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Old and New Testament teachings

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

Bible quotations used by the late Fred Morris, author of Manna Publications, are from the NIV New International Version (1984) or NIrV New International Readers Version (1998) published at that time by Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London.

Use "CTRL F" to search for key words or phrases

1st January 2021. Malachi 2:17 to 3:4. The word of the Lord God Almighty given to Malachi in 400 BC says, "You have wearied the Lord with your words ... 'Where is the God of justice?' See, I will send My messenger who will prepare the way for Me ... the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD God Almighty... "He will be like a refiner's fire or a launder's soap... So I will come near to you for judgment." Revelation 3:24-28 gives the words of Jesus to John for the churches. "To you who have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets... hold on to what you have until I come. To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations... just as I have received authority from My Father. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." *Thank you Father for revealing your truth and purpose to your servants Malachi and John. Encourage the desire in Your people to see Your justice at work in today's society under Your new covenant, whatever the personal cost it takes to grow in your righteousness through Your refining fire. We ask for Your mercy in stopping Satan from perverting this generation with his deep evil secrets. Enable us in 2021 to build on Your faith and righteousness in Christ and to overcome and do Your will to the end with His authority and*

compassion at work in us over individuals, institutions and nations. To Your glory. Amen.

4th January 2021. 1 Samuel 30:9-31 records the instructions of the future King David to share plunder from battles equally between his followers. Some trouble makers disagreed with this decision and wanted to withhold the plunder from those who did not join the battle with them (v.22) but David said, "No my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord God has given us... All shall share alike" (v.23-24). 2 Corinthians 12:19-20 records Paul's concern for the church in Corinth. "We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarrelling, jealousy, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder." *Dear God, we see clearly in the Bible records of God's people behaving badly despite the righteous leadership of David and Paul. Send Your refining fire so that the Church of Jesus Christ today is obedient to You and compassionate towards others as we trust You in the ministry of Your calling to establish righteousness in the land. Help us to be examples of Christ-like caring for others, with wisdom in interpreting Your guidelines and with obedience towards those You have given in authority over us. Amen.*

5th January 2021. 2 Chronicles 34:19-33 records the time when the prophetess Huldah was consulted by government officials during a period when God's people were severely judged because of the sins of their fathers (v.21). She said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says... 'I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people... because they have forsaken Me...'" (v.24-28). The King called the people together and 'read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant' and on their behalf 'renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD God Almighty' (v.30-31). 'As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD' (v.33). Hebrews 2:17-18 says, "He [Jesus] had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." *Thank You Heavenly Father, that You sent Your Son in the form of human flesh to live as our example and to suffer as our redeemer and*

scapegoat and to rise from death to bring us everlasting resurrection life through Your mercy. Provide us Your prophets and prophetesses, priests, government officials and kings and queens to seek Your forgiveness, withhold Your judgement and lead our nations back into righteousness. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ who died as a punishment for our sins and the sins of previous generations. Amen.

Genesis 49:8-12 gives the words of Jacob's blessing on his son Judah whom the rest of the family of Israel "will bow down to" (v.8). "The right to rule will not depart from Judah. It will be his until the King it belongs to comes. [Then] it will be His until the nations obey Him (v.10, NIrV). Galatians 2:6-10 Paul warns, "As for those who seemed to be important, whatever they are makes no difference to me. God does not judge by external appearance... On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews" (v.6-7). The church leaders in Jerusalem agreed to this, asking Paul to continue to remember the poor (v.9-10). *We thank You God for these historical and prophetic words recorded for us to see Your purposes in the family of Abraham through Judah in preparing the way for the Christ-child to be born and brought up 1700 years later by Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem then Egypt then Nazareth before His ministry as King of the Jews. We thank you that Paul accepted Jesus as Israel's Messiah and was called to preach the Good News to the rest of the world. May the whole of the Bible speak clearly the truth from God for today and see the nations repent and bless You and bring salvation to the poor and needy and to all, regardless of "whatever they are". In the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

7th January 2021. Psalm 138 is a psalm of David. "I will praise You O LORD God Almighty with all my heart... I will praise Your name for Your love and faithfulness... When I called, You answered me... Though the LORD is on high, He looks upon the lowly, but the proud He knows [only] from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life... The LORD will fulfil His purpose for me; Your love, O LORD, endures for ever. Do not abandon the works of Your hand!" 1 Corinthians 10:23-33. Paul quotes a familiar saying of believers, "Everything is permissible" for those who have been freed from the Old Testament covenant. However, Paul adds "not everything is beneficial" and "not everything is constructive" (v.23). He gives an example about not

eating meat offered to idols, "for why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience?" (v.27-29). "So... whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks [Gentiles] or the church of God" (v.31). "I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved" (v.33). *Dear Father, while heeding the warnings of Paul, we thank You for the new life and freedom given by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. We also thank You for King David's belief of Your purpose being fulfilled in him through praise and worship and testifying of Your love and safekeeping "in the midst of trouble". Establish us in Your everlasting mercy through the cross of Christ for Your glory and for "the good of many, so that they may be saved". Amen.*

8th January 2021. Isaiah 52:5-10 gives God's words to Isaiah, "All day long My name is constantly blasphemed." Yet God assures Isaiah that "My people will know My name" (v.5-6). God continues, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion 'Your God reigns'... When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes" (v.7-8). "The Lord God Almighty will bare His holy arm in the sight of all nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God" (v.10). Romans 10:8-11 gives Paul's explanation that under the new covenant, "the word [of God's law] is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart (Deuteronomy 30:14), which is the word of faith we are proclaiming, that if you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from death, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." *Dearest Father, in these days when Your name is blasphemed, assure us we will know You personally and know Your delight in us as we proclaim Your Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ for people to see for themselves that our God reigns. Bring on the time when "all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God". Help us to realise the truth is within us to confess "Jesus is Lord" and to know we are saved. Amen.*

11th January 2021. Psalm 38:10-15 echoes the longings of King David to be delivered from persecution, fear and isolation, which echoes today's plague

situation. "My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes. My friends and companions avoid me... my neighbours stay away" (v.10-11). "I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply. I wait on You O Lord God Almighty" (v.14-15). Romans 16:1-20 mentions at least 28 people by name whom Paul sends special greetings to at the end of his letter to the Roman church (v.1-16). He concludes by warning them to keep away from those "who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned" (v.17) and to "be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (v.19-20). *Father God, grant the love, compassion, wisdom and conviction of Paul so that we may be strong in supporting believers today who are in ministry and who may be oppressed by persecution, fear and isolation or who find themselves unable to worship, listen or speak in the way they are accustomed to. Overrule those who play into the hands of the enemy in hindering the Good News of Jesus Christ or who cause disagreement between believers. Comfort those who are prevented from meeting with friends and companions. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

12th January 2021. 1 Samuel 28:8-25 describes the sad end of Saul's reign as the first king of Israel. He knew that he had disobeyed God which had resulted in the loss of communication with the Almighty (v.15). He unwisely consulted the spirit of Samuel through a medium for advice on how to defeat the enemies of Israel and was told it was too late to repent and God would give the kingdom over to David (v.17). Further, he and his sons would be destroyed the next day in battle and would end up in Heaven with Samuel (v.19). So God blessed David in battle against the Amalekites (Chapter 29) but Saul was destroyed in battle against the Philistines (Chapter 30). Acts 13:4-12 records the opposition to the Good News from God preached by Paul and Barnabas on the island of Cyprus. Paul accused Elymas of "perverting the right ways of the Lord" and told him he would become blind for a time (v.10-11). Because of this the Roman governor of Cyprus believed the Good News of Jesus Christ (v.12) and later on, some of the Jews there also believed in Jesus as their Messiah. *Father God, encourage us to remain obedient believers, not disobedient believers, that we will be richly rewarded in Heaven and leave a legacy of success for Your Kingdom on Earth. Enable us to get things right by*

walking in the light of Your truth at all times so that Your Spirit will not depart from us and that many will be saved by our works, witness and worship. Encourage us to persevere and see victory for Your people and restoration of true faith in You whilst there is time. In the name of Jesus and for His sake, Amen.

13th January 2021. Joel 2:17-32 says "Let the priests who minister before the Lord God Almighty weep [and] say 'Spare Your people O Lord. Do not make Your inheritance an object of scorn [fun]. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" ' (v.17). Then Joel assured his readers that "the Lord will take pity on His people" (v.18). They will never be ashamed again and in the last days God will "pour out My spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, you young men will see visions" (v.27-28). "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (v.32). Luke 18:17 gives the words of warning from Jesus, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." This warning follows on from His question, "When the Son of Man comes [returns] will He find faith on earth?" (18:8). *Heavenly Father thank you for these encouraging words prompted by questions that are relevant for today. Many wonder "Where is God?" and "Where are the people of faith awaiting Christ's return?" May our leaders of church and state humble themselves and weep before You so that Your name and Your church are glorified and Your Spirit can freely minister to the believers, young and old alike, in power. Take pity on us and strengthen our faith and enable us to extend Your Kingdom as we await our Saviour's return. Amen.*

14th January 2021. 1 Chronicles 8 confirms the genealogy of Israel's first king chosen by God from the smallest tribe, Benjamin (8:33). Sadly, this record is followed by the testimony that "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD God Almighty. He did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance and did not enquire of the LORD" (10:13-14). Revelation 2:12-17 gives the words of Jesus to the apostle John regarding the church in Pergamum. "I know where you live, where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to My name... Nevertheless, I have a few things against you... Repent, therefore!" (v.13-16). "To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna", the food of Christ (v.17). *Dear God, the words of our Saviour reveal how a few people in the church at Pergamum brought*

judgement on all the people. This was ever true, as with Saul's disobedience which brought judgement on all of God's people. We thank you for the written word expressing your mercy in anointing David as Saul's successor who in turn brought Your light and salvation to Israel and whose family line gave birth to the opportunity of salvation for the world through Jesus Christ. Help us at all times to heed your word and not risk unholy behaviour nor let unrighteous decisions hinder the spiritual growth of those around us. May our example bring glory to Your name and blessings to Your people and our nation. Amen.

15th January 2021. Psalm 86 is a prayer from a "poor and needy believer" who is devoted to God Almighty, seeking His mercy and joy (v.1-3. "Teach me Your way O LORD, and I will walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name. I will praise You O LORD with all my heart; I will glorify Your name for ever. For great is Your love towards me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave" (v.11-13). So, "give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame" (v.17). Matthew 17:14-23 describes the power of Jesus over demons and the lack of faith of His disciples who were unable to do the same. Jesus told them they needed faith even if it was as tiny as a mustard seed (v.20). This was the time that Jesus revealed to His followers that men "will kill Him and on the third day He will be raised to life" which further upset the disciples (v.23). *Father God, forgive us for not reaching out to You in greater faith to meet the spiritual, mental and physical needs of those around us, even if we ourselves are "poor and needy believers". Increase our faith beyond that of a mustard seed, to "glorify Your name for ever". Help us to understand more of Your provision which was fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ our Saviour, who died for our sins and was resurrected to eternal life with You, that He might intercede on behalf of all who believe. So may we reach out in faith to others in the name of Jesus and through the power of Your Holy Spirit within us. Amen.*

18th January 2021. 1 Samuel 30 describes how the future King David wept before the Lord over the destruction caused by some of the enemies of Israel. Unlike King Saul in Chapter 28 who sought guidance from a medium, the Witch of Endor (Chapter 28), David 'found strength in the LORD his God' and enquired from Him what to do (v.6-8). The LORD ordered David to pursue the enemies and he was soon guided to where they were hidden. None of them

were allowed to get away 'except for 400 men who escaped on camels' and everything was recovered (v.15-19). Revelation 21 describes the future New Jerusalem, and the Apostle John was told "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). *Lord God, forgive us for trusting in our own wisdom or worse, trusting in mediums or horoscopes. Encourage us in good times and bad times to seek You and trust in Your guidance. Renew Your vision again and again of the glorious New Jerusalem when our Lord and Saviour will reign on Earth and all Your creation will obey and worship You and peace will reign and the moral and physical pollution we have caused will be banished. Amen.*

19th January 2021. Jeremiah 48 records God's sadness for the nation of Moab (v.31). They were descendants of Lot who travelled to God's Promised Land with Abraham 1300 years before. They were guilty of "making offerings on the high places and burning incense to their gods". God wanted to restore their fortunes (v.47) but 20 years later they and their distant relatives in Israel were punished and conquered by Babylon. Unlike the Jews, there was no remnant of the Moabites. Luke 6:20-45 records the sermon of Jesus to His disciples. "Blessed are you [faithful believers] who are poor... hungry... mourning..." (v.20-21). "Blessed are you [faithful believers] when men hate you... exclude you... insult you... reject you... because of the Son of Man" (v.22). "Rejoice... because great is your reward in Heaven" (v.23). This teaching is followed by instructions to love our enemies, to show mercy and to avoid judging others (v.27-42) and to bear much good fruit (v.43-45). *Thank You heavenly Father for the records that show Your love and mercy to those who obey and worship You, the One True God. Forgive us when we are guilty of allowing the worship of lesser gods. Thank You for the teachings of Jesus, Your Son and our Saviour, to remain faithful and even rejoice in times of hardship, showing love and mercy to those who persecute us. May Your remnant of faithful believers bear much good fruit on Earth and in Heaven, as an everlasting witness to Your mercy. Amen.*

20th January 2021. Deuteronomy 12:8-14 records some of the commands God gave to Moses before entering the Promised Land "so that your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you and so that you may

enjoy long life" (6:2). Moses told the people of Israel, "You are not to do as we do today, everyone as he sees fit... but you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance" (12:8-10).

"Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling place for His Name, you are to bring everything [sacrifices] I command you" (v.11). "Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose in [each] one of your tribes and there observe everything I command you" (v.14). Romans 2:8-10, Paul says, "For those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger (v.8), but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good" (2:10). Paul made it clear that he was telling this to both Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. *Dear Father, thank you for the Old and New Testament records which clarify the importance of not "doing as we see fit" which results in "self-seeking and rejecting Your truth". Thank You for the many examples in the ministry of Christ our Saviour that portray a self-less interest in caring for others before He sacrificed His life for all who believe in Him. Show us the sacrifices in life you wish us to make, what, when and where, in order to extend Your Kingdom before Christ returns. Amen.*

21st January 2021. Psalm 37 is famous for David's advice based on his personal experience of God's salvation. He says, "Do not fret... (v.1); trust in the LORD God Almighty... (v.3); delight in the Lord... (v.4); commit to Him... (v.5); be still and wait patiently... (v.7)." David believed strongly that "there is a future for the man of peace but... the future of the wicked will be cut off. The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD" (v.37-39). John 17:20-25 records the prayer of Jesus to His Heavenly Father for all future believers. He prayed "that all of them may be one... as We are one" (v.20-21). "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me" (v.23). "...that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them" (v.26). *Lord Jesus, thank you for this prayer for Christian unity and love. Help us in the power of Your Holy Spirit to heed the advice of King David. And may our lives witness to the world that Father God sent You to teach and to help the needy and then to die in our place as punishment for our sins. Thank you for the future You have provided for all true believers, on Earth and in Heaven with You. Amen.*

22nd January 2021. Nehemiah 8:17-18 records that in the seventh month after the 42,360 Jewish exiles from Babylon settled back in Jerusalem and

region, "the whole company that had returned from exile built booths [of tree branches] and lived in them. From the days of Joshua ... until that day [1000 years] the Israelites had not celebrated like this and their joy was very great. Day after day, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the Feast [of Booths] for seven days." This was followed by public confession and worship (Chapter 9). Hebrews 13:15-16, 500 years after the Feast of Booths was re-established in Jerusalem, the writer of the book of Hebrews instructs the Jewish believers. "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for such sacrifices God is pleased." *Lord Jesus, thank you that in living and dying for our sins to be forgiven we are able to "continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise" anywhere in the world. May we also offer "the fruit of lips that confess His name" and be a blessing as we "do good and share with others" the Good News and the good things of His provision. Thank you Heavenly Father for the reminder from Old Testament days to be disciplined in understanding Your commandments and their application and joyful in our worship and not to neglect Your salvation purposes fulfilled through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Israel's Messiah over many generations. Forgive us for any devaluing of Your divine truth. Amen.*

25th Januaray 2021. Jeremiah14:19-22. Around 600 BC, Jeremiah asked God, "Why have You afflicted us so that we cannot be healed? ... O Lord God Almighty, we acknowledge our wickedness and the guilt of our fathers; we have indeed sinned against You. For the sake of Your name, do not despise us... Remember Your covenant with us and do not break it... our hope is in You." The people did not repent and were conquered by the Babylonians, with a remnant of faithful believers exiled for 70 years. Acts Chapter 7 records Stephen's speech to his persecutors of the purposes of God for Israel and His Messiah. Then Stephen, "full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to Heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." This resulted in the stoning to death of Stephen and even greater persecution by Saul who was later miraculously converted on the road to Damascus. *Father in Heaven, hear the prayers of Your people whose hope is in You. Enable us to understand Your Holy Scriptures and apply them in today's world of disobedience and affliction. Deliver us from persecution and plague. Bring*

repentance, forgiveness, miracles of healings and conversions and also leaders who uphold Your truth and salvation in Christ Jesus alone. Amen.

26th January 2021. Genesis 30:22-24. "Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son... She named him Joseph." Joseph became one of the family of his father Jacob. Jacob was later called Israel. God used Joseph to fulfil His promise made to Abraham for Jacob's family to settle in Egypt for 430 years, to prosper with many children and flocks, before settling in the Promised Land of Canaan, which adopted the name of Israel. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NIrV) records Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special [unique] way. This is for the good of all (v.7)... All the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person just as He decides" (v.11). *Father God, we thank you for your spiritual gifts of life and salvation through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. You sent Him down from Heaven to be born into the family of Abraham to teach Your truth and to take the punishment for our sin and the sins of those who repent and believe. Thank you also for Your provision through Joseph who became a Saviour to Israel whilst in Egypt. We rejoice with His mother Rachel who valued the gift of a son through whom many have come to know the One True God of Israel. We also rejoice with Mary who valued the gift of Your Son, Israel's Messiah. May the world learn to value the gift of babies and nurture them into fullness of life to develop the gifts You decide for the good of all. Amen.*

27th January 2021. 2 Chronicles 7:1-3 records the first Temple in Jerusalem dedicated to Yahweh, Almighty God, in 1004 BC. This was after Solomon had prayed for God to be open and attentive "to the prayers offered in this place" (6:41). After Solomon prayed, 'the glory of the LORD filled the Temple' (7:1-2). 'When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD God Almighty above the Temple, they knelt ... and worshipped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying "He is good, His love endures for ever" ' (7:3). This was an answer to King David's fervent desire years before the Temple was built: "Be exalted O LORD in Your strength [and] we will sing and praise Your might" (Psalm 21:13). Philippians 1:27 (NIrV) recounts Paul's fervent desire for believers "to work together as one person... to spread the teachings of the Good News". *Hear prayers Father God, not only for the experience of*

worshipping You in buildings dedicated to You and in the presence of Your Holy Spirit fire but to work together in unity, sharing the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, so that each and every nation will kneel and worship and give thanks to You. For Your glory. Amen.

28th January 2021. Isaiah 22:15-25 reveals how the LORD God Almighty confirmed to His prophet Isaiah that Shebna (v.15) would be deposed from office (v.19). "In that day I will summon my servant Eliakim... I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him" (v.20-21). "I will place on his shoulder the key to the House of David" (v.22) for the purposes of establishing the reign of Israel's Messiah 700 year later. Even so, God was eventually forced to remove Eliakim from power (v.25). Hebrews 8:8-13 says how God again 'found fault with the people and said [through His prophet Jeremiah], "The time is coming, declares the LORD God Almighty, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and Judah" (v.8). "I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be My people" (v.10). *Thank You Heavenly Father for explaining through Your prophets how You are prepared to act to appoint and then remove people from power in order to establish Your Kingdom on Earth through Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ. Thank You for Your promised new covenant, through the gift of Holy Spirit power after the death and resurrection of Christ our Saviour, so that Your truth can be received personally into the minds and hearts of all who repent and believe Jesus suffered for their salvation. Help us to trust in Him for our ongoing understanding of Your truth and believe You will raise up and cast aside leaders of Your choosing when we seek His forgiveness for sins of our nation past and present. Amen.*

29th January 2021. Deuteronomy 28:43-47 warns of one of the things that will happen if God's people disobey Him. God warned, "The alien who lives among you will rise above you higher and higher but you will sink lower and lower" (v.43). Why? God said, "Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of your prosperity" (v.47). James 5:1-10 warns the rich that their wealth will be destroyed in the last days (v.1-3). But for the faithful who wait on the Lord's coming, "be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (v.8). *Father God, forgive us for valuing and using wealth and prosperity wrongly without benefitting the poor and needy to Your*

glory. Forgive us for allowing institutions and businesses to control us which discriminate against biblical and ethical standards. Forgive us for welcoming other religions into our society on an equal basis in ways that risk compromising Your truth. Raise up strong leaders in our nation who will bring others to Christ our Saviour who alone can restore our relationship with You, the One True God Almighty. For His sake, who died to save all who acknowledge He is Your Son. Amen.

1st February 2021. 1 Chronicles 23:1-5 records the way King David prepared for his son, Solomon, to build and equip the Temple in Jerusalem. He had previously been instructed by God what to do (22:6-16) and his first tasks before his death was to make Solomon king and then appoint the Levites their tasks in readiness for Solomon's Temple (v.4-5). This included the musicians "to praise the LORD God Almighty with the musical instruments I have provided for the purpose." Mark 6:7-29 reveals how King Herod liked to listen to John the Baptist (v.20) but is remembered most for being deceived into permitting his execution (v.27). This happened at the time Jesus was training His disciples to go out and teach and preach and to deliver people from demons and to heal the sick (v.7-13). *Father God, in these urgent times, enable us to know how to pray for the leaders of our nations so that peace will prevail and freedom maintained to praise and worship You. May they be "instructed by God what to do". At the same time, encourage your people "to go out and teach and preach and to deliver people from demons and to heal the sick". May we do this to prepare the way for the return of Christ as at the time of John the Baptist, without counting the cost and in the power of the Holy Spirit. For Your glory. Amen.*

2nd February 2021. Isaiah 45 faithfully records these words of God for Israel through His Old Testament prophet Isaiah, 2700 years ago: "I will strengthen you though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting, men may know there is none besides Me. I am [Yahweh] the LORD God Almighty, and there is no other. I form the light and I create disaster. I the LORD do all these things" (v.5-7). "People from other nations will say, 'Surely God is with you and ... there is no other god' " (v.14). Luke 1 faithfully records the purpose of God revealed to Zechariah 700 years later, concerning John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets: "Many will rejoice because of his birth for he will be great in the sight of the

LORD... Many people of Israel will he bring back to the LORD their God... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord", meaning Israel's Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (v.14-17). *Father God, thank you for revealing Your Hope, Light and Truth for these days of darkness and disbelief. Forgive our sins and the sins of our fathers and have mercy on us by rejecting disaster and restoring us as Your people of whom "other nations will say, 'Surely God is with you and ... there is no other god' ". Revive our faith and obedience so that we are prepared for, and can prepare others for, the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Saviour. For His sake. Amen.*

3rd February 2021. Ezekiel 23 gives the word of God through His prophet Ezekiel to Israel at the time of their great disobedience 2600 years ago. "I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in Egypt. You will not look on these things with longing or remember Egypt anymore..." (v.27). "Since you have forgotten Me and thrust Me behind your back, you must bear the consequences..." (v.35). "Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD God Almighty" (v.49). 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 says how Paul "was given me a 'thorn in my flesh', a 'messenger of Satan', to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." *Lord Jesus, help us to put behind us forever the sins of the past that we may be strong in You, and in the power of Your Spirit, to journey through the life that Father God has chosen for us, despite present difficulties, both personal and more generally in the world around us. Help us to willingly suffer the consequences of disobedience in our land and continue to witness the joy of salvation in You alone, in the belief that our present difficulties will lead to personal and public confession, divine mercy and a strong Church made ready to welcome You back as Saviour of the world. Amen.*

4th February 2021. Leviticus 25:8-19 gives details of establishing a fifty-year jubilee in the land, to celebrate two generations of God's provision. The Lord God Almighty told Moses, "Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants" (v.10). "For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you" (v.12). "Follow My decrees and be careful to obey My laws and you will live safely. Then the land will yield its fruit and you will eat

your fill and live there in safety" (v.18-10). Revelation 22:11-12 gives the instructions of Jesus recorded by the apostle John regarding the Last Days. "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." Why? "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." *Father God, we thank You for Your purpose down the centuries to bless those who love and obey You, not just in honouring You every Sabbath but to look back and delight in Your mercy and provision on special occasions. After two further generations of time may we now live in freedom to testify You are Almighty and will bless those whose trust is in You and Your Son, Jesus Christ. For our salvation and provision and to live safely in the Last Days, surrounded by so much evil. Come, Lord Jesus, come soon! Amen.*

5th February 2021. 1 Kings 6:11-19 records the words of God spoken to King Solomon and his response. God told him, "As for this Temple you are building, if you follow ... 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 will not abandon My people Israel" (v.12-13). 'So Solomon built the Temple and completed it' (v.14). 'He prepared the inner sanctuary within the Temple to set the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD there' (v.19). 2 Corinthians 12:19 explains Paul's reason for his concern about disobedience in the church. "We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening." He goes on to explain his fears that many have refused to repent (12:21) and will need his reproof (13:2). *Father God, thank you for this reminder to treasure Your written commandments as did King Solomon, aware that You would not abandon Your people if they obeyed them. May we learn from both Old and New Testaments the need to respect and obey Your Truth revealed by "those in Christ" and become strengthened in the faith without need of reproof. Keep us and our nation, therefore, obedient to the Word of God so that You will live among us and not abandon us in these days when our enemy seeks to destroy or weaken our witness of You. For the sake of Christ Jesus who suffered and died, that we might be set free from yielding to sin. Amen.*

8th February 2021. Jeremiah 9 records God's lament to Jeremiah over His people 600 years before He sent His Messiah. "They go from one sin to

another; they do not acknowledge Me" (v.3). "You live in the midst of deception; in their deceit, they refuse to acknowledge Me" (v.6). "See, I will refine and test them, for what else can I do because of the sin of My people?" (v.7). "Death has climbed in through our windows and has entered our fortress; it has cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the public squares" (v.21). "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom... but let him who boasts, boast about this: that he knows and understands Me, that I am the LORD God Almighty, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on Earth, for in these I delight" declares the LORD (v.24). Hebrews 10:16-17 records what God said later to Jeremiah in 31:33-34: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. 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." *Father God, thank you for revealing Your truth down the ages. Our streets are now empty because of death or the fear of death while so-called wise men boast of their achievements. May our faith be in You and in Christ Jesus alone so that Your "kindness, justice and righteousness" will reign on Earth, "for in these I delight". In Your mercy, forgive us. Amen.*

9th February 2021. Ecclesiastes 3:9-14 asks what is the purpose and benefit to mankind of all the work we do. The writer says, "I have seen the burden [distress, trouble] God has laid on mankind. He 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" (v.10-11). He acknowledges that there is nothing better for mankind "than to be happy and to do good ... and find satisfaction in all his toil, which is the gift [purpose, provision] of God" (v.12-13). He also affirms that "God does it so that men will revere [fear, honour] him" (v.14). 1 Corinthians 11:32 gives Paul's understanding that "we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world." Paul also says in Romans 8:22-27, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in pains of childbirth right up to the present time." However, he believes that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express... because the Spirit intercedes in accordance with God's will." *So Heavenly Father, affirm for us this day that your purpose and provision in life is "to toil and be happy and do good" for*

Your glory and honour. As Your created world groans around us as never before, may Your Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus Christ our Saviour, strengthen us, individually and collectively, and intercede on our behalf in accordance with Your will, free from condemnation and to Your glory. And may such amazing grace be publically testified in locations near and far, that people will reach out for Your salvation in Christ alone! Amen.

10th February 2021. Genesis 18 records the time 4000 years ago when the LORD God Almighty appeared to Abraham in the form of three men (v.1-2). After blessing him with the promise of a child in his old age (v.10) they confirmed that Abraham's family would in future become "a great and powerful nation... to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just" (v.18-19). In the meantime, they also confirmed that "the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous, that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached Me" (v.20-21). Romans 1:16-17 confirms the strength of Paul's belief in the Good News of God's salvation in Christ alone. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the Gospel, 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'." *Father God, thank you for clarifying again in Your Old Testament writings Your purposes in establishing righteousness through the Jewish family of Abraham by the miracle birth in the old womb of Abraham's wife Sarah. Thank You also for clarifying in Your New Testament writings Your purposes in establishing righteousness and salvation through the Jewish Messiah by the miracle birth in the young womb of Mary. We pray for the future extension of the Kingdom of God through the family of Abraham and through all who trust in Mary's firstborn Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, hear the outcry of faithful believers who are persecuted by those who disobey your truth in the Bible. For the sake of Jesus who suffered for all who live by putting their trust and faith in You. Amen.*

11th February 2021. 2 Chronicles 34 records the time when King Josiah enquired of the Lord God Almighty what He would say "for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah". This was because in his eighteenth year of his reign, the truth had been revealed to him that "Great is the Lord's anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord"

(v.21). God revealed through the prophetess Huldah His plan to “bring disaster on this place and its people... because they have forsaken Me” (v.24-25). So the king “renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord to follow the Lord and keep His commands, regulations and decrees” (v.31). Acts 18:9-10 says that the Lord Jesus spoke to the Apostle Paul in Corinth through a vision, “Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking; do not be silent. For I am with you and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” *Lord Jesus, thank you for this record of Your intervention to show mercy on the city of Corinth for the many believers in that place at that time. And thanks be to God for the record that shows how He withheld His punishment in the reign of Josiah when he prayed for the remnant of believers in Israel and Judea. Lord Jesus, Father God, for the sake of Your name and for the faithful believers in our nations, free us from plagues and persecution and unrighteous legislation so that Your Good News can be freely and faithfully preached and Bible-based laws will be established or renewed and obeyed publically once again and all false and unholy teachings rejected. In the power of Your Spirit. Amen.*

12th February 2021. Jeremiah 46 to 51 records God’s condemnation of the unholy nations that surrounded his people Israel. “A curse on him who is lax in doing the work of the LORD God Almighty!” (48:18). This is said in the context of failing to destroy evil. There is one chapter added to these writings and prophecies of Jeremiah by an unknown author. Chapter 52 records the evil done by the last king of Israel (Zedekiah) before the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the 4600 remnant of Jews to Babylon. 1 John 3:13-18 says “Do not be surprised if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love each other.” (v.13-14). John goes on to say, “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” (v.16-18). *Father God we thank you for Your love for us, Your people. Forgive us when we fail to remember You and shut out Your love at work in us. May we remember the words of Jesus to love You and to love each other. May we remember the words of John to recognise the sacrifice of Jesus was to set us free from the sins of the world that surround us. May we respond to Christ’s gift of eternal salvation in this world and the*

next with acts of love and obedience to You and to mankind and avoid Your condemnation, judgement, rejection, death and even exile. May we learn then from Jeremiah that You, Almighty God, will deal with the evil enemies around us if we ourselves honour and obey Your commands and live as holy people in Christ our Saviour. Amen.

15th February 2021. Deuteronomy 31:7-8 records how Moses spoke to his successor, Joshua, saying to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with the people into the land that the LORD God Almighty swore to their forefathers to give to them... The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 teaches "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed... God gives it a body as He has determined" (v.36-38). Paul then applies this to the eternal life of believers in Christ Jesus. "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable [but] it is raised imperishable... it is sown in weakness [but] it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body [but] it is raised a spiritual body" (v.42-46). "And just as we have been borne in the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear likeness of the Man from Heaven", meaning Christ Jesus Himself. *Thank you Father for the privilege of understanding how Moses died knowing that the spiritual work in his life would be fulfilled after his death and resurrection through others. Encourage us to realise how the seeds we sow will bring a harvest long after we die and have faith to believe that our own lives will not perish but see everlasting life with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Help us to see the true needs in Your creation at this time as we enter into Your chosen roles in society and in the world around us, to bear good fruit now and in the future. Amen.*

26th February 2021. 2 Kings Chapters 1 to 11 records the time in Israel when prophecies were fulfilled regarding the death of the evil King Ahab's wife Jezebel and their family, along with the prophets of their gods of Baal. This cleared the way for the 40-year reign of King Joash in Jerusalem who repaired the Temple for worship of our LORD God Almighty, using workmen who "acted with complete honesty" (12:15). Joash was assassinated (12:20). Acts 7 records Stephen's speech concerning the amazing history of the Jews from the time of Abraham up to the 33-year reign of Jesus Christ on Earth. Stephen

said, "You are just like your fathers: you always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One [Israel's Messiah]. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him – you who have received the Law that was put into effect through angels, but have not obeyed it!" Stephen was martyred (v.54-60). *Father God, forgive us for allowing the persecution of those who have upheld Your truth down the ages. May our nations uphold the freedom of speech today in acting "with complete honesty" to establish Your righteousness in society with the freedom to receive salvation through the preaching of the Good News of Your Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Make us strong in the power and compassion of Your Holy Spirit and obedient to Your commandments, whatever the personal cost. For Christ's sake. Amen.*

17th February 2021. Jeremiah 9:23-24 records the words of the LORD God Almighty to His servant Jeremiah. "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts, boast about this: that he understands Me, that I am the LORD who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on the Earth, for in these I delight." Matthew 21:1-17 tells what happened in the last few days before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. He instructed His disciples to fetch a donkey and its colt for Him to ride into Jerusalem. "If anyone says anything to you, tell them that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away" (v.3). Jesus chose to ride on the young colt, not the old donkey (Mark 11:7) as prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. The first words of Jesus recorded in Jerusalem were spoken in the Temple. He said, "My house will be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of robbers" (v.13). *Father God, we note how Your Son humbled Himself by riding on the colt of a donkey but showed contempt for the rich traders in the Temple. Not only were they robbing people of their money but robbing You of the worship and prayer that was Your purpose for that place. Help us to understand Your desire for kindness, justice and righteousness on Earth and reject worldly wisdom and unholy use of power and riches. Help us also to respond to the commands of Jesus our Saviour in the same way as the owner of the donkey and colt allowed him to fulfil our Lord's destiny recorded in the Old Testament. In these Last Days, keep us humble in preparing for the return of the Messiah*

and remove all obstacles to worship and prayer. For Your glory and for the salvation of the lost and for the encouragement of the faithful, "whilst there is time" in fulfilling the destiny of our Messiah in His second coming. Amen.

18th February 2021. 2 Chronicles 6 records the prayers of King Solomon before the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. "O LORD God Almighty... You who keep your covenant of love with Your servants who continue wholeheartedly in Your way... keep for Your servant David my father the promises You made to him ... 'if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before Me according to My law, as you have done'." (v.14-17). Solomon continued, "Whatever disaster or disease may come, and when a prayer or plea is made by any of Your people... then hear from Heaven, Your dwelling place, forgive, and deal with each man according to all he does ... so that they will fear You and walk in Your ways all the time they live in the land that You gave our fathers" (v.28-31). Luke 20:20-26 reveals how Jesus spoke wisely to His accusers and said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." They were astonished by His answer and became silent. *Lord Jesus, enable us to trust Your Holy Spirit within us to speak with wisdom and authority against those who seek to accuse You and Your ministry today. Thank you for the faith of our fathers and forefathers who trusted in God Almighty and obeyed His commandments first, before worshipping in buildings made by man. Hear prayers to save us from current disasters and diseases especially those of us who are locked down or locked out of church buildings. Enable us to speak with wisdom and authority against those who seek to accuse us or destroy our witness. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

19th February 2021. Job 40:1-9 records how Job was chastised for arguing with God Almighty (v.2). Job admitted, "I am unworthy. How can I reply to You?" (v.4). God demanded answers to three questions: "Would you discredit My justice? Would you condemn Me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's [to save yourself]?" After this, and further words from God, Job repented (Chapter 42). Romans 8:26-27 says "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints [God's people] in accordance with God's will." *Thank You again, heavenly Father for these wonderful truths faithfully recorded in our Bibles.*

Thank you for sending Jesus our Saviour to take our punishment for sin and leave us with His Spirit at work in our lives. May we therefore learn to exercise Your divine wisdom that caused Job to stumble regarding Your justice, Your justification, Your deliverance. Thank You that the Holy Spirit power is at work in our lives who knows our weaknesses and gives us words to pray which are in line with Your will for the needs of Your people and the ministry we all have in this fallen world. May we readily relent and repent and through Your readiness to forgive may we see revival before Jesus returns to Earth. Prepare us through Your Spirit to minister signs and wonders in the name of Jesus to the glory of God Almighty! Amen.

22nd February 2021. Psalm 136 encourages the reader to remember that the love of the LORD God Almighty endures for ever. The writer gives thanks to the Lord (v.1-3), acknowledges He is Creator (v.4-9), who brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land (v.10-22). He encourages the reader to "give thanks to the God of Heaven" who remembers His people "in our low estate", who frees us from enemies and provides us with food (v.23-26). Luke 16:10 gives the words of Jesus about people who prove if they can be "trusted with very little can also be trusted with much". Sadly, this also applies, Jesus said, to those who are "dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much". *Father God, in Your mercy open our eyes, as with the psalmist, to the good things You have done and provided in our lives. May we prove worthy of Your trust and the trust of others in the small things we do "in our low estate" that we may prove wise in seeking and gaining and trusting Your security and provision without resorting to dishonesty. May we never doubt that Your love "endures for ever" and live according to the calling and salvation secured in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May we prove worthy to take on the responsibilities you want us to adopt, with Christ-like integrity and authority, in and with Your love and mercy. Amen.*

23rd February 2021. Ezekiel 48 records the amazing vision given by God regarding the future city of Jerusalem with land apportioned in great detail to the twelve tribes and with a "special portion" for the Zadokites (v.9-12) who were the faithful descendants of Aaron, the priest and brother of Moses. The name of the city will be known as "The LORD Is There" (v.35) and will be the fulfilment of God's promise in Ezekiel 37:27, "My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God and they will be My people." This was first fulfilled

when God's Son, Jesus Christ, was born in Jerusalem who was called 'Immanuel' by the angel who visited Joseph the future wife of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Immanuel means, 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23), which will take on a new fulfilment when Jesus returns one day soon to Jerusalem in glory (Acts 1:11). Acts 7:44-53 records the words of Stephen at the time of the rapid growth in believers who responded to the preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem (see 6:7). Stephen said, "Our forefathers had the Tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed to Moses according to the pattern [details] he had seen" (7:44). He explained that it remained until the time of the first Temple built by Solomon (7:45-47). Then the Temple leaders crucified the "Righteous One" whom the prophets of God said would come to "bring God with us" (7:52). *Father God, we ask that we will never forget these things recorded for the faithful descendants of believers. Grant further understanding to believe in the Second Coming of our righteous Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in order to boldly proclaim the full Gospel with hope of revival now with You in the midst of Your people. Amen.*

24th February 2021. Genesis 28:6-15 records how Esau chose for himself to marry a descendant of Abraham through his son Ishmael as well as having Canaanite wives (v.6-9) whereas his twin brother Jacob set out to seek a wife from Abraham's relatives 750km away in Haran. He was given God's blessing en route when he saw what we call 'Jacob's ladder' in a dream. There above it stood the LORD God Almighty, who said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." James 1:16-18 says, "Do not be deceived my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all He created." *Heavenly Father, thank You for Your 'word of truth' recorded in Scripture and your blessing on Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through whom we*

become children of Abraham because of faith in his descendant – Mary’s Christ-child, Your Son, our Saviour. Help us to take it in that we are part of the promise given to Jacob to be a blessing to You and Your people everywhere. Amen.

25th February 2021. Leviticus 16:20-22 describes the final part of sacrifice and atonement for the sins of God’s people as given to Moses and Aaron. After the sacrifices in the sanctuary of the Tent of Meeting containing the Ark of the Covenant, Aaron must take a live goat and “he is to lay both hands on the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellions of the Israelites – all their sins – and put them on the goat’s head. He shall [then] send the goat away into the desert... The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place.” This goat is known as the scapegoat to confirm that the sins of the people have not only been forgiven but have been removed to a far place. Hebrews 12:4-11 warns us to understand the need for discipline under any persecution we experience for Christ’s sake. “In your struggles against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood” (v.4). “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? We have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits?” (v.7,9). “Discipline... produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (v.11). *Thank your Father God for the discipline we need in serving our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when we are persecuted for our faith. Keep reminding us of the blood He sacrificed for our salvation and that our sins have not only been forgiven but sent out to a distant place like the scapegoat in the desert. Amen.*

26th February 2021. Joel 2:28-32 records the famous prophecy given to Joel of the Day of the LORD. “I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions” (v.28). “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (v.32). Luke 18:26 asks the question, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus assured His followers that “no-one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come, eternal life” (v.29). This was said after the words of Jesus that “anyone who will not

receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (v.17). *Father God, thank You for these words to encourage our faith in You and Your provision through salvation in Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Help us to sacrificially build the Kingdom of God now with child-like faith, that many more will experience the work of Your Holy Spirit in their lives "in this age, and in the age to come, eternal life". Amen.*

1st March 2021. Malachi 3-4 speaks of another Day of the Lord. God reminds His prophet Malachi, "I the LORD God Almighty do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed... return to Me and I will return to you" (3:6-7). 'Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other and the Lord listened and heard' (3:16). "I will spare them just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him" (3:17). "For you who revere My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings... See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord comes" (4:2,5). Matthew 27-28 records the action by Pilate to secure the body of Jesus in the tomb by sealing it and guarding it (27:62-66). On the first day after the Sabbath, 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake for an angel of the Lord came down from Heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it... The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men' (28:1-4). 'The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified... He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him" ' (28:5-7). *Father God, thank you for preparing us to celebrate the victorious Easter resurrection of our Lord and Saviour and the hope that is ours in His return to Earth as King and Judge. Send another Elijah to prepare Your creation at this time in repentance, forgiveness and revival. For Your glory and for the sake of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.*

2nd March 2021. Numbers 20:1-13 records the time when the people of Israel complained to Moses that there was no water in the desert on the way to the Promised Land and they wished they were back in Egypt (v.2-5). Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves before the Lord God Almighty at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The Lord spoke to Moses. The Lord said, "Take the staff... gather the assembly together. Speak to the rock... and it will pour out its water... so that they and their livestock can drink" (v.6-8). Then

Moses disobeyed God and in anger struck the rock with his staff and failed to give God the glory for the water which poured out (v.9-12). Luke 2:43-52 tells of the time when Jesus the Christ was a boy and stayed in the Temple at Jerusalem for three days instead of returning home to Nazareth with His earthly parents. He said, "Did you not know I had to be in My Father's house?" but became obedient to them instead of remaining in Jerusalem to train as a Rabbi. *Father God, help us to listen carefully to humbly obey You and give You glory in all that we say and do so that others may see Your light and truth and be blessed by streams of living water that comes from the Rock of our Salvation in Christ Himself. May our leaders prostrate themselves before You and see the need to put their trust in Jesus Christ and give glory to You through acknowledging Your provision in answer to prayers, in humility and patience, without anger or trying to assert themselves. Amen.*

3rd March 2021. Judges 4 records the time when Israel was saved by God-fearing women. The prophetess Deborah spoke to Barak the word of God to go into battle against Sisera and the Canaanites (4:4-7). The battle went in Israel's favour and the injured Sisera was met by Jael, the wife of a Kenite descendant of Moses. She helped him into her tent then infamously took a stake and hammered it into his head. (v.18-21). 'On that day, God subdued Jabin the Canaanite king before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin ... until they destroyed him' (v.23-24). Deborah sang a song of praise to the Lord God Almighty (Chapter 5) ending "May they who love You be like the sun when it rises in strength." Then the land had peace for forty years (5:31). John 16:5-16 records the words of Jesus before His arrest, trial and crucifixion. "Now I am going to Him who sent Me... I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor [Holy Spirit] will not come to you" (v.5-7). "When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth" (v.13). *Heavenly Father, thank You for transforming the way we seek and hear Your truth for today through the outworking of Holy Spirit power among Your people. May young and old, male and female, uphold Your truth to subdue or destroy the wicked and bring peace in our time to Your glory with Your love in us shining as the sun. And may those who love You enjoy freedom to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ without hindrance or persecution. Amen.*

4th March 2021. Ezekiel 21 records the final words of God Almighty spoken against His people and the city of Jerusalem that they had polluted, before He allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to destroy them. It is not until Chapter 36 that God shows mercy for the remnant of believers because of His great love and because of what the other nations are saying about His special people. God promised, "I will use you to show the nations how holy I am. Then they will know I am the Lord God Almighty" (36:23). "I will put My Spirit within you... You will live in the land I gave your people long ago. You will be My people and I will be your God" (36:27-28). John 1 begins the account of who Jesus was and is, fully man but fully God, with power over everything. Also, John writes about the teachings of Jesus and His trial, crucifixion and resurrection. His book ends with how Jesus showed mercy to Peter who had denied Him and who would "bring glory to God" as leader of His Church (21:19). *Father God, thank you for the extracts from Scripture which reveal Your mercy even to the most disobedient people because of your love for mankind whom You created in Your image. May we seek Your forgiveness and rise up with new beginnings of ministry and witness to your love through revival Spirit power and renewed faith in Jesus the Christ as Israel's Messiah and Son of God, Saviour of the world. For His sake. Amen.*

5th March 2021. 2 Chronicles 14 records the 10-year reign of King Asa in Judah nearly 3000 years ago, during which he removed the altars and idols of alien gods. "He commanded Judah to worship the LORD [Yahweh], the God of their people. He commanded them to obey the LORD's laws and commands" (14:4). During his reign, a neighbouring nation tried to attack Judah. 'Then Asa called out to the LORD his God. "LORD, there is no-one like You. You help the weak against the strong. LORD our God help us. We trust in You. In Your name we have come out to fight against this huge army" ' (14:11). God gave victory and the people took back home many goods and cattle from their enemy. Jude wrote words of encouragement and perseverance to the early church believers. "Dear friends. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. Show mercy to those who doubt" (v.20,22). *Father God, thank You for the ministry of encouragement down the ages through godly leaders of faith in You and Your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us for permitting alien faiths to influence us in our nation. Bless us as we stay faithful in worshipping and obeying You and You*

alone. Help us not to doubt but to be holy and guided by Your Spirit. May we be a blessing to other nations as You bless us. Through the compassion and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

8th March 2021. 1 Kings 8 & 9. After the completion of the Temple, King Solomon sought God's favour on the people. "Pay attention to them every time they cry out to You" (8:52). "May He give us what we need every day. Then all the nations on Earth will know that the LORD is God. They will know that there is no other god" (8:59-60). Then the LORD God Almighty appeared to Solomon and warned him, "Suppose you or your sons turn away from Me and do not obey the commands and rules I gave you [all] and go off to serve other gods and worship them. Then I will cut Israel off from the land I gave them. I will turn my back on the Temple. I will do it even though I have set it apart for My name to be there. Then Israel will be hated by all the nations. They will laugh and joke about Israel" (9:6-7). Romans 11:11-24. Paul teaches that "they [Israel] did not trip and fall once and for all time, did they? Not at all! Because Israel sinned, those who are not Jews can [now] be saved. That will make Israel jealous of them. Israel's sin brought riches to the world. Their loss brought gain to the non-Jews. What greater riches will come when all Israel turns to God!" (11:11-12). "He was hard on those who stopped following Him. But He was kind to you. So you must continue to live in kindness. If you do not, you also will be cut off" (11:22). *Father God, thank you for this reminder of the cause for the worldwide persecution of Your special people. Thank you also for Paul's explanation of Your blessing for the non-Jews. May we be ever grateful for salvation through Israel's Messiah and pray for them daily. May we also heed Paul's warning to remain faithful. Amen.*

9th March 2021. Genesis 21:1-7 records the birth of Isaac as promised by God to Abraham and Sarah despite Abraham's great age. "The Lord God Almighty ... did for Sarah what He promised to do." Sarah said, "Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." Luke 15:1-7 gives the parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep. "Would he not go and look for the one lost sheep until he finds it? When he finds it, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders and go home... He will say, 'Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.' " *Father God we are reminded from these two Bible stories how precious each person's life is to You and to our Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. From*

birth, even before birth, there is much reason to rejoice for every life because it is special to You, since You know each one of us personally. Thank You for conceiving and nurturing us in the womb to produce fruitful lives that bring joy in Heaven and on Earth. Bring out the full potential within us to live the lives You have created to Your glory! May we see the potential You have created in all people like you did with Isaac, to rejoice and be part of Your purpose to bring salvation to the world. Show us how to seek those who have lost their way in life to bring them back to the Great Shepherd of His sheep. Amen.

10th March, 2021. 1 Chronicles 24:1-5 records the way King David impartially separated the descendants of Aaron for their roles in ministering as priests. No distinction was made regarding family seniority (24:31). Acts 7:9-53 records how Stephen, who lived 1000 years after King David, testified how God chose Joseph, the eleventh child of Abraham's grandson Jacob, to become ruler of Egypt despite the persecution of his jealous brothers. God was with Joseph and the whole family of Jacob moved to Egypt and prospered and grew greatly (7:14-17), before returning to the Promised Land of Canaan now called Israel. They were led there by Moses who "received living words to pass on to us" (7:30-38). Stephen's last words to the Jews in Jerusalem before he was martyred were, "The Law you received was brought by angels, but you have not obeyed it" (7:53). He said this because they killed Israel's Messiah. *Lord Jesus, thank You for fulfilling all the Law requires for our salvation even though You were persecuted and suffered and died a cruel death to set Your people free, including everyone who confesses You are the Son of God today. We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for encouraging His servant David to share responsibility fairly to promote the ministry of the priesthood whilst in the Promised Land. We thank Him for recording Stephen's speech for us to see clearly how He used the most persecuted believers, like Joseph and Moses, to prepare the way for His special people to be blessed and ultimately welcome their Messiah. Fulfil Your plan for us all to receive Your impartial forgiveness and Holy Spirit power to share equally in the priesthood of all believers in today's persecuted church. Amen.*

11th March 2021. Micah 4 and 5 record God's plans in 700 BC for the future of Israel (including the disabled, the exiles and the grieving, 4:6) and for the rest of the world. "You will have to go to Babylon. But that is where the Lord

God Almighty will save you. There He will set you free from the powerful hand of your enemies. But for now, many nations have gathered together to attack you" (4:10-11). "Bethlehem ... out of you will come a Ruler over Israel for Me... The promised Ruler will stand firm and look after His flock... His people will live safely and His greatness will reach from one end of the Earth to the other. And He will bring them peace" (5:2-5). Revelation 18. An angel prophesies to the apostle John of another Babylon. "How terrible for you, Babylon, city of power. In just one hour you [will] have been destroyed! The traders of the world will be sad and cry over her [for] no-one buys what they sell any more" (18:10-11). *Father God, thank you for your truth revealed in Scripture, past, present and future. Thank you for your mercy shown to Your special people by raising up a remnant in exile in Babylon who then returned and rebuilt Jerusalem which witnessed the triumphant entry of their Ruler and Messiah who was born in Bethlehem and became Saviour of the world. Help us, the remnant of believers, to prepare for the fall of modern Babylon and equip us to bring Your peace and salvation before the Second Coming so that many will be saved and rejoice in these Last Days. For the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour, who died that we might have eternal life. Amen.*

12th March 2021. Proverbs 11:11,20,27. These selected proverbs say, "The blessing of honest people build up a [whole] city, but the words of wicked people destroy it... The Lord God Almighty hates those whose hearts are twisted, but He is pleased with those who live without blame... Anyone who looks for good, finds favour." John 4 is the story of Jesus at the well in Samaria where He promises the woman 'living water' (v.10). She immediately progressed to seeking this provision to which Jesus offered 'eternal life' (v.14). This followed with perception that Jesus was a prophet and led her to confess her sins (v.17) then to proclaim God's truth that "salvation comes from the Jews" (v.19,22), and then profession of faith, "I know that Messiah is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything" (v.25). She left Jesus and told her friends, "Could this be the Christ?" Then, through her testimony, many people believed (v.39) and then even more people believed when they invited Jesus to stay and talk with them (v.40-41). They confessed their faith by saying, "We know that this man really is the Saviour of the world" (v.42). *Heavenly Father, thank you for this famous story of how the woman at the well progressed step by step to witnessing her faith in Jesus as the Messiah,*

the Son of God. As a result, many more came to believe in Jesus our Saviour. Empower us through Your Spirit, to bless others with 'honest living' and live 'without blame' so that we may find favour with others in order to 'build up a whole city' with a saving faith in Yourself. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

15th March 2021. Psalm 37:34. "Wait for the LORD God Almighty to act. Live as He wants you to do." Revelation 18:1-4 gives John's account of another angel coming down from Heaven who shouted, "Fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen!" A voice from Heaven said, "Come out of her My people. Then you will not take part in her sins. You will not suffer from any of her plagues." *Father God, thank you for the warning of the consequences of our nation engaging with today's lifestyle of modern Babylon. In Your mercy, may we repent and fully come out and know Your forgiveness and recover quickly from past unrighteousness and from plagues You have allowed us to experience. Protect us from experiencing further plagues in future and encourage us to live as You want us to live and wait on You to do mighty things in these Last Days. Enable our nation to be part of your church revival and see marvellous signs and wonders before Christ our Saviour returns! Amen.*

16th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 1:8-9. Paul encourages the church members at Corinth:

- to believe God will keep them "strong to the end";
- to be blameless when they meet their Lord at His return;
- to remember that God is faithful towards all who have been called to "share life with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord".

When we confess our sin, the blood of Jesus makes us clean and God makes us strong in our faith. "Then you will be without blame [before God] on the day our Lord Jesus Christ returns" (1:8). We can be blameless only because God gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us. The Holy Spirit brings Christ's righteous life to us. God's Spirit shows us our sins, so that we can be made holy.

Paul called the return of Israel's Messiah as "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" because it is the day of Christ's final victory over all His enemies. And it will be a victory day for all who eagerly wait for His coming. "God is faithful" (1:9).

The New Testament of the Bible reminds us that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's Ten Commandments (Matthew 5:17). They were given to Moses 3500 years ago, recorded for us in the Old Testament (Exodus 20). As we call on

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to save us and stop us from further sinning, may we obey all the Ten Commandments in our worship, work and witness of Almighty God. We do not have Moses or Paul to guide or mediate for us but we have Christ Himself, who died to save us. At this very moment He dwells with our Almighty God and Creator, guiding us through His Spirit and mediating on our behalf. Remember also that Jesus said, "Practise and teach these commands, then you will be called important in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

17th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Paul said, "I ask you to agree with one another. I make my appeal in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:10). Christ Himself was speaking to these Christians through Paul. It was said in love.

Great men of God had preached in Corinth – Paul, Apollos, Peter. Some Corinthians said they followed one man, some another (1:12). Paul told them not to follow men but to unite in following Christ and be as His body on Earth.

He also asked them, "Did Paul die on the cross for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?" (1:13). His questions showed them how foolish they were to follow men. It was God who called them and saved them. It was God who blessed them. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, could:

- plant the seed of faith in a person's heart (Romans 10:10).
- save them by the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15).
- receive them into His family through baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Like many Christians today, they put value on a preacher and whoever baptised them in water. They took their eyes off Jesus and put them on a man. Paul wanted them to give all the glory to God and only "boast about what the Lord has done" (Jeremiah 9:24).

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.

18th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. Paul spoke about his Gospel message. He knew that human wisdom was important to the people in Corinth. But Paul said that human wisdom does not understand God. By our own wisdom, we cannot find God. Human wisdom leads us away from God. "The message of the cross [of Christ] seems foolish... But it is God's power to us who are being saved" (1:18). Paul quoted the words of Isaiah, "God will do away with the cleverness of those who think they are so clever" (1:20; Isaiah 29:14).

The Jewish leaders thought they were wise. Many of them hated Jesus. They had rejected their Messiah and sent Him to His death, a sacrifice God planned for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles.

As a Jew, Paul had learned all the wisdom of the Pharisees. Before Paul was saved, he hated Christians too and tried to kill them. But now he used only the words of Jesus to lead people to God. He said, "God has made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1:20).

The Jews looked for a warrior Messiah, a leader who would deliver their nation from the Romans who ruled most of the world at that time.

"The world through its wisdom did not know Him [but] God was pleased... to save those who believe" (1:21). "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles [non-Jews]. But to those whom God has chosen... it is [Christ, KJV], the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:24).

The Greeks in Corinth wanted to be men of great wisdom and strength. Paul said, "The foolish things of God are wiser than human wisdom" (1:25).

19th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. "Think of what you were when God chose you. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were powerful; not many belonged to important families" (1:26). He asked them to remember what they were when God called them.

God is sovereign. He does as He wishes. He planned to choose the foolish things and the weak people of the world to shame the wise and the strong (1:27). "So that no-one can boast..." (1:29).

This Good News is for all people, for men and women of all position, education and riches. God does not look to see if a person is rich or poor, weak or strong, sick or healthy, young or old. He looks for those with an open heart, those who want to know His forgiveness and His love. People who will trust, worship and obey him and follow His Son.

Paul says confidently, "Because of what God has done, you belong to Christ Jesus. He has become God's wisdom for us. He makes us right with God [righteous, KJV]. He makes us holy and sets us free" (1:30). He rescues us from sin. He changes us for the better and we should give Him the glory for our new life.

Paul quoted Jeremiah, "The one who boasts should boast about what the Lord has done" (1:31). God told Jeremiah, "He should boast that he has understanding and knows Me. I want him to know that I am the LORD God Almighty" (Jeremiah 9:24).

Do you trust God's power to save you or are you still trusting in yourself? Ask for the wisdom to receive God's righteousness, holiness and salvation through Christ alone and not through the foolish ideas of mankind. Amen.

22nd March 2021. 1 Corinthians Chapter 2. The deep things of God were shown to Paul by God's Spirit (2:13). He was not pretending to be bold or strong. He did not come with fancy words or great wisdom. "I preached to you about the truth of God's love" (2:1).

Remember that Paul was a very learned man. He studied God's Law in the school of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). But His mind was on one thing only. Paul chose to speak only about "Jesus Christ and His death on the cross" (1 Cor. 2:2).

We often call this 'the mystery of Christ':

- Son of Creator God, recreated as a human being within the womb of a virgin.
- Lived for 33 years as a Son of Man with power to raise the dead and cast out demons.
- Loves us so much that He was willing for His own flesh and blood to be sacrificed.
- Sacrificed so that His punishment became our salvation from sin for those who believe.
- Requested us to remember His injured body and spilt blood when taking bread and wine.
- Prays for us while seated with God Almighty, whom He left to live on Earth to suffer and die.
- Reigns in glory over the Kingdom of God for eternity with all who are saved.
- Promises eternal life through faith alone, living in obedience with works of charity in the name of Jesus.
- Sends His Holy Spirit to live in all who believe and portray the divine nature of God Himself.

Based on the words of the famous writer Jeremy Taylor, born in Cambridge, England, in 1613.

23rd March 2021. 1 Corinthians 2:3-10. Paul wrote, "When I came to you, I was weak and afraid... [But] as I preached, the Holy Spirit showed His power. That is so you would believe, not because of human wisdom, but because of God's power" (2:3-5).

Paul wanted his readers to know, "Our words are different from the words of the... rulers of the world" (2:6). Paul shared the "secret wisdom of God" with them freely. But he did not use any clever words, only the words given through Holy Spirit power.

“God planned that His wisdom would bring us heavenly glory” (2:7). God planned this from the beginning. The rulers of this world did not know God’s plan. If they had known it, they would not have crucified “the Lord of glory” (2:8). They were unwise and ignorant.

Paul then quotes from the prophet Isaiah: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has known what God has prepared for those that love Him” (2:9; Isaiah 64:4). This mystery is part of the amazing secret of the Christian Church. It:

- was planned by God before the world began;
- brings all people of faith in Yahweh God together;
- blesses all people then and now in this age;
- shows the world God’s glory.

“God has shown it to us through His Spirit. The Spirit understands all things... even the deep things of God” (2:10). The Holy Spirit works in people’s hearts to reveal the Father’s will and bring salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

24th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 2:14-16. Paul said, “Some people... do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God” (2:14). Paul knew that God’s servants think differently and act differently to those who refuse salvation through Christ alone. Christians are under God’s authority and they take orders from above. Those who do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God do not understand this. A Christian’s thoughts, beliefs and motives are foolish to others without the Holy Spirit’s help.

Paul quoted from the prophet Isaiah to confirm that only those who have the mind of Christ know the mind of God. Without this indwelling of the Holy Spirit, non-believers cannot know the mind of God nor the mind of Christians. “Who has known the mind of the Lord God Almighty?” (Isaiah 40:13). Paul stated confidently that Christians can know the mind of God in any matter because “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).

By trusting in the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit, true believers can know what is right and righteous. They learn to understand, and also feel and love as Christ loved. This is possible when they allow the Holy Spirit power to work in them. Jesus Himself promised that His Father in Heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13).

The apostle James said, “If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you” (James 1:5).

Pray for God to raise up leaders in church and state who are spiritually strong, and whose wisdom comes from the Holy Spirit, not from ungodly people with persuasive words.

25th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 3:4-13. Paul again reminds his readers not to argue about which teacher to follow (3:4). Peter, Paul and Apollos were only servants of the Lord (3:5). God used Paul to plant the seed of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He used Apollos to water the seed in their hearts, but it was God through the Holy Spirit who made it grow (3:6). And God wants to make us into mature Christians. He wants the freedom to do His work in us. "It is God who makes things grow" (3:7), not Paul or Apollos.

"The one who plants and the one who waters the seed have the same purpose. The Lord will give each of us a reward for our work" (3:8). God blesses His servants now and He will reward them later. God will say to each one, "You have done well, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

Paul wanted to do only what God called him to do. He wanted to preach the Good News about the power of the cross of Christ (1:17).

Paul told them, "You are like God's field or building" (3:9). God wants His Church to be farmed well and built well. God had given Paul the grace to prepare the ground and to lay a firm foundation. "Now someone else is building on it. But each one should build carefully" (3:10).

Paul said there is no better foundation "than the one that has already been laid. That foundation is Jesus Christ. A person may build on it using gold, silver... wood or straw. But each person's work will be shown for what it is" (3:11-13). The day will come when it will be brought to the light and judged by fire (or persecution) to see if it remains strong (Job 23:10).

26th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23. Paul asked, "Do you not know that you are God's temple? God's Spirit lives in you" (3:16). We must always remember that each believer is built with others into the family of God. Each person is like a stone or brick in a building (1 Peter 2:5). Paul warned, "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy them. God's temple is holy and you are that temple" (1 Cor. 3:17).

Paul was worried that false prophets would destroy the church in Corinth. Paul knew that wrong teaching would turn believers away from the truth. This would make the church weak, locally and nationally.

"Do not fool yourselves", Paul said. "Some of you think you are wise... The wisdom of this world is foolish in God's eyes" (3:18-19). Paul added quotations from the Old Testament writings (3:20). "The Lord God Almighty knows that the thoughts of the wise do not amount to anything" (Psalm 94:11). "God catches the wise in their own tricks" (Job 5:13).

Paul then warned the church, "No more boasting about... Paul or Apollos or Peter!" (1 Cor. 3:21). What mattered most was, "You are joined to Christ. You belong to Him and He is joined to God" (3:23).

The Corinthian church was blessed by the ministry of Paul, Apollos and Peter, but the believers were taking sides. Some liked one leader better than another and followed that person. This caused disunity and weakened the work and witness of the church. They failed to share the teachings of Christ and show His Spirit at work in their lives.

Does the ministry you do bring praise for yourself or praise for God?

29th March 2021. 1 Corinthians 9-17. Life was hard for Paul. Believers and non-believers had wrongly judged him. He was not complaining. Other apostles had been persecuted and even killed for Christ's sake. Often, Paul and his companions were (4:9-13):

- made to feel like criminals, risking injury, even death;
- served God as fools, for Christ's sake;
- hungry, thirsty, and dressed in rags;
- homeless and forced to work with their hands;
- often beaten, and treated like rubbish.

Paul said these things to show the believers in the Corinthian church how sad he was that they had caused disunity. He wanted to bless those who persecuted him and the other preachers (4:12).

However, Paul said, "I am not writing this to shame you. You are my dear children, and I want to warn you" (4:14). Many leaders had cared for them, but he was like their father. They were his children in the faith. He saw them accept Christ, and he fed them with God's word. He prayed for them. He wanted only God's best for them. He wanted them to become strong and mature Christians, united in serving Christ.

Paul knew there were many believers in Christ in Corinth but they had few spiritual fathers (4:15). He wanted them to follow his example in serving Christ (4:16). "That is the reason I am sending Timothy to you... He is faithful in serving the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in serving Christ" (4:17).

Paul knew we must stop grieving God with our disunity caused by lack of love and respect for each other.

30th March 2021. Matthew 5:3-10. The eight blessings that Jesus taught). These teachings are called the Beatitudes of Jesus the Christ. They were at beginning of the greatest sermon that Jesus preached to His closest followers (Matthew Chapters 5 to 7). They are important teachings for us to understand today and know true happiness.

1. "Blessed are those who are spiritually weak [poor in spirit, KJV]. Then the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them."

2. "Blessed are those who are sad [mourn, KJV]. Then they will be comforted."
 3. "Blessed are those who are humble [meek, KJV]. Then they will be given [inherit, KJV] the Earth."
 4. "Blessed are those who hunger for what is right [righteousness, KJV]. Then they will be filled."
 5. "Blessed are those who show mercy. Then they will be shown mercy."
 6. "Blessed are those whose hearts are pure. Then they will see God."
 7. "Blessed are those who make peace. Then they will be called the children of God."
 8. "Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. Then the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them."
- Then Jesus added (5:11-12), "Blessed are you when people make fun of you and hurt you because of Me. You are also blessed when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of Me. Be joyful and be glad. Your reward in Heaven is great. In the same way, the people hurt the prophets who lived long ago."

31st March 2021. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Paul warned the believers in Corinth for allowing sin in the church. "I am told a man is living with his father's wife" (5:1). He was living an immoral life but claiming to be a Christian.

Paul said, "You should be filled with sadness!" He told them they should put the man out of the church (5:2). "I am not there with you, but I am with you in spirit. I have already judged the man who did this" (5:3).

Paul did not judge this man's faith in God but judged his wrong behaviour. He failed to walk away from temptation. Paul believed that this man must leave the church and see for himself the work of Satan in his life. He must then choose the right thing to do. When he is rejected by the church, Paul hoped he would repent and be saved.

Paul said that when they meet together, they must tell this man he cannot be part of their fellowship. Paul twice makes it clear that decisions to discipline another church member must be approved by the whole church "when you come together" (5:4-5).

Because this man was living an immoral life, he had to leave their meetings. They must keep on loving this man and praying for him, so that his spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord (5:5). God is full of mercy and grace. Therefore, we do not stop loving sinners, but we must pray for those who fall into sin. We resist Satan in Christ's name by using spiritual weapons, such as prayer (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Victory comes as we expose and judge sin and separate ourselves from it.

1st April 2021. 1 Corinthians 5:5-7. Some of the church members boasted about who they were in the church or what they did. They also boasted about whose teaching they followed. Paul said, "Your boasting is not good" (5:6). He said that the sins of pride and also sexual behaviour are like yeast. A little yeast in bread "works its way through the whole lump of dough".

In a similar way, these sins and other sins of this world, spread quickly through the whole church. Paul wanted believers to convert people of this world to Christ. It was therefore most important for them to avoid worldly sins in their own lives. We must save others, and ourselves, from the sins of the world. Paul said, "Get rid of the old yeast [sins in your life]. Be like a new lump of dough without yeast" (5:7).

If you ignore sin in your church or in your life, it will spread and affect your whole life and others. There is no such thing as a small sin; all sin is unholy and hated by God. He turns His back on sin. We then quickly lose contact with Him and our Saviour. We also lose the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit unless we repent.

When we share bread and wine together at the Lord's Supper, we must be honest and truthful. As true believers, we remember Christ's death as His sacrifice for us. No sin must be left among us. We remember that "Christ has been offered up for us. He is our Passover Lamb" (5:7; Exodus 12:21-27).

2nd April 2021. 1 Corinthians 5:7-13. When we share bread and wine together at the Lord's Supper, we must be honest and truthful. As true believers, we remember Christ's death as His sacrifice for us. No sin can be left among us. We must remember that "Christ has been offered up for us. He is our Passover Lamb" (5:7; Exodus 12:21-27). We must not boast in sin but repent and unite in worshipping Christ together.

Paul reminds the church in Corinth again and again to "stay away from people who commit sexual sins" (5:9,11). "You must stay away from anyone who claims to be a believer who does these things."

Paul also lists other sins. "Stay away from a person who worships statues of gods, or who tells lies... gets drunk or who cheats. Do not even eat with a person like that" (5:11).

To keep their fellowship pure and holy, they could not have such people in their meetings. If such people joined their fellowship, it would spoil their witness. Those outside the church would not see any difference between them and their heathen neighbours.

However, we should not judge non-believers outside the church, but we should pray for them. We must judge ourselves, and those inside the church (5:12). "God will judge those outside" (5:13).

“Put your hope in the Lord God Almighty. Live as he wants you to and He will honour you... The Lord saves those who do what is right” (Psalm 37:34,39).

Church leaders should therefore discipline sinners in our churches, with the agreement of its members and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is a small sacrifice to make compared to the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross for our sins.

5th April 2021. 2 Chronicles 7:11-15. When King Solomon had finished building the Temple in Jerusalem, the LORD God Almighty appeared to him and said, “I have heard your prayer... Suppose I close up the sky and there isn’t any rain? Suppose I command locusts to eat up the crops? And suppose I send a plague among My people? If they make themselves humble in My sight. If they pray and look to Me. And if they turn from their evil ways. Then I will listen to them from Heaven. I will forgive their sin. And I will heal their land. After all, they are My people. Now My eyes will see them. My ears will pay attention to the prayers they offer in this place.”

1 Corinthians 5:12-13. Paul said that we should not judge non-believers outside the church, but we should pray for them. We must judge ourselves, and those inside the church (5:12). “God will judge those outside” (5:13). King David said, “Put your hope in the Lord God Almighty. Live as He wants you to and He will honour you... The Lord saves those who do what is right” (Psalm 37:34,39).

Why is it important for us to humble ourselves to pray for God’s righteousness in the land? How can we, God’s people, keep our lives pure and holy before we begin to judge others? This is a small sacrifice to make compared to the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross for our sins and for the extension of His Father’s Kingdom on Earth before He returns to Jerusalem.

6th April 2021. Exodus 34:29-32 records one of the times when Moses met with God Almighty to receive His words written on stone tablets. On this occasion “he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.” Note that the Bible does not say it happened because the LORD had spoken to Moses, but that Moses had spoken to Him. The outcome was that the people feared to come near Moses until he called them to listen to the commands of God. First the leaders came then all the people of God came to listen.

Acts 1:1-5 records how Jesus spent time with His disciples (now called apostles) after His resurrection. He gave them “instructions through the Holy Spirit” (v.2) and “spoke about the Kingdom of God” but warned them to wait, since “in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit” (v.5).

Thank you Heavenly Father that time and again You draw us close to Yourself and to Your Son to hear more of Your truth and commands despite our sin and disobedience, even betrayal and denial. Help us to realise that as we draw near to You in repentance and obedience, we receive the radiance of Your glory and the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit. Teach us to be aware of the privileged outcome of becoming apostles of Your word, "first for leaders, then for all the people of God to listen to". Enable us, then, to put behind us all our sins, disobedience and denials and shine for Jesus in the power of Your Spirit for the extension of Your Kingdom. Amen.

7th April 2021. Zephaniah 3 records God's prophecy for Jerusalem given in 600 BC which at that time was "disobedient and unclean... They do not trust in the LORD God Almighty nor ask for His help" (3:1-2). "Daily the LORD does what is righteous yet the unrighteous know no shame" (3:5). Zephaniah then records that the LORD will pour out His anger on the world (3:8) but will "purify what all the nations say and they will use their words to worship Me. They will serve Me together" (3:9). God will also remove from Jerusalem "those who delight in pride... but I will leave within you the meek and humble who trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of believers will do no wrong... They will eat and lie down in peace and no one will make them afraid" (8:11-13). "Sing and be glad... The Lord has taken away your punishment; He has turned back your enemy" (8:14-15). "The LORD your God is with you. He is mighty to save... I will give you honour and praise among all the peoples of the Earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes" (8:17,20).

Matthew 5:5 Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are humble [meek, KJV]. Then they will be given [inherit] the Earth." Jesus taught us to learn from what is weak and wrong in our own lives by reaching out to Him in faith to humbly meet the needs of others before our own needs.

Father God, thank You for Your promised mercy for Jerusalem and for the world. Keep us in Your will to be "meek and humble" and establish daily Your righteous Kingdom through faith in Israel's Messiah. "Purify what all the nations say" to worship You. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

8th April 2021. 1 Kings 15:1-14 reveals how King Abijah "was not fully devoted to the LORD his God" (v.3). He did not worship idols but allowed the people to continue in sin. However, God blessed Jerusalem and Judah for the sake of His former King David (v.4). After three years, God raised up King Asa who reigned in Jerusalem for 41 years and "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (v.11). "He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his father had made" (v.12).

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 says how the apostle Paul warned against mixing with unbelievers. "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" (v.14). "How can the temple of the true God and the statues of other gods agree? We are the temple of the living God!" (v.16). Paul then quotes from God's former prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Samuel. "Come out from among them and be separate. Do not touch anything that is not pure and clean, then I will receive you. I will be your Father and you will be My sons and daughters" (v.17-18).

Father God, we pray for this generation to be blessed by leaders who believe Your written word and who expel what is evil in the land. May we in turn choose to separate ourselves from who or what is evil. We ask this not only for the sake of former leaders who made our nations great but for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. Bring revival so that His sacrifice is not in vain and we can live in the hope of His eternal salvation through the power of His Spirit, until He returns to Jerusalem to reign in victory. Amen.

9th April 2021. Malachi 2:10-17 warns against unfaithfulness to God and to the people of God. Malachi is told that this is like a man who is unfaithful to his wife whom the LORD God Almighty "made one" (v.15). God's purpose in faithful marriage is to "seek godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. I hate divorce" (v.15-16). In this way, God was revealing to Malachi how the people of God had broken their covenant with Him which was established at the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Instead, they had raised up children from marriages to unbelievers (v.11). They had wearied the LORD with their unfaithfulness to Him and constant questioning, "Where is the God of justice?" (v.17).

Acts 11:19-21 records the time when God encouraged the followers of Jesus to spread the Good News not only to believing Jews (v.19) but to believing Gentiles (v.20). In this way, "the Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (v.21).

Lord Jesus, help us to understand the need to be "faithful to God and to the people of God" under His new covenant with His people. May we therefore proclaim the Good News and raise up "godly offspring" to extend His promised worldwide family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Help us not to compromise His plan for the Kingdom of God You spoke about so many times to Your disciples. Enable us through Your Spirit to minister to others in a selfless way with Your compassion but without yielding to the ways of sinners and non-believers. Help us to patiently endure as we "obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). Amen.

12th April 2021. Job 23 covers the period in Job's life when he said, "If only I knew where to find Him [God] ... I would find out what He would answer me" (v.3-4). However, he had the conviction that "when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold, for my feet have closely followed His steps. I have kept to His way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of His lips. I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread" (v.10-12). Yet Job also suspected that God had not finished refining him in his walk in life (v.13-17).

1 Corinthians 6:8 explains that the disputes and moanings within the church showed that their own hearts were wrong. Paul said, "You ... do wrong ... to your brothers and sisters" (6:8). They were guilty of judging others but failed to judge themselves. They were also selfish and did not forgive one another. This gave Satan a foothold in their lives. "Do not give the devil a chance" (Ephesians 4:27). Once you let him lead you astray he will try and take control and spoil all the good things God is doing in your life and church.

Father, forgive us when we argue or moan about things in our church when we ought to look at what is wrong in our own lives. Make us faithful to Your commands and treasure Your words, like Job, while being open to the refining Holy Spirit power in our lives so that, also like Job, we do not lose touch with You. Forgive our selfish ways and encourage us to seek the forgiveness of others and to be more forgiving ourselves. In Jesus' name. Amen.

13th April 2021. Genesis 21 records the beginnings of Jewish and Arab nations according to the word of the LORD God Almighty. Ishmael, the son of Abraham by his maidservant Hagar, was already born when his wife Sarah "became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age at the very time God had promised him" (21:2). God also promised Abraham, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring" (21:12-12).

1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Paul reminds the church, "Do you not know your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?" (6:19; also 3:16-17). The Corinthian believers probably thought that God cared only for their spiritual salvation and not for their bodies. Paul warned them that we are not our own; we were bought at a price. "Christ has paid the price for you", he said. We belong to Him and our bodies must be under the control of His Spirit. "Use your bodies in a way that honours God" (6:20).

Dear Lord God, thank you for teaching us that Abraham's family through Isaac and Jacob has had to live with the result of unfaithfulness in marriage which has caused conflict down the ages. May we learn from Paul's teaching that You have concern for bodily needs as well as spiritual needs and trust

fully in Your purpose and timely provision in life. Forgive us for doing wrong in the past. Help us to receive Your forgiveness and to know Your victory in our lives though the sacrifice of Your Son, our Saviour. Show us also how to see and understand Your provision for those around us even when there is ongoing conflict. Amen.

14th April, 2021. Numbers 33 records details of over 40 stages in the journey of the family of Jacob (Israel) from Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan. That was the country where Abraham used to live and where Isaac was born. These stages were written down by Moses at the command of God Himself (v.2). When they arrived on the banks of the River Jordan, God told Moses to tell the people of Israel to "drive out all... destroy all... demolish all... take possession... and distribute the land" (v.50-54). "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land... they will give you trouble... And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them" (v.55-56).

Romans 9 records Paul's understanding of God's purpose and provision for the people of Israel, his own people. They were chosen as God's children, with divine glory, blessed with His covenants and the Law and the Temple. He gave to the founders of Israel His promise of the coming Christ, "who is God over all. May He always be praised! Amen." (v.4-5).

We thank you Lord Jesus for the insight given to Moses to record for us all the special provision in the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob over 3500 years ago. We believe that this was done with Your Father's salvation of the world in mind through Your birth, death and resurrection in Israel 1500 years later. Help us to learn today from these records of what God's people did, good and bad, and show mercy at this present time when the world awaits Your return to deliver believers from persecution and evil. Help us to live all "40 stages in our journey" of faith and believe that "You are God over all". Amen.

15th April 2021. Psalm 38 (NIV), records David's prayer of faith for hope of God's salvation. "All my longings lie open before you, Lord; my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes" (v.10-11). "LORD, I wait for You; You will answer, Lord my God" (v.15). "I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin" (v.18). "LORD, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. Come quickly to help me, my LORD and my Saviour" (v.21-22).

1 Corinthians 1:18-30 (NIRV) says, "The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are lost and dying. But it is God's power to us who are being saved. It is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of those who are wise" (v.18-19; Isaiah 29:14). "God chose the weak things of the world to shame

the strong... Because of what God has done, you belong to Christ Jesus. He has become God's wisdom for us. He makes us right with God. He makes us holy and sets us free" (v.27-30).

Father God, help us to understand the amazing truth recorded by your apostle Paul. Like David, we long for You, we confess to You and we trust in You for our salvation. Though we feel like a humble shepherd or even a wandering sheep, we know You did not leave David, who became Your king to prepare the way for Israel's King Jesus, our Saviour. Help us to understand the message of the cross to shame those around us by proclaiming Your truth of our Messiah who "makes us holy and sets us free". Amen.

16th April 2021. 1 Samuel 30:17-25 tells how King David returned from a successful battle against the Amalekites with much plunder (v.17-20). He was met by 200 of his army who had stayed behind because they were too weary to fight. David greeted them, but some members of his army were angry with them for deserting. They refused to share the plunder (v.21-22). David said, "No my friends, you must not hold back the share of what the LORD God Almighty has given us... Everyone's share will be the same." David made this a law for Israel (v.23-25).

James 5:13-16 gives guidelines for prayerful fellowship among believers in the early days of the Jewish congregations who believed in Jesus as their Messiah. "Are any of you in trouble? Then you should pray. Are any of you happy? Then you should sing songs of praise. Are any of you ill? Then send for the elders of the church to pray over you... If you have sinned, you will be forgiven."

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the Old Testament guidelines that have been taught from the earliest days of Your Church, among Jewish and Gentile believers alike. Keep us aware of the love in our Heavenly Father's heart for all people. May we enter into the fullness of God's provision and purpose for those who put their trust in Him and who accept His forgiveness and salvation through Your sacrifice. May we in turn, generously reflect His love to others and pray for those who are fearful, weary or ill, forgiving them and rejoicing with those who are glad. Amen.

19th April, 2021. 2 Chronicles 34:29-33 records the time of King Josiah after the lost book of the Law of God was found in Solomon's Temple. "Josiah called together all the elders ... all the people of Jerusalem ... from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing the words ... and renewed before them the covenant in the presence of the LORD God Almighty – to follow the Lord and keep His commands ... with all his heart and his soul and obey the words of the covenant written in this book" (v.29-31). He removed all the

idols from the land. "As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their fathers" (v.33).

Revelation 22:10-12 records the words from Jesus that the angel of God gave 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 is right continue to be 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."

Lord Jesus, thank You for the revelation You gave to your servant John to continue to read our Bibles faithfully in these evil days as we await Your return. We pray that Your church will faithfully preach the word of God without compromise so that Your Holy Spirit will convict some and encourage others to receive Your salvation and fearlessly witness the righteousness of God in their lives. May we "not fail to follow the LORD, the God of our fathers" and "continue to be right and holy". Come soon, Lord Jesus! Amen.

20th April, 2021. Judges 15:9-20 gives the story of Sampson when the Philistines came to take him prisoner (v.10). The men of Judah were afraid and tied Sampson up with strong new rope to hand him over to their enemies (v.12-13). When Sampson was delivered into the hands of the Philistines, he faced death but "the Spirit of the Lord God Almighty came up him in power." He broke the ropes and slaughtered a thousand men using a donkey's jawbone (v.14-16). He became a leader and judge of Judah for 20 years (v.20).

Romans 8:28-39 records the words of Paul, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose... to the likeness of His Son" (v.28-29). "If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all" (v.31-32). "Jesus Christ... is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who can separate us from the love of Christ? As it is written, 'For Your sake we face death all day long' (Psalm 44:22). In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (v.35-37). Paul was convinced that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v.38-39).

Thank you Father God for working all things for our good and for reminding us of how Sampson was prepared to die for the sake of other believers. Thank you Jesus for being prepared to die to save us from spiritual death and intercede for us. Amen.

21st April 2021. Job 41 gives God's answer to Job to explain why he had planned so much suffering in his life. God points to the huge and powerful sea creature called leviathan and says that no-one is strong enough to stand against it. "Who then is able to stand against Me? Who dares to ask Me to explain? Everything under Heaven belongs to Me!" (v.10-11). Job admitted before God, "I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be defeated... I despise myself and repent" (42:2,6).

Hebrews 7:18-25 explains that, "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless, for the law [given by God to Moses] made nothing perfect. A better hope is introduced by which we draw near to God... Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant... because Jesus lives for ever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He lives for ever to intercede for them."

Father God, forgive us for questioning what You do and why You do it. Thank you for the life of Job to testify of Your mighty power to create and to save. Thank You for the testimony of the writer of the book of Hebrews who confirms the imperfect nature of Your old covenant and the trust we can place in Jesus Christ as Your new covenant for our salvation for ever and tells us how He intercedes with You for us. Help us to admit that no plan of Yours can be defeated. Enable us to live lives of praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

22nd April, 2021. Psalm 7:14-17 warns that "men are full of evil, plans trouble and ends up telling lies. Anyone who digs a hole, falls into the pit he has made [because] the trouble he makes comes back on him. And the violent things he does comes down on his own head." However, David, the psalm writer says with equal conviction, "I will give thanks to the LORD God Almighty because of His righteousness and will sing praise to the LORD Most High."

1 Timothy 2:8-15 warns men and women not to copy the customs of the world around them but to "lift up holy hands in prayer without anger or disputing" (v.8) and to "continue in faith, love and holiness" (v.15). Paul's advice to Timothy is said in the context of women submitting to the authority of men in the home and in the church and that women should find fulfilment in childbearing and in caring for them and in doing good deeds to all. Indeed, in the 2000-year period of the Christian Church, "women have demonstrated to a greater degree than men, the qualities of faith, love and holiness" (Thomas Hale, colleague of Fred Morris, quoted in The Applied New Testament Commentary, published by Kingsway Publications, 1996).

Father God, You have created both men and women in your likeness but with different roles and characteristics. David and Paul understood much

about the failings of human nature. Help us also to understand how to live our lives with mutual respect and love for each other. Forgive us when we abuse the roles you have purposed in life and also the responsibilities You have given us for the world around us. For the sake of Your Son who died to save us from our sins. Amen.

23rd April 2021. Judges 8:28-33 records the time of Gideon who lead Israel in peace for 40 years. But as soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel joined themselves to the gods that were named after Baal. "Israel was not faithful to the LORD God Almighty... They forgot what the LORD their God had done for them. He had saved them from the power of their enemies."

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 describes Paul's chief focus in his life. "Christ sent me to preach the Good News. He commanded me not to use human wisdom. That would take all the power away from the cross of Christ. The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are lost and dying. But it is God's power to us who are being saved."

Dear God, forgive us for forgetting what You have done to save us from our enemies. Help us to refocus our lives on You and on Your calling. May we preach in the name of Jesus, pray for public repentance and praise You in the power of Your Spirit for Your salvation plan for the lost and the dying through faith in the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May we never presume on Your everlasting mercy and risk having Your back turned towards us through worshipping the gods of this age. Amen.

26th April 2021. Jeremiah 51:59-64 gives the word of God Almighty concerning the promised destruction of Babylon which happened less than 60 years later at the hand of Cyrus king of Persia. This prepared the way for the release of the Jewish remnant to rebuild Jerusalem in 539 BC.

Hebrews 10:19-23 says "We are not afraid to enter the Most Holy Room. We enter boldly because of the blood of Jesus... It has been opened for us through the curtain... So let us come near to God with an honest and true heart. Let us come near with a faith that is sure and strong... Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The One who promised is faithful."

Father God, our trust is in You to do and finish what You have promised. Despite the persecution of all the apostles, You have established the Church of Jesus Christ across the world. Despite the persecution of Your people Israel, You have established them in the land of Your promise once again. "Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have" in Christ our Saviour in these Last Days before His return. Prepare us and the world to receive Him in glory with great numbers to welcome Him. May we soon see revival to add to those "with a faith that is sure and strong". Thank you for rebuilding your earthly

Temple so that we could enter boldly through the curtain into Your presence, now and for ever, "because of the blood of Jesus" Your only Son, our Saviour. Amen.

27th April, 2021. Jeremiah 36 describes the time when the word of God came to Jeremiah to "get a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you. Write down what I have said about Israel, Judah and all the other nations... from the time of King Josiah until now... Maybe then all of them will turn from their evil ways. If they do, I will forgive their sins" (v.1-3). Baruch the scribe took the scroll and read it to the people and a time of fasting before the Lord God Almighty was proclaimed (v.8-9). While Jeremiah and Baruch hid, the king ordered the scroll to be read to him and he burnt it, bit by bit (v.19-23). God spoke to Jeremiah to write another scroll to send to the king to tell him of the disaster that would come on him and on Jerusalem. But the king burned it in the fire (v.27-32).

Revelation 7-10 describes those who survived the great tribulation, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14). "The Lamb will be their shepherd... And God will wipe every tear from their eyes" (7:17). Then the seventh seal was opened and an eagle called out in a loud voice "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth!" (8:13). Then a mighty angel came holding a scroll who declared, "The mystery of God will be accomplished, just as He announced to His servants the prophets" (10:1-7). This is generally understood to refer to the Mystery of Christ and His Kingdom.

Father God, in Your mercy, help us to heed Your written word for today, that we may see a mighty extension to Your Kingdom through Christ our Saviour before His return to Earth. Amen.

28th April 2021. Exodus 10:15-30 [NIV] gives instructions under the old covenant for Aaron the priest to make a "breastpiece of decision" so that "whenever he enters the Holy Place of God Almighty, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart... as a continuing memorial before the Lord God Almighty" (v.29).

Hebrews 9:6-28 [NIrV] says that "the priests entered in to do their work for God and for others but only the high priest went into the inner room once a year... He offered the blood for himself and for the sins the people had committed because they did not know any better" (v.6-7). "When Christ came to be the High Priest ... He did not enter by spilling the blood of goats and calves. He entered the holy room by spilling His own blood. He did it once and for all time. He paid the price to set us free from sin for ever" (v.11-12). "Christ offered Himself to God without any fault. He did this through the

power of the eternal Holy Spirit... Now we can serve the living God. That is why Christ is the go-between of a new covenant. Now those God calls to Himself will receive the eternal gift He has promised. They will receive it now that Christ has died to save them. He died to set them free from the sins they committed under the first covenant" (v.14-15). "He will take away the sins of many people. He will also come a second time. At that time He will not suffer for sin. Instead, He will come to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him" (v.28).

Thank you Father for this clear message of Your Good News of salvation in Christ to proclaim for today. Come Lord Jesus! Amen.

29th April 2021. Ezekiel 48:30-35 records God's plans for Jerusalem including its gates, one of which will welcome the return of Jesus our Lord in the last days. The new name of the city will be "The LORD God Almighty is there" which is an everlasting promise.

Jude verses 17-25 says, "Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. They told you, 'In the last days people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly ideas.' ...They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love [and] show mercy to those who doubt... Save them. To others, show mercy mixed with fear." Finally, Jude says, "Give praise to the One who was before all time, who now is, and who will be for ever. Amen."

Eternal Father, keep us in Your love and prompt us through Your Spirit to be a blessing to You and also to other believers, especially those who doubt in these last days. Show us how to be merciful and wise to others who make fun of Your truth. May we remember to pray for Jerusalem and its role in the world as we await our Saviour's return. Thank You for Your mercy and salvation. Grant Your people a full measure of Your Holy Spirit to persevere and serve the church of Jesus Christ with signs and wonders, that many will be saved. Amen.

30th April, 2021. Genesis 30:22-43 records how God's provision prevailed for Jacob and his family and his flocks whilst working for his uncle Laban. God provided extra children through his second wife, Rachel (v.22-24) then Jacob planned a way to increase his flock of goats (v.35-43) before returning to Canaan, future Israel, the land God promised to his grandfather and father, Abraham and Isaac.

Acts 6:1-9 records how the apostles planned a way of meeting the needs of church growth and daily provision of food (v.1). They met to decide how to avoid neglecting 'the teaching of the word of God' (v.2). Then they gave instructions 'to choose seven of your men... who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit' while they themselves gave 'attention to prayer and to teaching the word' (v.3-4). The congregation were pleased and chose seven men. 'Then the apostles prayed and placed their hands on them. So God's word spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem grew quickly. Also a large number of priests began to obey the teachings of Jesus' (v.5-7). Signs and wonders followed, but also opposition arose (v.8-9).

Father God, thank You for the record of how Noah's prayer (Genesis 9:26) prepared the way for his first son Shem's family to become established and prosper in Canaan. Praise you for how you blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the people of Israel before and after the resurrection of their Messiah. Encourage us to observe Your ongoing divine strategy of growth and miracles of provision midst today's growing persecution. In the blessed name of Jesus, we ask. Amen.

3rd May 2021. 2 Chronicles 24 (NIV) records the life of King Joash who "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD God Almighty all the time Jehoiada was priest in Jerusalem" (24:2). He collected taxes due under the law of Moses and repaired the Temple. "All the officials and the people brought their contributions gladly" (24:10). "They rebuilt the Temple of God according to its original design and reinforced it" (24:13). However "After the death of Jehoida, the officials of Judah paid homage to the king and he listened to them. They abandoned the Temple of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and worshipped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came upon Judah and Jerusalem. Although the LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to Him, and although they testified against them, they would not listen" (24:17-19).

Acts 7:1-53 records the speech of the apostle Stephen who reminded the Jews how God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to greatly increase the number of God's people greatly whilst in Egypt (v.17). But a new king persecuted the people and ordered their newborn babies to be killed. But Moses was saved by Pharaoh's daughter who in turn saved the people of Israel and led them back toward the Promised Land of Canaan. "At Mount Sinai, he received living words to pass on" (v.38) but the people rejected him "and in their hearts turned back to Egypt" (v.39). Stephen told his listeners, "You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit. You have received the Law but not obeyed it" (v.51,53).

Father God, forgive us for disobeying You. Remind us that "My Breath's wrath is real!" Bring repentance and revival today! Amen.

4th May 2021. Genesis 22:1-19 is the account of Abraham's testing to be willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac in the way alien tribes did (v.1-2) and how Abraham obeyed (v.3-10) only to be stopped by God's angel and told to sacrifice the blood of a male sheep instead (v.11-13). The angel of the Lord God Almighty then gave Abraham a message from God, "I make a promise on oath in My own name. I will bless you because of what you have done. You have not held back your son, your only son. So I will certainly bless you. I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky... Your children will take over the cities of their enemies. All nations on Earth will be blessed because of your children. All this will happen because you obeyed Me" (v.15-18).

Revelation 20:4 records the vision given to the apostle John. "I saw the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because they had given witness to Jesus and because of God's word. They had not worshipped the Beast or his statue. They had not received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled with Christ for 1000 years."

Father God, enable Your people to be bold and fearless in "witnessing to Jesus and Your word". May we refuse to yield our lives to alien leaders and alien religions but put our trust in salvation through the Lamb of God whom You sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. So fulfil Your promise to Abraham nearly 4000 years ago and keep us from yielding to the mark of the Beast, to share in the blessings of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth. Amen.

5th May 2021. Ecclesiastes 8:14 records the despair of the writer regarding the apparent lack of meaning in life. "Godly men get what wicked people should receive and sinful men get what godly people should receive." However, he is wise enough to advise, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your might" (9:10) and then concludes with divine wisdom, "Respect God and obey His commandments" (12:13).

Acts 21:17-21 records the arrival of Paul in Jerusalem to meet the Jewish elders of the believers in Christ as Saviour. "He reported everything God had done among the non-Jews through his work. When they heard this they praised God." But some of the Jewish believers were stirring up trouble for Paul because they had heard false rumours which had to be put right (v.21).

Lord Jesus, in Your Church on Earth, grant divine wisdom through the work of Your promised Holy Spirit that we may not be trapped in or tripped up by human wisdom. Encourage us to work with fervour and rejoice in the

purposes of God according to our calling in service to others. Enable us to give glory to God as we find true meaning in life through obeying His commandments. Enable us to stand up strong against lies and persecution as we seek to extend and support Your Church. So do not let us despair but help us to overcome evil with good. For Your sake, who died for those who believe in You as the Son of all Righteousness. Amen.

6th May 2021. 1 Samuel 9:15-16 records the calling of Saul as God's first king of Israel. It tells how God spoke to Samuel the day before, "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man... Anoint him to be leader of my people Israel. He will save them from the powerful hand of the Philistines. I have seen how much My people are suffering. Their cry for help has reached me."

Hebrews 10:1-5 explains how 'the Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming... The same sacrifices have to be offered over and over again. They must be offered year after year. That is why the Law can never make perfect those who come near to worship... the worshippers would have been made clean once and for all time. They would not have felt guilty for their sins any more... So when Christ came into the world, He said, "You did not want sacrifices and offerings. Instead, You prepared a body for Me." '

Father God, You revealed Your purpose many years before the 1000-year reign of kings in Israel to save them from their enemies, then suddenly put it into action within 24 hours through Your obedient servant Samuel. From the beginning of time, You planned to create a body for Your only Son as our Saviour to bless the world through His sacrifice for sin. Then suddenly, in less than 48 hours, His crucifixion and resurrection prepared the way for eternal life for all who believe. Hear our cry for Your help today to save us from the destructive work of the enemy and the persecution of believers. Bring revival and prepare the world for the sudden return of Your Messiah! Amen.

7th May 2021. 1 Samuel 14:44-47 tells how the new King Saul of Israel tried to honour God rather than his own son, Jonathan. However, the followers of Saul encouraged him to forgive Jonathan and so instead he focused successfully on defeating the enemies of Israel on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines.

Revelation 20:4-6 is where the apostle John says, "I saw the thrones of those who had been given authority to judge were sitting... also the souls of those whose heads had been cut off because they had given witness for Jesus and because of God's word. They had not worshipped the beast of the statue. They had not received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and ruled with Christ..."

Heavenly Father, again thank You for Your everlasting truth recorded in the Bible. Help us to focus on fighting the enemies of Your Kingdom instead of passing judgement on those near to us who share our faith. May we continue to "give witness for Jesus and ... God's word" and not conform to the worldly powers around us. Teach us to know what Jesus would say and do. Whatever the cost, we look forward to our resurrection with Christ. For your glory. Amen.

10th May 2021. 2 Kings 9:1-13 records the instructions of Elisha to one of the prophets to anoint Jehu as future 'king over the LORD's people Israel'. In addition, to prophesy that the family of former king Ahab would perish and so would his wife Jezebel. Although Jehu tried to dismiss what the prophet told him (v.11), those who were with him 'blew the trumpet and shouted "Jehu is king!" ' Jehu reigned for 28 years (10:36) and did everything that the prophet said and God was pleased (10:30). Yet he was 'not careful to keep the Law of the LORD God Almighty with all his heart... In those days, the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel' (10:31-32).

1 Timothy 3:8-13 gives Paul's advice concerning the work of church deacons who must be "worthy of respect, honest and true... They must hold on to the deep truths of the faith... They must be first tested, then let them serve as deacons if there is nothing against them... Those who have served well earn the full respect of others and also become more sure of their faith in Christ Jesus."

Lord Jesus, enable us to live our lives worthy of respect and uphold the deep truths of our faith in You and in God our Father. May we learn from Scripture to obey God with all our heart and not dismiss what the Spirit is saying to us so that His influence through us increases and does not reduce. Open our eyes to what is happening to us and around us in today's world so that we may pass each test and grow in faith, love and obedience as we await Your return. Amen.

11/5/21. Genesis 42 reports the journey of ten of the sons of Jacob to Egypt to buy corn. Joseph, their lost brother, met them there but they did not recognise him (v.8). He spoke to them with authority from Pharaoh, king of Egypt (v.15) but also acknowledged his faith in God Almighty (v.18). Secretly, he showed his compassion for his estranged brothers and wept for them despite the wrong they had done to him and their father (v.24).

Jude 21-22 is written probably by one of the brothers of Jesus. "Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love."

Heavenly Father, thank you for these encouraging and anointed words from brother Jude who knew personally our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Your Son. Thank you for our purpose and provision in Christ and also for Your words from 3700 years ago when Your purposes for Your people Israel were being established. Although many things are not always revealed to us until later, help us to note how Your servant Joseph respected the authority of the nation he lived in at that time and also testified of his faith in the one true God of his father Jacob (Israel). Help us to respect the authority in our land and give glory to You at all times as we await understanding of our role to play and Your purpose and provision for this day and every day. May we show compassion to those who have done wrong as did Joseph and Jesus. Amen.

12th May 2021. Ezekiel 28:25-26 says, "The LORD and King says, 'I will gather the people of Israel together from the nations where they have been scattered. I will show that I am holy among them. I will let the nations see it. Then Israel will live in their own land. I gave it to my servant Jacob. My people will live there in safety. They will build houses. They will plant vineyards. They will live in safety. I will punish all of their neighbours who told lies about them. Then Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.' "

2 Timothy 1:12-14 records Paul's testimony and advice. "I know the One I have believed in. I am sure He is able to take care of what I have given Him. I can trust Him with it until the day He returns as judge. Follow what you heard from me as the pattern of true teaching. Follow it with faith and love because you belong to Christ Jesus. Guard the truth of the Good News that you were trusted with. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."

Father God, continue to open our eyes to understand the times we live in. Strengthen the same belief and faith and trust You have given us as you gave Paul. As the world around us trembles, may we encourage others to follow the true teaching of the Good News in Christ and live in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Bless and keep safe this day Your people Israel and prepare us and them for the time when Jesus our Messiah returns to Jerusalem in glory. For His sake who died with Your compassion to save the world from sin. Amen.

13th May 2021. Isaiah 23 records prophecy concerning Tyre, a great city which traded with the world including Israel, especially in supplying her with timber for King David's palace and for Solomon's Temple. God warned that for seventy years it would lose its wealth through trading which had encouraged unholy revelry (23:7). At the end of the seventy years, the LORD God Almighty told Isaiah that He would restore the trade to Tyre, "But the money

it earns will be set aside for the LORD. The money will not be stored up or kept for Tyre. Instead, it will go to those who live the way the LORD wants" (23:17-18).

Romans 9:22-33 shows Paul's clear understanding of the Old Testament prophets. He quotes from Hosea how God chose to bless the Gentiles as well as the Jews. "I will call those who are not My people 'My people'... they will be called 'children of the living God' " (9:25-26). He explains how Isaiah lamented, "The number of people from Israel may be like the sand from the sea, but only a few of them will be saved" (9:27). Paul said that the Jews did not find the righteousness of God because they did not look for it by faith. "They tripped over the Stone that causes people to trip and fall. It is written [by Isaiah] 'Look! In Zion, I am laying a Stone that causes people to stumble. The one who trusts in Him will never be shamed' " (9:30-31).

Father God, thank you that you chose to bless some of the Gentile tribes as well as the Jews with Your righteousness in Old Testament times before offering salvation for all through Christ. Continue to reveal Your truth to Jews and Gentiles today to live by faith in You. For Your glory and for Christ's sake. Amen.

14th May 2021. Esther 10:1-3 tells how attempts to persecute the Jews failed in the time of King Xerxes. This was at the time of the Jewish exile in Babylon. 'Mordecai the Jew was second only to the king... All the other Jews had the highest respect for him. That is because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the benefit of all the Jews.' The name Mordecai means 'little man' and he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest of the twelve tribes of Israel.

1 Corinthians 12:12-21 explains how the body is made up of different parts which work together as one body. Paul teaches us that the same applies to the body of Christ – His Church on Earth (v.12). "We are all baptised by one Holy Spirit into one body. It does not matter whether we are Jews or Greeks [Gentiles], slaves or free people [servants or masters]. We were all given the same Spirit" (v.13). "God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them" (v.18). "He has given more honour to the parts that didn't have any. In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will look after each other" (v. 24-25). By this Paul means we should avoid looking down on some believers but give honour to all members of the body of Christ and care for each one.

Thank You Father for your love for us all and for sending Your Son to die for our salvation. Help us to fulfil Your purpose in caring equally for each other with the compassion of Christ and in the power of His Spirit. Amen.

17th May 2021. Jeremiah 44 gives God's judgement on the Jews who left Jerusalem to settle in Egypt and did new sins by creating new gods. "They made Me very angry. They burned incense to other gods and worshipped them. You and your people of long ago never had anything to do with those gods before" (44:3). "Why make Me angry with the gods your hands have made?" (44:8). God warned them that only a few would escape His punishment by sword, famine and plague (44:13-14). But the people told Jeremiah, "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord God Almighty" (44:16).

Luke 2:41-52 records the time when Jesus was 12 years old and went with Joseph and Mary to the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. After the Feast was over, Jesus was missing for several days because He was sitting in the Temple Courts listening to the teachers and asking them questions. "Jesus became wiser, stronger and more and more pleasing to God and to His people" (2:52).

Father God we thank You for the record of how Jesus valued the Old Testament teachings, unlike some of Your people 600 years before at the time of Jeremiah. Help us to be obedient to Your truth recorded for us in both Old and New Testaments and not be deceived by new teachings of today nor worship "new gods" that Your people have never worshipped before. Help us to reject "new ideas" that are wrong and adopt "new ideas" that are righteous. For the sake of Jesus Christ who sacrificed His life for all who believe He is the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Amen.

18th May 2021. 1 Chronicles 24:1-5 is where King David gave instructions for ministry at the site of the House of the LORD God Almighty and its altar for the burnt offerings of repentance for sins. This was done before the Temple was built. The priestly descendants of Aaron were appointed to serve God and the people as "officials of the Temple and officials of God" (v.5). Two of Aaron's four sons had no offspring. His son Eleazar had many more descendants than his other son Ithamar. So David arranged for twice as many descendants of Eleazar to serve than descendants of Ithamar and these officials or priests were all appointed fairly by lot.

Galatians 3:6-14 states Paul's understanding of God's old and new covenants. He wrote, "We know that no-one is made right with God by keeping the Law. Scripture says, 'Those who are right with God will live by faith' " (v.11; Habakkuk 2:4). He knew after his conversion on the road to Damascus that "Christ Jesus set us free [redeemed us] so that the blessing given to Abraham would [also] come to non-Jews through Christ. He did it so that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Christ" (v.14).

Thank You heavenly Father for recording the divine wisdom of King David to appoint a fair system of priests and officers to serve You in worship and sacrifice for future generations. Make bold the Church today to "live by faith" and to declare Your truth of salvation through Christ alone. Help us, whatever our ancestry, to respect that ALL believers are "appointed fairly", called by You as priests "to serve God and the people" under the new covenant. Amen.

19th May 2021. Judges 9 to 12 records the ungodly events between the times of Gideon and Samson, when the rulers and people failed to trust in the LORD God Almighty. The end of Chapter 8 says, "As soon as Gideon died... Israel was not faithful to the Lord" (8:33). However, Chapter 13 records the miraculous birth of Samson. In His mercy, "The Lord blessed him and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir in him" (13:24-25).

Titus 3:3-8 gives the words of Paul to his friend in Crete. "At one time we too acted like fools. We did not obey God... We were controlled by all kind of longings and pleasures. We were full of evil... But the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared. He saved us. It was not because of the good things we had done. It was because of His mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins. We were born again. The Holy Spirit gave us new life. God poured out the Spirit on us freely because of what Jesus Christ our Saviour has done. His grace made us right with God. So now we have received the hope of eternal life as God's children." So, "commit to doing what is good."

Thank You God for Your mercy in calling us into eternal life as Your children. As we reflect upon the sacrifice You made through the miraculous birth of Your Son, who was punished for our sins and the sins of the people, may "the Spirit of the Lord begin to stir us up" so we "commit to doing what is good". In these unfaithful days, encourage repentance, holiness and good deeds. Forgive the disastrous ungodly sins of our nation and raise up world revival in preparation for Messiah's return. For Your glory and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

20th May 2021. 1 Chronicles 9:22-34 lists the appointment of priests from the tribe of Levi, originally prepared by David and Samuel (v.22). This included gatekeepers for the House of the LORD God Almighty, and those in charge of its treasures and the articles to use in the Temple service, plus the furnishings and oil and incense. Also, baking the offering bread in preparation for Sabbath and the leading of daily worship by musicians.

1 Corinthians 9:9-19 gives Paul's views on whether ministers should be paid to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. He said, "Here is what is written in the Law of Moses. 'Do not stop an ox from eating while it helps separate the grain from the straw' ... We have planted spiritual seed among

you. Is it too much to ask that we receive from you some of the things we need? ... Do you not know that those who work in the Temple get their food from the Temple? ... In the same way, those who preach the Good News should receive their living from their work [the Gospel, KJV] ... I am not writing because I hope you will do things like that for me ... I am able to preach the Good News free of charge ... I do it to win as many as I can to Christ."

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the example of Paul in preparing the way for supporting the preachers of the Good News of Your sacrifice for our salvation. Similarly, your servants David and Samuel prepared the way for people to worship our Heavenly Father. Help us to live holy lives and focus on the witness, worship and work of Your Church, trusting You for our personal needs. For Your glory. Amen.

21st May 2021. Isaiah 40:27-31 gives these famous words from the LORD God Almighty to His people: "Why do you say, 'The LORD doesn't notice our condition'? Do you not know who made everything? ...The LORD is the God who lives forever. He created everything on Earth. He will not become worn out or get tired... He gives strength to those who are tired. He gives power to those who are weak... Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly on wings like eagles. They will run and not get weary. They will walk and not grow faint."

Jude says, "I feel I should write and ask you to stand up for the faith... Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. They told you, 'In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings.' They are not led by the Holy Spirit... Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ will bring you eternal life. As you wait for His mercy, remain in God's love. Show mercy to those who doubt... Give praise to the One who is able to keep you from falling into sin. He will bring you into His heavenly glory without any fault. He will bring you there with great joy... Give praise to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Give praise to the One who was before all time, who now is, and who will be forever."

Thank You Father for Your eternal truth. We praise Your name and Jesus our Saviour. Refine us so that our lives are an acceptable daily offering to You. Amen.

24th May 2021. Ezra 5 and 6 records what happened after the Jews were told to stop rebuilding Jerusalem and its Temple for 15 years (4:24). Haggai, received a prophesy from God and encouraged the building to recommence

(5:1-2). This time, the enemies of Israel did not stop the work but instead investigated the historical facts behind the rebuilding and wrote to the new king Darius of Persia without any lies or accusations (5:3-17). The king researched the palace records for the truth (6:1-5) and issued the instruction, "Do not try to stop the work on God's Temple" (6:7). In addition he ordered that expenses be paid to the workmen and the ingredients be provided on a daily basis for sacrifices "pleasing to the God of Heaven". He also said, "I want them to pray that things will go well for me and my sons", also daily (6:8-10).

John 21 gives the account of the time after the resurrection of Jesus when He chose to meet the disciples who had gone fishing in the Sea of Galilee without a single fish being caught. He told them what to do to catch many fish and to bring them ashore for breakfast. John was the first to recognise the Lord but Peter, who had recently denied Jesus, was the first to jump out of the boat to greet Him and then be blessed by Him (21:7-19).

Dear "God of Heaven", we praise You for these examples of times when You acted in mercy to bless Your people with freedom to work without false accusations and with abundance of daily provision. Release us today from those who hinder Your love, mercy and provision and may we become a daily blessing to others. Through the resurrection power of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

25th May 2021. Ezekiel 47:1-12 records a famous vision given to Ezekiel, one of God's major prophets. He was given visions of the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of God's people and the future glory of Jerusalem. Here, in 574 BC, he describes the river of fresh water that will flow from under the Temple into the Jordan valley and then into the former Dead Sea, with a port for fishermen at En Gedi and fruit trees along the river banks. "Every month they will bear fruit. The water from the Temple will flow to them. Their fruit will be used for food and their leaves will be used for healing" (v.12).

1 Peter 1:1-7 is written to Christians during the first century dispersion, "to you, God's chosen people. You are strangers in the world. You are scattered all over... You have been chosen in keeping with what God the Father had planned. That happened through the Spirit's work to make you pure and holy. God chose you so that you might obey Jesus Christ. He wanted you to be made clean by the blood of Christ... In His great mercy He has given us a new birth and a hope that is alive. It is alive because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Your salvation is going to be completed. It is ready to be shown to you in the last days... Your troubles have come in order to prove that your faith is real. It is worth more than gold."

Father God, thank You for these encouraging words to give us "real faith" in our future through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Despite the destruction, persecution and dispersion of Your people today, grant us a personal "hope that is alive". Amen.

26th May 2021. Genesis 49:29 to 50:9 records the death of Jacob whilst living in Egypt 400 years before the Exodus. He requested to have his bones buried in the cave in the field in Canaan purchased by Abraham over 200 years before. Pharaoh honoured the will of God by arranging for the family of Jacob to travel to Canaan with many Egyptian officials for a seven-day period of mourning (50:8-9).

Luke 1:11-17 records the time when the Jewish priest Zechariah was told by an angel of God that his wife Elizabeth will have a son named John [the Baptist] who would bring much joy to him and to Israel (1:14). "He will be important in the sight of the Lord God Almighty... He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord [Jesus, their Messiah]" (1:15-17).

Dear Father God, we note how You intervened in Egypt to establish Your purpose revealed to Abraham that through his grandson Jacob the tribes of Israel would dwell in Canaan despite much persecution and opposition from the Egyptians later on. You appointed Moses to prepare the way for Your plan who in turn prepared the way for the children of Israel to become a holy people. Thank you for this example of your purpose and preparation for Your people and for the way You later appointed John the Baptist to prepare the people to be holy and receive their Messiah, Jesus Christ our Saviour. May we learn from what You did 2000 and 3500 years ago and prepare ourselves and others to be holy, "despite much persecution and opposition", in readiness for the promised second coming of Christ. Amen.

27th May 2021. Jeremiah 44:1-14 records the warning to God's people who tried to escape from divine judgement in Jerusalem by fleeing to Egypt. But they continued to worship other gods. God asked "Why do you want to bring all this trouble on yourselves?" (44:7). So Jeremiah brought a message from God Almighty to them. "I will destroy the people of Judah who are left... All of them will die in Egypt... I will use war, hunger and plague to punish the Jews who live in Egypt. I punished Jerusalem in the same way" (44:12-13).

Acts 8:4-7 records the time of church persecution in Jerusalem before Paul's conversion. Yet "the believers, who had been scattered, preached the word [Good News] wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria. There he preached about the Christ. The crowds listened to Philip. They saw the miraculous signs he did. They all paid close attention to what he said. Evil

spirits screamed and came out of many people. Many who were disabled or who couldn't walk were healed. So there was great joy in that city."

Heavenly Father, thank you for the evidence of how Your people suffered much in the Middle East in Bible times, both from divine punishment brought on by their own sins and from the persecution of non-believers. Help us to distinguish today between the signs of Your punishment and of enemy persecution and not run away from the responsibility You have given us to repent and proclaim the Good News to re-establish Your truth in the land. For the sake of Jesus Christ who died for us in order to extend the Kingdom of God with signs and wonders. Amen.

28th May 2021. 2 Chronicles 36:11-17 records the lead-up to the destruction of Jerusalem 600 years before the birth of Christ. "Zedekiah ... ruled in Jerusalem for 11 years. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not pay any attention to the message the LORD spoke through the prophet Jeremiah ... His heart became very stubborn. He would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel. And the people and the leaders of the priests became more and more unfaithful ... The people and leaders made the LORD's Temple unclean ... The Lord, the God of Israel, sent word to His people through His messengers. He sent it to them again and again. He took pity on His people ... But God's people made fun of His messengers. They hated His words. They laughed at His prophets. Finally the LORD's burning anger was stirred up against His people. Nothing could save them. The LORD brought the king of Babylonia against them."

James 2:18-22 says, "Show me your faith that doesn't do good works. And I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that ... Do you want proof that faith without good works is useless? Our father Abraham [was] considered to be right with God because of what he did. So you see that what he believed and what he did made his faith complete."

Father God, forgive us when our faith without works saddens You as much as those who reject you. May the people and leaders avoid divine judgement by turning back to You and taking action in faith. So have pity on us and prepare us for the second coming of Christ our Saviour. Amen.

31st May 2021. Deuteronomy 18:9-19 gives clear guidance for God's people who were given a new beginning in the Promised Land of Canaan. Moses told them, "Do not copy the practices of the nations that are there... Do not practice any kind of evil magic at all... Do not get messages from those who have died... You must be without blame in the sight of the LORD your God... The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He will be one of

your own people. You must listen to him. [God said] 'I will put My words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him to say. The prophet will speak in My name.' "

John 8 12, 31-36 records the words of Jesus to the people. "I am the light of the world. Those who follow Me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life... If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free... Everyone who sins is a slave to sin... So if the Son [of God] sets you free, you are free indeed."

Thank you Father for the new beginning You gave to us humans at the time of Moses and the prophets and finally at the time of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. Forgive us for the times we have done evil and sought after sinful pleasures or sought guidance from evil powers. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, set us free from the darkness that surrounds us so that we and our loved ones can begin again to walk in the light of Your truth as taught and lived by Jesus. For His sake, who suffered the punishment for our sins. Amen.

1st June 2021. Psalm 37:23-27. "If the Lord is pleased with the way a man lives, He makes his steps secure. Even if he trips he will not fall. The Lord's hand takes good care of him. I once was young and now I am old. But I have never seen good people abandoned. I have never seen their children begging for bread. Those who do what is right are always giving and lending freely. Their children will be blessed. [So], turn away from evil and do good. Then you will live in the land for ever." Also, Psalm 18:36 says "You give me a wide path to walk in so that I do not twist my ankles."

Luke 10:25-29 records the time when Jesus spoke to someone who knew the Old Testament teaching well. The man asked, "Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and Love your neighbour as you love yourself." Jesus replied, "Do this and you will live." Then the man asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus then told him the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your forgiving mercy to those who confess their sins and put their trust in You. Help us not to stumble over how to understand and apply Your written Word but to learn from what Jesus our Saviour taught regarding the Kingdom of God on Earth and in Heaven, based on love for You and for others. May we receive the fullness of Holy Spirit power in our worship and witness. Amen.

2nd June 2021. Exodus 3 is the time when God spoke to Moses from a 'burning bush' on the edge of the Sinai desert. The angel of the LORD God Almighty prepared the way for the calling of Moses 'and appeared to him in flames of fire from within the bush' (3:2). When Moses went near, God Himself spoke to him. "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (3:4-6). God quickly shared His thoughts of compassion and mercy with Moses. "I have seen My people suffer in Egypt. I have heard them cry out because of their slave drivers... So I have come down to save them" (3:7-8). "I am sending you to Pharaoh. I want you to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. They are My people" (3:10).

Jude 24-25 gives Jude's doxology. "Give praise to the One who is able to keep you from falling into sin. He will bring you into his heavenly glory without any fault. He will bring you there with great joy. Give praise to God... through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for the record of how Moses, after 40 years 'in the wilderness', was led by an 'angel of light' to hear Your voice of compassion for Your special people and then be told what to do to set them free. Thank you for sending Jesus Christ, not only to reveal 'the light of Your truth' but to save all who believe He is the Son of God. Enable us this day to put our years 'in the wilderness' behind us and to know Your thoughts and calling to set others free. Enable us to do this 'without fault' through the compassion and mercy of Christ at work in our lives and with the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen.

3rd June 2021. Proverbs 23:26 (NIV) gives a warning and a calling. "My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to My ways."

John 5:36-42 tells how Jesus spoke to those who were taught the Law of Moses which is from God Almighty. "I am doing the very work the Father gave Me to finish. It gives witness that the Father has sent Me. The Father who sent Me has Himself given witness about Me. You have never heard His voice. You have never seen what He really looks like. And His word does not live in you. This is because you do not believe the One He sent. You study the Scriptures carefully. You study them because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about Me. But you refuse to come to Me and receive [eternal] life... I know you. I know that you do not have love for God in your hearts."

Heavenly Father, the God of Abraham and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, open our eyes to both Old and New Testament teachings we pray. Increase the longing in our hearts to love You and know You personally. Enable us to keep our eyes on Your way of salvation without being distracted by the desires and demands of the world around us. Thank you that Jesus

came to finish and fulfil the words You gave to Moses and the prophets. May we be true followers of Him, the Living Word, who knows You personally. May we be like Him when He was on Earth, and "give you our heart" and worship You, without being distracted from Your plan for our salvation through His teachings, persecution and suffering for our sins. For His sake. Amen.

4th June 2021. Psalm 36:5-11 says, "LORD, Your love reaches to the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches up to the skies. Your righteousness is as high as the mountains. Your justice is as deep as the oceans... You are the fountain of life. We see light [truth] because you give us Your light. Keep on loving those who know you. Continue Your righteousness to those whose hearts are honest. May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked."

Revelation 22:10-14 records the words of Jesus Christ to the apostle John. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy in this book. These things are about to happen. Let those who do wrong keep on doing wrong. Let those who are evil continue to be evil. Let those who do what is right keep on doing what is right. And let those who are holy continue to be holy. Look! I am coming soon! I bring my rewards with me. I will reward each person for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes."

Lord Jesus, You know the end from the beginning because You are the First to the Last. In this age of wickedness, persecution and pollution, enable us to experience new beginnings of Your mercy and provision in preparation for Your second coming. Encourage us with a wave of revival to establish Your salvation for many more believers to greet You on Your return, including our families and friends. For Your sake, who took our punishment, and for the glory of our loving, faithful, righteous God of justice. Amen.

7th June 2021. Proverbs 3:5-8 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways remember Him. Then he will make your paths smooth and straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Have respect for the LORD and avoid evil. That will bring health to your body. It will make your bones strong."

1 Corinthians 8:9 says, "Be careful how you use your freedom [in Christ]. Be sure it doesn't trip up someone who is weaker than you." Paul goes on to give an example of eating meat sold in local markets that had been offered to idols. In this case he says he would prefer never to eat meat again rather than cause those with a weak or new faith to stumble (v.13).

Lord Jesus, You ate the food of sinners when you dined with them and You ate the Jewish Passover food when you dined with Your disciples. In all

our ways may we trust in God our Heavenly Father to do what is right in His eyes and not trust in our own understanding. May we show respect for Him and also for others, as You did when You lived on Earth. So show us how to be careful to use Your freedom wisely and not cause others of weak or new faith to stumble or cause confusion or doubts. Also, make our paths smooth and straight that we in turn grow healthier mentally, spiritually and physically to become a blessing to You and to those around us. Amen.

8th June 2021. Isaiah 40 to 42 gives many words of encouragement to faithful believers in the LORD God Almighty. "Do you not know who made everything? The LORD is the God who lives forever. He created everything on earth... He gives strength to those who are tired. He gives power to those who are weak... Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weary." (40:28-31). "The LORD says, 'People of Israel, you are my servants... You are the children of my friend Abraham... I have chosen you. I have not turned My back on you. So do not be afraid... I am the LORD your God. I will help you.' " (41:8-13). "I, the LORD, have chosen you to do what is right... You will be a light for the other nations." (42:5-7).

1 Peter 2:13-17 says, "Follow the lead of every human authority. Do it because the Lord wants you to. Obey ... the highest authority. Obey the governors ... Live like free people. But do not use your freedom to cover up evil. Live like people who serve God. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the community of believers. Have respect for God. Honour the king [human authority]."

Father God, we take note of your encouragement to Jews and Gentiles alike who put their trust in You. Help us to understand the times we live in and watch You prepare Your people to welcome Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Israel's Messiah, in these Last Days. As we wait, help us to live as God-fearing citizens, showing respect and standing up for righteousness without growing weary. For the sake of Jesus who died on the cross to save us. Amen.

9th June 2021. Jeremiah 9:4-7 gives God's warning to Jeremiah. "Be on guard against your friends; do not even trust the members of your own family... You live among people who tell lies. When they lie, they refuse to pay any attention to Me... I will put them through the fire to test them. What else can I do? My people are so sinful!"

Philemon 4-7 gives Paul's praise to Philemon. "I always thank my God when I remember you in my prayers. That's because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I hear about your love for all of God's people. I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely

understand every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy. It has cheered me up. My brother, you have renewed the hearts of God's people."

Father God, what a difference in these two testimonies! Help us to be aware of the sins of the people around us. Keep us faithful and righteous during times of Your testing. Give us wisdom to discern lies and to learn who our true friends are and give You thanks for them. May we remember to support them in our prayers for their faithful witness and for their encouragement to the followers of Christ our Saviour. Help us then to walk boldly in the light of Your truth and encourage others to do the same. May we also "completely understand every good thing we have in Christ". In the name of Jesus. Amen.

10th June 2021. Exodus 33:12-23 records the time when Moses needed reassurance from the LORD God Almighty in his calling to lead the people of Israel on the way to the Promised Land. "If you are pleased with me, teach me more about Yourself. Then I can know You. And I can continue to please You." The LORD replied, "I will go with you... I will do exactly what you have asked. I am pleased with you... I have mercy on whom I have mercy. And I will show love to those I love. But you cannot see my face." Then the Lord told Moses to stand in an opening in a rock for His glory to pass by without seeing His face.

1 Peter 2:23-25 says of Jesus Christ, "People shouted at Him and made fun of Him. But he did not do the same back to them. He suffered. But ... He trusted in the One who judges fairly. He Himself carried our sins in His body on the cross. He did it so that we ... would lead godly lives. His wounds have made you whole. You were like sheep who were wandering away."

Heavenly Father, thank You that when Your leader Moses and Your people Israel were wandering in the desert, You came down to speak to him and reassured him. Thank You that Your apostle Peter reminds us that Jesus also suffered persecution and complaints from the people of Israel. But He suffered without complaining and trusted in You to save those who believed in You from wandering away like sheep. Keep us faithful in the midst of persecution. In Your mercy, keep us faithful to our Lord and enable us to see Your glory at work in Him through the lives of faithful believers and the work of His Spirit today. Amen.

11th June 2021. Proverbs 1:1-7 provides the purpose of Solomon's famous proverbs. This includes the importance of divine wisdom and the discipline to obey, in order to do "what is right and honest [just] and fair". He says that wisdom is particularly important for advising children and childish persons. But

for all, he wants "the people to listen and add to what they have learned" and to "understand the sayings and riddles of the wise".

Philippians 3:12-16 gives Paul's wise advice. "Not that I have been made perfect. But I move on to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for... I forget what is behind me. I push hard towards what is ahead of me. I move on towards the goal to win the prize. God has appointed me to win it. The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus Himself. All of us who are grown up in the faith should see things that way. Maybe you think differently about something. But God will make it clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already reached [received]."

Lord Jesus, thank You that through Your sacrifice you have enabled us who believe You are the Son of God, to put our old lives behind us. Help us to be obedient and live up to the wisdom and fulfilment we have already received in our salvation and press on. May we "add to what we have already learned" and be a blessing to You and to our Heavenly Father and to everyone He has given us to care for, pray for, teach and support. May we be more and more aware of our "heavenly prize in You." Amen.

14th June 2021. 1 Samuel 7:15 to 8:8 records how Samuel remained as the last judge of Israel for the rest of his life. He was obedient to the Lord God Almighty and gained the respect of the people but was disappointed that his sons did not choose to follow him in leading Israel. The people of Israel therefore rejected Samuel's sons and instead asked him to appoint a king for them, which further disappointed Samuel. However, God told Samuel to go ahead with appointing and anointing a king and to warn them what Israel's first king might do in serving the people.

Galatians 3:24-28. Paul claims "the law was put in charge until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Christ. But now faith in Christ has come. So we are no longer under the control of the Law. You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus."

Heavenly Father, thank You that Scripture makes clear Your purposes under the old covenant which points us to the new beginnings in Christ our Saviour. Deliver us from the outcome of mankind's imperfect attempts to obey Your Law when they appoint leaders to rule our lives. Enable us instead to be obedient to both the letter of Your Old Testament Law and its fulfilment in our New Testament resurrection lives which have been purchased at great cost through Christ's punishment for our sin. May His Spirit dwell in us that we may judge and lead and serve the people of God today with His wisdom, love, compassion and power. Amen.

15th June 2021. 1 Chronicles 8 records the descendants of Benjamin which provided Israel their first king, Saul (v.33). This and other genealogies, were so important to the Jews for their faith in God Almighty and His calling to witness to the world.

1 John 1 records the 'Word of Life' by the apostle John, also a Jew, who had experienced the fullness of God's provision for the special people of God through personally knowing His Son our Saviour, Jesus, the 'Word of Life'. John said, "Here is what we announce to everyone about the Word of Life. He was already here from the beginning. We have heard Him. We have seen Him with our eyes... We give witness about him. And we announce to you that same eternal life. He was with the Father [and] He has appeared to us. We announce to you what we have seen and heard. We do it so you can share life together with us. And we share life with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ... And the blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us pure from all sin... If we admit that we have sinned, He will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done."

Father God, forgive us for the times we place our faith in our inheritance which has been sinful and corrupt instead of in Your truth revealed through the purity of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Thank you for this faithful testimony of the apostle John for Jews and Christians the world over. May we daily walk in the light of this truth and be effective in our witness that our salvation is through faith in Christ alone. Amen.

16th June 2012. Psalm 55 gives the plea of King David to God to listen to his prayer and not to ignore him (v.1). He requests that God Almighty will confuse the wicked who bring threats and lies to the streets of the cities (v.9-11). In faith he states, "I call to God and He saves me" (v.16). In faith he calls on others to believe, "He will never let the righteous fall" (v.22). He ends by saying "As for me, I trust in You."

1 Timothy 3:13-16. Paul says, with much experience in the Church, "those who have served well earn the full respect of others. They also become more sure of their faith in Christ Jesus... I am writing these directions to you. Then if I have to put off my visit, you will know how you should act in God's family. The family of God is the church of the living God. It is the pillar and foundation of the truth. There is no doubt that godliness is a great mystery. Jesus appeared in [the form of] a body. The Holy Spirit proved that he was the Son of God. He was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations. People in the world believed in Him. He was taken up to heaven in glory."

Thank You heavenly Father for recording the experiences and faith of men like David and Paul. Help us to stand firm against the persecution and lies of the wicked. May our focus be on serving and respecting other believers,

living godly lives in "the church of the living God". May there be much evidence of Jesus in our midst through the presence of His Holy Spirit with much impact locally and "among the nations" for the world to believe in Him. To His glory. Amen.

17th June 2021. Genesis 48:11-22 gives the record of the time when Jacob (Israel) was old and almost blind. Joseph brought his two sons to be blessed by their grandfather. When Jacob placed his hands on the boys' heads, he crossed his hands over so that the younger boy, Ephraim, received the greatest blessing. He went on to become the largest tribe in Israel. But the tribes of both boys became famous in all Israel and an example to everyone else (v.20).

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 records Paul's teachings on the Lord's Supper in which he warns the brothers and sisters to come together in love and unity and mutual respect (v.17-22). He then goes on to express his understanding of what the Lord Jesus did and said at the Last Supper and the need to understand the way in which they can be made worthy of sharing in the body and blood of Jesus without sinning against their brethren. He warned them to be open to "further directions" when he visited them in the future! (v.34).

Heavenly Father, thank you for the way in which Jacob finally became aware of the worthiness of all his family members to share in the blessing of God Almighty and so become a blessing to each other. Thank you, also, for Paul's understanding of the importance for the gathered fellowship of believers to view each other with equal honour and respect to avoid judgement and discord among the brethren. Thank you for his understanding of the importance of remembering the sacrifice and death of our Lord and Saviour when we share the bread and wine together in the presence of His resurrection glory. Keep us open to further teaching! Amen.

18th June 2021. 2 Samuel 7:8-16 records the words of God Almighty to His servant King David. "I took you away from the grasslands where you were taking care of your father's sheep and goats. I made you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you everywhere you have gone. I cut off all of your enemies when you were attacking them. Now I will make you famous. Your name will be just as respected as the names of the most important people on earth... I tell you that I myself will set up a royal house for you... Then I will make one of your own sons the next king after you. And I will make his kingdom secure... I will set up the throne of his kingdom. It will last forever... Your throne will last forever."

James 3:13-18 says to the Jewish and Gentile believers, "Are any of you wise and understanding? You should show it by living a good life. Wise people

are not proud when they do good works... The wisdom that comes from Heaven is pure. That is the most important thing about it. And that's not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It does not pretend to be what it is not. Those who make peace should plant peace like a seed. If they do, it will produce a crop of right living."

Heavenly Father, thank You for these words of James who knew our Lord personally and confirms Your purpose for His Kingdom to reign eternally as promised to His servant David. Help us to "produce a crop of right living" by living wise, peaceful, caring, obedient, fair and merciful lives to your glory and for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

21st June 2021. Judges 2:6-31 records the remaining years of Joshua's leadership of Israel in the Promised Land of Canaan and what happened after. 'They went to take over the land. All of them went to their own shares of land. The people served the LORD as long as Joshua lived... Then those who were born after grew up and they did not know the Lord. They did not know what He had done for Israel. The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They served the gods that were named after Baal. They deserted the Lord, the God of their people... They served the gods of the nations that were around them. They made the LORD angry because they deserted Him... So He handed them over to robbers... And now they were suffering terribly. Then the LORD gave them leaders. The leaders saved them from the power of those robbers... But when the leaders died, the people returned to their evil ways. The things they did were even more sinful than the things their people before them had done.'

Matthew 14:13-21 tells us that Jesus, after the death of his cousin John the Baptist, 'went alone to a quiet place. The crowds heard about this and followed him... He felt concern for them and healed those among them who were ill.' Then follows the story of the feeding of 5000 men.

Father God, the compassion and miraculous ministry of Jesus, Your Son, our Saviour, gives us no excuse to turn away from You or the godly people You have sent to us in the past. Forgive us and restore divine leadership and miraculous provision we pray in these Last Days. For Your glory. Amen.

22nd June 2021. 2 Samuel 5 to 6 records the events over 3000 years ago which led to David becoming king of all Israel, fulfilling Samuel's calling by God to anoint him as the future king whilst still a young shepherd boy. One of the first things he did was to conquer Jerusalem and the Philistines and bring the Ark of God there in readiness for the future Temple which his son Solomon built.

Romans 7:22 to 8:2. Paul says, "Deep inside me I find joy in God's Law. But I see another law working in my body. It fights against the law of my mind. It makes me a prisoner of the law of sin. That law controls the parts of my body. What a terrible failure I am! Who will save me from this sin that brings death to my body? I give thanks to God. He will do it through Jesus Christ our Lord. So in my mind I am a slave to God's Law. But in my sinful nature I am a slave to the law of sin. Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's sentence [condemnation]. I am now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit. That law gives me life because of what Christ Jesus has done. It has set me free from the law of sin that brings death."

Father God, thank You that we are able to look back at how You prepared the way for Samuel and David to fulfil the vision given to Abraham of Israel's Messiah who would save the world through faith in the one true God Almighty. May our focus continue to be on Jerusalem as Your mercy unfolds for that place to welcome the return of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Thank you for the events that happened there 2000 years ago which means I am "now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit which has set me free from the law of sin that brings death." Amen.

23rd June 2021. Nehemiah Chapters 1 and 2 record how Nehemiah wept before the Lord God Almighty when he heard about the desolation of Jerusalem where the remnant of exiles still lived (1:4-11). King Artaxerxes noticed how sad Nehemiah had become and sent him to visit and report on Jerusalem with permission to obtain timber to commence the rebuilding (2:1-9). Despite opposition from the local pagan tribes, God's hand was upon Nehemiah and the work of rebuilding was commenced. He also told the enemies of Israel to go away (2:17-20).

Luke 13:11-32 tells the story of the prodigal son and his resentful brother. It records how the rightful inheritance of the younger son was wasted on foolish living but when he repented, his father forgave him but his elder brother did not.

Heavenly Father, thank you for these Bible records which express Your love for Your people, including remnants and wayward family members, and Your readiness to forgive. May we too, know Your forgiveness and refuse to step outside Your perfect will through waywardness or through resentment. Help us to handle persecution and opposition wisely and firmly and trust in You for our needs. Keep us ever in line with Your will and live expecting to welcome our Saviour's sudden return to Jerusalem. In His name we ask. Amen.

24th June 2021. Jeremiah 3:21-25 gives the words of God to His people Israel and their response at the time of His prophet Jeremiah. "A cry is heard on the barren hilltops. The people of Israel are sobbing and praying. That's because their lives are so twisted [perverted]. They have forgotten the LORD their God. 'You have not been faithful,' says the Lord. 'Return to Me. I will heal you. Then you will not turn away from Me anymore.' 'Yes,' the people say. 'We will come to you. You are the LORD our God. The gods we worship on the hills and mountains are useless. You are the LORD our God. You are the only one who can save us. From our earliest years shameful gods have ... destroyed our sons and daughters... We and our people before us have sinned. We have not obeyed You from our earliest years until now.' "

2 Timothy 2:24-26 records Paul's advice. "Anyone who serves the Lord must not fight [quarrel]. Instead, he must be kind to everyone. He must be able to teach. He must not hold anything against anyone. He must gently teach those who oppose him. Maybe God will give a change of heart to those who are against you. That will lead them to know the truth. Maybe they will come to their senses. Maybe they will escape the devil's trap. He has taken them prisoner to do what he wanted." This teaching is followed by Paul's warning: "There will be terrible times in the last days" (3:1).

Father God, bring much repentance in these terrible times of the 'last days' before Jesus our Messiah returns. Forgive us for neglecting the teaching of Your truth to our sons and daughters. Prompt us to repent and to do many acts of kindness. Heed our prayers for revival. Amen.

25th June 2021. Ezra Chapter 2 lists the 50,000 Jewish descendants who returned to Jerusalem 70 years after the exile in Babylon. The following year, "All of the people gave a loud shout. They praised the LORD. They were glad because the foundation of the LORD's Temple had been laid" (3:11).

Hebrews 9:15 says, "Christ is the go-between of a new covenant. Now those God calls to Himself will receive the eternal gift He promised. They will receive it now that Christ has died to save them. He died to set them free from the sins they committed under the first covenant."

Thank You Father God that Your Son, our Saviour, made the sacrifice under Your new covenant to provide access to You and Your love and mercy anywhere in the world, not just in the sacred buildings Your people have raised up. Encourage us to seek Your forgiveness and to worship You and welcome the promised Holy Spirit into our lives wherever we live. Bless all believers who are exiled in foreign lands or persecuted in their home lands, that they may build strong foundations through knowing resurrection power in their lives in Jesus Christ who died to set us free. Amen.

28th June 2021. 1 Samuel 11:12-15. After Saul was anointed king, he raised up an army of 33,000 men in Israel and Judah and defeated the Ammonites. Then the people reaffirmed him as king in the presence of the Lord God Almighty. Saul refused to punish those who doubted he was God's choice for their king. "We won't put anyone to death today! After all, this is the day the LORD God Almighty has saved Israel" (v.13). 'They sacrificed friendship [peace] offerings to the Lord. And Saul and all of the people of Israel celebrated with great joy' (v.15).

2 Peter 1:3-12. "God's power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life... So you should try very hard to add goodness to your faith. To goodness, add knowledge. To knowledge, add the ability to control yourselves. To the ability to control yourselves, add the strength to keep going. To the strength to keep going, add godliness. To godliness, add kindness to believers. And to kindness to believers, add love... If you do everything I have just said... you will receive a rich welcome into the Kingdom that lasts forever. It is the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Dear God, thank You for this Old Testament record which shows an example of a righteous and united kingdom whose leader showed compassion for all his people. He also listened to and obeyed God, forgave those who rebelled, and encouraged the people to worship You together and rejoice. Thank You for this New Testament list of Christian values to unite in remembering to dwell in "the Kingdom that lasts for ever". Amen.

29th June 2021. 1 Samuel 12 records Samuel's speech to the people of Israel after Saul's first success as king over Israel. He reminded them of how the LORD God Almighty sent Moses and Aaron to bring them out of Egypt. "They settled them in this land. But the people forgot the LORD their God. So He gave them over to the powerful hand of the Philistines... The people cried out to the Lord. They said, 'We have sinned. We have deserted the LORD. We have served the gods that are named after Baal... Save us now from the powerful hands of our enemies. Then we will serve You.' The LORD sent Gideon, Barak, Jephthah and me. He saved you from the hands of your enemies, who were all around you. So you lived in safety. But then you saw that the king of Ammon, was about to attack you. So you said to me, 'We want a king to rule over us.' You said it even though the LORD your God was your king... The LORD has placed a king over you. But you must have respect for the Lord. You must serve Him and obey Him... Both you and the king who rules over you must follow the LORD your God."

Philippians 3:12-14 says, "I have not yet been made perfect. But I move on to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for... I forget what is

behind me. I push hard toward what is ahead of me. I move on toward the goal to win the prize... The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus Himself."

Heavenly Father, help us – our leaders and our people – to put behind us what we and our children and our parents have done wrong and but our full trust in You. For Christ's glory. Amen.

30th June 2021. Proverbs 3:5-8 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways remember Him. Then He will make your paths smooth and straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Have respect for the LORD and avoid evil. That will bring health to your body. It will make your bones strong."

Philemon verses 15-17 records Paul's words to his old friend regarding his prodigal servant Onesimus who ran away from Philemon before he gave his life to Jesus. Paul said to Philemon, "Onesimus was separated from you for a little while. Maybe that was so you could have him back for good. You could have him back not as a slave. Instead, he would be better than a slave. He would be a dear brother. He is very dear to me. But he is even more dear to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. Do you think of me as a believer who works together with you? Then welcome Onesimus as you would welcome me."

Heavenly Father, help us to learn from these words in the Old and New Testaments to trust in Your purpose and provision at work in our lives and not to trust in our own understanding. Forgive us for the many times we have run our own difficult route in life instead of Your 'smooth and straight pathway'. Give us a greater understanding of Your purpose and provision in our lives and in the lives of others around us that we may work closely together, enfolded by Your love. Grant us 'health to our body' and perfect us also in mind and spirit, through the resurrection power of Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.