the truth that will set us free from myths and lies, and pass it on to others, both in words and deeds. For Your glory. Amen.*

Day 263. Exodus 20:18-21 records the reactions of the people immediately after hearing Almighty God speak the words of the Ten Commandments. "When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen, but do not have God speak to us or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.' The people remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was." 1

Corinthians 1:2-9 gives the words of Paul "to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus... God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful." *Heavenly Father, help us to obey the all-important Ten Commandments in fear of You and the need to keep from sinning and to excel under Your times of testing. May we realise we do not have a Moses or a Paul to lead or mediate for us but we have the fellowship of Christ Himself, who died to save us and who dwells with the Almighty God and Creator, mediating on our behalf. Thank you that Your Ten Commandments are fulfilled in us through Your mercy as we "call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" to stop us from sinning. Amen.*

Day 264. Proverbs 1:2-5 pleases: "For attaining [both] wisdom and discipline... doing what is right and just and fair, for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young, let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance." Matthew 1 records the family line of Abraham, Judah, Boaz and King David, the ancestors of Joseph, the future husband of Mary (v.2-16), "who was with child through the Holy Spirit" (v.18). He "was a righteous man" (v.19) and tried to do the right thing but "an angel of the Lord appeared to him" and told him to continue with his marriage to Mary. "She will give birth to a Son and you are to give Him the name Jesus [which means 'the LORD God Almighty saves'] because He will save His people from their sins" (v.21). Joseph followed the wisdom of the angel and took Mary as his wife, with Jesus (v.24-25). *Dear God Almighty, we praise You for the obedience of the lowly carpenter Joseph from Nazareth, a descendant of King David, who was given divine "wisdom and discipline" which led to Your provision of salvation through Your Son Jesus Christ, "to save His people from their sins". Let the wise be amazed at this familiar story "and add to their learning" and "do what is right and just and fair" regarding Your provision for our needy world today, through Jesus Christ before He returns to Earth. Amen.*

Day 265. Nehemiah 2:20 tells how the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 445 BC went ahead despite opposition from the unbelievers around them. "The God of heaven will give us success. We His servants will start rebuilding." The following chapter gives the details of all the men and women involved in the rebuilding and what they personally rebuilt, repaired or restored, using the original foundations or built as new. Each part, when it was finished, was dedicated to the Lord (3:1). Yet some believers refused to help the restoration; they "would not put their shoulders to the work" (3:5). 1 Timothy 1:3-7 records Paul's warning to Timothy to personally order "certain men not to teach false doctrines" (v.3) who "promote controversies rather than God's work – which is [done] by faith" (v.4). "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (v.5). "Some have ... turned to meaningless talk... but they do not know what they are talking about" (v.6-7). *Father God, help us to heed these warnings from Your word to ignore or speak to those who work against us in the establishment of Your Kingdom, including any dissenters inside the church fellowship as well as the unbelievers around us. Help us to rebuild the Church of Christ where past sins and controversies have destroyed the witness of Your truth, ensuring we build or rebuild on Christ our Saviour as the solid foundation for extending Your Kingdom and for destroying the wicked works of the enemy. In the name of Jesus and for His sake, through the guidance and empowering of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Day 266. Psalm 105 recalls the history of two of Noah's sons, Shem and Ham. The Israelites were descendants of Shem, Abraham and Jacob. The Egyptians were descendants of Ham. "Then Israel entered Egypt; Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham. The LORD God Almighty made his people very fruitful" (v.23-24). "Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them" (v.38). But He blessed Israel. "They asked for meat and He brought them quail. He satisfied them with manna, the bread of heaven. He broke open a rock and streams of water poured out" (v.40 NIRV). "He remembered the holy promise He had made to His servant Abraham... He gave them the lands of other nations... so they might obey His rules and follow His laws" (v.42-45 NIRV). Hebrews 10:35-39 says, "So do not throw away your [reason for] confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and not delay..."

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved." *Lord God, help us to live as Your people, faithful to You and unafraid of difficult times with death and destruction around us. May we understand Your purposes over the centuries in and through Your people Israel and their Messiah our Saviour and wait confidently for His return. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 267. Nehemiah 13 tells how, after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the Book of Moses was "read aloud in the hearing of the people" (v.1). This led to the rejection of unholy non-believers from the assembly of God (v.2-3) and the provision of food, wine and oil for singers (v.5) in line with the custom established by King David "for the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God" (12:46). When Nehemiah briefly left Jerusalem to report to King Artaxerxes, the singers "went back to their own fields" (v.10). On his return, Nehemiah asked, "Why is the House of God neglected?" and he "called them together and stationed them at their posts" (v.11). Revelation 21 gives the vision of the New Jerusalem when "the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God" (v.3). "Nothing impure will enter into it... but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (v.27). *Heavenly Father, we seek forgiveness for neglecting Your guidelines in Scripture and delight in the songs of praise and thanksgiving to You. Restore true worship in our land, free from any influence of non-believers and encourage our leaders to call us back to worship. Bring repentance with revival and a longing to see the building up of the New Jerusalem during these evil days. For Your glory and for the sake of Jesus our Saviour, Son of God, who was born as a human being to suffer punishment on our behalf for our eternal salvation. Amen.*

Day 268. Ecclesiastes 4 records the despair of the writer about "the oppression that was taking place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed and they have no comforter" (v.1). He was forced to conclude, "I declared that the dead who had already died are happier than the living who are still alive" (v.2). "Pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him" (v.10). In the next chapter the writer begins to see God's truth and light. "Stand in awe of God" he says (5:7). By the end of his book he declares, "Remember your Creator" (12:1) and finally, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind" (12:13). Matthew 19:17 records the words of Jesus to the rich young man, "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." *Heavenly Father, help us to realise the importance of keeping Your Ten Commandments, whether we are rich or poor, oppressed or free, young or old. Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, thank you for the sacrifice You made for our salvation and the opportunity this gives, not only to live in eternal righteousness with You but also the opportunities to care for the needy of the world around us in these days of death and destruction and disobedience. Amazing grace! Amen.*

Day 269. Nehemiah Chapter 5 reveals that during the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, many of the people of Israel suffered from poverty and hunger because of the demands of the officials and nobles at that time (v.1-5). Nehemiah ordered them to give back the land and their dishonest taxes (v.6-11). They promised to do this and "the whole assembly praised the LORD God Almighty" (v.12-13). Nehemiah asked God to remember him "with favour ... for all I have done for these people" (v.19). He was then able to continue to focus on the work of God in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Chapter 6). Luke 14:1-14 includes the warning, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (v.11). Jesus then advised the rich to care for the poor and needy, "and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (v.14). *Heavenly Father, convict the wealthy people of our nation to humble themselves and establish Your righteousness in the land by caring for the poor and needy with compassion. Enable our leaders to rule wisely, unhindered by unrighteous and irresponsible exploitation and focus on the work God has appointed them to do in rebuilding what has been lost or destroyed. And may our leaders be remembered "with favour for all they have done for the people" to Your praise and glory. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Day 270. Psalm 37:37-40 is a psalm of David which begins with the words "Do not fret" (v.1 & 7) and continues, "Consider the blameless; observe the upright." David proclaims, "There is a future for the man of

peace. But... the future of the wicked will be cut off" (v.37-38). Why? "The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD God Almighty. He is their stronghold in times of trouble... because they take refuge in Him" (v.39-40). 1 Timothy 5:24-25 confirms that "the sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgement ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them" (v.24). However, "good deeds are obvious and even those that are not cannot be hidden" (v.25). *Father God, help us to accept that the sins of some unbelievers around us will be exposed in this world, but with others we may never see Your judgement upon them. So let us heed the warning of Your spiritual leader David, not to fret when evil surrounds us, but to have faith to know that You are our stronghold, fulfilled through Christ our Saviour. Enable us then to do works of good deeds to the "blameless and upright", so that the light of Christ within us cannot be hidden. In His name and through His Spirit we ask. Amen.*

Day 271. Genesis 9:1-4 records God's new covenant with mankind after the Great World Flood. "He blessed Noah and his sons saying, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth... Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.' " Matthew 24:11-14 gives the words of Jesus regarding what will happen at the end of the age during the persecution of His followers. "At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people" (v.10-11). "Because of the increase in wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. But he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom [of God] will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and the end will come" (v.12-14). *Thank you Father God in establishing Your purpose for us to preserve, not destroy, human life and to populate the Earth, and also benefit from the choice of both green plants and meat. Forgive us for polluting Your world morally, spiritually and physically, allowing wickedness and rejection of Your love and mercy through Christ our Saviour. Help us to "stand firm to the end" and support the preaching of the Good News to the whole world, along with compassion for the needy, before the return of Your Messiah. For His sake and glory. Amen.*

Day 272. Genesis 50:7-14 records the time when Joseph obeyed the wishes of his dead father Jacob, whilst still in Egypt, and took his bones to bury them in the cave purchased by Abraham centuries before in the Promised Land of Canaan. Many Egyptian officials went with Joseph and his eleven brothers, the future tribes of Israel (v.7-8). The local Canaanites saw the large company of mourners and wrongly assumed "the Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning" (v.9-11). They did not know this was part of God's purpose for Israel in calling Abraham to the land of Canaan 2000 years before Israel's Messiah was born there for the salvation of the world today. Luke 2:1-11 describes how Quirinius, governor of Syria, was ordered to take a census of people in Israel when most of the world was ruled by the Romans (v.1-3). The local people in Bethlehem saw the crowds coming from many parts of Israel to register, which included Joseph and Mary bearing the unborn Son of God. Joseph was from the unimportant town of Nazareth so was told to stay in a cattle shed "because there was no room in the inn" (v.4-7). However, the local shepherds were told what happened next. "An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them" (v.9). The angel told them, "Today, in the town of David [Bethlehem] a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord [Messiah]" (v.11). *Almighty God, whilst much of the world in the past 4000 years has been unaware of Your salvation plan fulfilled in Jesus Christ, thank you for Your mercy to all people in recording Your purposes in the Bible and for personally revealing Your truth to many believers down the ages. Open the eyes and hearts of the world today to welcome our Saviour, the Christ-child, into their lives. For Your glory and for His sake. Amen. Come soon Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:12).*

Day 273. Jeremiah 46-50 records how God proposed to intervene and deal severely in a variety of ways with the countries surrounding Israel including Babylon. However, "In those days, at that time" declares the LORD God Almighty, "the people of Israel and the people of Judah [united] together and will go in tears to seek the LORD their God... They will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten. My people have been [like] lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray" (50:4-6). "In those days... search will be made for Israel's guilt but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah but

none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare" (50:20). Luke 23:26-43 records the words of Jesus at His crucifixion. He said to the wailing women, "Do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children" (v.28), for He knew what would happen regarding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. He also showed compassion towards the two criminals who were crucified with Him, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (v.34) and shortly after this, one of the criminals repented and Jesus forgave him and said, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" awaiting His resurrection (v.43). *Lord Jesus, speak with compassion today on behalf of the remnant of believers who seek the mercy of God to be repeated in our deliverance in 2021 from modern Babylon and the variety of other enemies that surround Your people, both Jewish and Gentile believers. May we repent and bind ourselves together in unity to seek the Lord God Almighty and know Your forgiveness and life-giving salvation, despite the death and destruction around us, before Your return. Amen.*

Day 274. Deuteronomy 24 and 25 list some of the many social, moral and religious commandments and guidelines from God given to Moses for the people of Israel nearly 3500 years ago in preparation for living in the Promised Land of Canaan. "You must follow carefully what I have commanded" (24:9) which included caring for foreigners, widows and orphans (24:19-22). Also the instruction to take unresolved disputes to court (25:1) rather than putting at risk the law and order of the land by fighting and arguing and encouraging others to join in the conflict. John 7:1-13 reveals the growing desire in His followers for Jesus to declare His authority and go to Jerusalem "so that Your disciples may see the miracles You do" (v.3). But Jesus chose to stay in Galilee for "the right time for Me has not yet come" (v.6,8), knowing the conflicts ahead (v.12). *Father God, help us to reflect on these examples of preparation for conflicts ahead as we move forward under Your provision and purpose in the ministry of Your calling. Enable us to know when to act to avoid unnecessary discord that leads to breakdown of law and order and which adds to the strife of the poor and needy. Encourage us to seek You for the right time to act in Your name and meanwhile remain focused on caring for the foreigners, widows and orphans in our midst. For Your glory, in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Day 275. Genesis 36 records the history of Jacob's twin brother Esau who took wives from the women of Canaan (v.2), unlike Jacob who took wives from the relatives of Abraham. Esau and his family and animals and goods 'moved to the land some distance away from his brother Jacob' (v.6). This land became known as Edom, south east of the Dead Sea, which at that time was still part of Israel, called Jordan today. This separation of the two brothers was done because 'the land where they were staying could not support them both because of their livestock' (v.7) comprising cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats. They became aliens to Israel but many moved back to southern Judea, seeking peace and unity and safety from common enemies. Mark 13:12-13 says that Jesus warned His followers, "Brother will betray brother to death and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of Me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." *Heavenly Father, help us to understand the work of Your Spirit today amongst Jewish and Christian believers in the One True God Almighty. Help us to come to terms with alienation within families of believers, remaining loyal in love and readiness to forgive any prodigal family members. Help us also to remain faithful to You under future persecution from non-believers and to stand firm to the end with faith in Israel's Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, seeking peace and unity with Jews against our common enemies. Amen.*

Day 276. Joel 3:12 speaks of God's judgement of the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat which many Jews, Muslims and Christians believe will be the final judgement place. "Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side." Revelation 3:4-6 records the words of Jesus to the church in Sardis. "You have a few people ... who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with Me dressed in white. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name in the Book of Life but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." *Lord Jesus, thank you for Your revelation through John warning us to be personally prepared for the Final Days before Your return to Earth. Thank You Father God for your warning through Joel for the nations to be prepared for judgement in the Final Days that are surely coming before Your Messiah returns. In these days of great testing, help us to be strong in faith and pure in holy living so that others near and far will see You in us and will believe and repent and have their names written in Your Book of Life. For Christ's sake. Amen.*