

## **Manna Publications (UK)**

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**Daily Manna: Editor's Choice  
Archive from July 2021 to Dec 2021**

### **Old and New Testament teachings**

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

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

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.** Genesis 42:18 states that Joseph, ruler of Egypt during the 7-year famine, told his brothers he believed in God Almighty which led them to realise they were being judged for their wrong-doing years before. In a miraculous way, this resulted in the entire family of Jacob (Israel) settling in Egypt for 400 years, a fulfilment of God's revelation to their ancestor Abraham.

James 4:6-11 says, "Scripture says, 'God opposes those who are proud. But he gives grace to those who are not.' (Proverbs 3:34) So obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who cannot make up your minds. Be full of sorrow. Cry and sob. Change your laughter to crying. Change your joy to sadness. Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up. My brothers and sisters, do not speak against one another. Anyone who speaks against another believer speaks against the law [of God Almighty]."

*Dear God, we see how You achieved good out of evil when the brothers of Joseph sold him as a slave into Egypt. Encourage us this day to take note of the advice of James to avoid doing or speaking evil against other believers, especially family members. In your love and mercy, forgive us and put right the wrongs we have said or done in the past which have caused sadness, conflict, rejection, separation and shame. Grant new opportunities to rebuild relationships to Your glory, through the empowering of the Spirit of Christ our Saviour and in accordance with Your holy law. Amen.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.** Job 38-42 records the well-known answers to Job who questioned God Almighty why he had been allowed to suffer so much. God said to Job, "Who do you think you are to disagree with My plans?" (38:2). "Were you there when I laid the Earth's foundation?" (38:4). "Its features stand out like different parts of your clothes [as viewed by astronauts]" (38:14). "Have you travelled to the springs at the bottom of the ocean [as viewed by deep-sea divers]?" (38:16). Job replied, "I know that You can do anything. No one can keep You from doing what You plan to do. You asked me, 'Who do you think you are to disagree with My plans?' ... I spoke about things I did not understand. I talked about things that were too wonderful for me to know ... So I hate myself. I am really sorry for what I said about You. That's why I am sitting [I repent, KJV] in dust and ashes." ...So the Lord blessed the last part of Job's life even more than the first part (42:1-12).

Romans 1:16-17 proclaims Paul's words, "I am not ashamed of the Good News. It is God's power. And it will save everyone who believes. It is meant first for the Jews. It is meant also for those who are not Jews... From beginning to end, becoming right with God depends on a person's faith. It is written, 'Those who are right with God will live by faith' " (Habakkuk 2:4).

*Thank You Father for these famous words about the experiences of Job and Paul who finally yielded their lives fully to Your plans and repented in faith. Help us to have faith in Your plans and experience Your blessing in the midst of many trials. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Nehemiah 9 records that after joyfully celebrating the daily reading by Ezra from the Book of the Law of God, "The people of Israel gathered together ... and stood and admitted they had sinned. They also admitted that their people before them had done evil things. They listened while the Levites read parts of the Scroll of the Law of the LORD their God... They also worshipped the LORD." The rest of the chapter records all they knew of their rich inheritance and blessing from God before asking Him to forgive them and deliver them from their present difficulties.

Colossian 4:2-6 gives more advice to the church. "Spend a lot of time [continue, KJV] in prayer and always be watchful and thankful" (v.2). "Be wise in the way you act towards those outside the church, making the most of every opportunity. Let the words you speak always be full of grace" (v.5-6). Paul also requested prayers for himself and his

fellow ministers. He was in prison at the time and asked the church to pray that God would open a door for preaching the Good News which is "the mystery of Christ" (v.3).

*Heavenly Father, as we read Your word, prompt us to confess our sins and the sins of our ancestors. Forgive us and enable us to recall the good times when Your people obeyed You. Establish Your truth in our land and deliver us from our "present difficulties". We ask this in Your mercy and for Your glory and for the sake of Jesus Christ who took our punishment so that we can teach and proclaim Your truth through His promised Holy Spirit power. Prompt us also to pray for your ministers. Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Jeremiah 50:18-20 records the prophecy given to Jeremiah about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. "The LORD God Almighty, who rules over all, says 'I will bring Israel back to their own grasslands. I will feed them on Mount Carmel and in Bashan. I will satisfy their hunger on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead. A new day is coming... At that time people will search for Israel's guilt. But they will not find any... That is because I will forgive the people I have spared.' "

Colossians 1:21-23 describes what we were, what Jesus has done for us, what we are now and what we are to do. "At one time you were separated from God... because of your evil ways. But because Christ died, God has brought you back to Himself. Christ's death (punishment) has made you holy in God's sight... But you must keep [continue in, KJV] your faith, steady and firm. Do not move away from the hope that the Good News holds out to you. It is the Good News that you heard... (for) every creature under heaven. I, Paul, now serve the Good News." In this way, Paul encouraged his readers, both Jews and non-Jews, to remain strong in their faith and live lives that bear fruit. This is achieved by believing, living and preaching the truth of God and witnessing the Good News of Jesus Christ all over the world.

*Dear God, forgive us and our forefathers for not entering fully into the salvation You offered through faith and obedience in Your word promised to Noah and Abraham as given to Moses and fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Keep us "steady and firm" in our faith to "bear fruit" that will continue to give us hope of our eternal salvation and will also encourage others "all over the world" to believe! Amen.*

**14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** 1 Chronicles Chapters 2&3 give the descendants of Judah before listing the descendants of the other eleven sons of Jacob (called Israel) in chapters 4 to 8. The family of Judah included King

David, confirming the importance of this tribe 1000 years before Israel's Messiah was born in Bethlehem. Jesus, the Christ or Messiah, later rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was welcomed by the people as "Son of David" (Matthew 1:1 and 21:9).

James 5:7-11 says, "Brothers and sisters, be patient [suffer long, KJV] until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop... You too must be patient. You must stand firm. The Lord will soon come back. Brothers and sisters, do not find fault with one another. If you do, you will be judged. And the Judge is standing at the door! Think about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. They are an example of how to be patient when you suffer. As you know, we think that people who do not give up are blessed. You have heard that Job was patient. And you have seen what the Lord finally did for him. The Lord is full of tender mercy and loving concern."

*Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing Your mercy and Your purpose for your people in the past as we suffer and wait patiently for Your Messiah to return in the future. Open our eyes in the meantime to see Your hand at work in the affairs of our nation – what is important and what is not. And help us to show compassion towards our brothers and sisters in Christ, seeking unity in and between church and state. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Deuteronomy 11:26-32. After giving Moses the Ten Commandments for the second time, God said, "Listen to Me. I am setting a blessing and a curse in front of you today. I am giving you the commands of the LORD your God today. You will be blessed if you obey them. But you will be cursed if you do not obey them. So do not turn away from the path I am now commanding you to take. Do not worship other gods. You have not known anything about them before... You will enter the land and take it over. The LORD your God is giving it to you. You will take it over and live there. When you do, make sure you obey all of the rules and laws I am giving you today."

2 Timothy 2:14-19. After Paul instructed Timothy on faithfulness, he said, "Keep reminding the believers of those things. Warn them before God not to argue about words. It is of no value. It only destroys those who listen. Do your best to please God. Be a worker who does not need to be ashamed. Teach the message of truth correctly. Stay away from godless chatter. Those who take part in it will become more and more ungodly... They destroy the faith of some people. But God's solid foundation stands firm. Here is the message written on it. "The LORD

knows who His own people are" (Numbers 16:5). Also, "All who say they believe in the LORD must turn away from evil."

*Dear God, help us to be faithful in obeying Your commandments which will prove a blessing to us. Help us to "turn away from evil" including "other gods we have not known anything about before" which will prove a curse to us. Help us also to encourage faithfulness in other believers and avoid arguments and "godless chatter". Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Job 40:6-9 records the time when Job was challenged by God for trying to argue with Him and to justify himself. "Then the LORD spoke to Job... 'Get ready to stand up for yourself. I will ask you some more questions. Then I want you to answer me. Would you dare to claim that I am not being fair? Would you judge Me in order to make yourself seem right? Is your arm as powerful as mine is?' "

Luke 10:25-37 is the parable of the Good Samaritan. An expert in Old Testament teaching sincerely questioned Jesus about how to inherit eternal life. Jesus said, "What is written in the Law? How do you understand it?" The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love Him with all your strength and with all your mind (Deuteronomy 6:5). And, love your neighbour as you love yourself (Leviticus 19:18)." Jesus replied. "You have answered correctly. Do that, and you will live." But the man wanted to make himself look good [to justify himself, KJV]. So he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus told him the parable and encouraged the man to be like the Jew in the story who helped the Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans normally despised each other, but Jesus told the devout Jew to be like the good Samaritan who showed mercy on the injured Jew in the story.

*Father God, forgive us for the times we fail to see we wrongly try to justify ourselves that we are right and righteous. Forgive us for questioning, even judging, You and Your people and non-believers, when we fail to show the love and compassion of Christ. Help us to "stand up" and answer Your questions honestly about our own attitudes as did Job, and repent. Amen.*

**19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Joel 2 gives a word from the Lord God Almighty to repent after many days of pestilence. "Let them say, 'LORD, spare Your people. Do not let others make fun of them. Do not let the nations laugh at them. Do not let them ask where is their God' " (2:17). After God's warning to repent, He promised, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy... In those days I will pour out

My Spirit on those who serve Me, men and women alike... Everyone who calls out to Me will be saved" (2:28-32).

1 John 3:13,16. "My brothers and sisters, do not be surprised if the world hates you... We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters."

*Father God, thank You for our salvation in and through Christ Jesus. Forgive us for disobeying Your word and suffering the consequences of ignoring Your sacrifice that brings us fullness of life. Save us from conflicts and pestilences and help us to rebuild relationships with You. Grant us the passion and compassion of our Saviour for our family, friends and neighbours so we will not be ridiculed for our failings but glorify You. Pour out Your Spirit on us in serving You and the men and women around us. Help us and others to experience the fullness of Your love in these last days, even if our witness generates hatred among some non-believers. Prepare us to suffer for the sake of sharing the Good News of Christ's sacrifice for us. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Psalms 12 & 13. King David said, "The LORD says, 'The weak are beaten down. Those who are in need groan. So I will stand up to help them. I will keep them safe from those who tell lies about them. The words of the LORD are perfect... You will keep us safe. You will always keep sinners from hurting us. Proud and sinful people walk around openly when the evil they do is praised by others' " (12:5-8). "But I trust in Your faithful love [mercy, KJV]. My heart is filled with joy because You will save me. I will sing to the LORD. He has been so good to me" (13:5-6).

1 John 2:1-6 says: "My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But suppose someone does sin. Then we have One who speaks to the Father for us. He stands up for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. He gave His life to pay for our sins. But He not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know God if we obey His commands. Suppose someone says, 'I know Him' but does not do what God commands. Then that person is a liar... But if anyone obeys God's word, then God's love is truly made complete in that person... Those who claim to belong to Him must live just as Jesus did."

*Father God, thank you for providing for our salvation through sacrificing Your own flesh and blood in Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour, who "paid for the sins of the whole world". Thank You for giving us the confidence (like King David) to joyfully sing "I trust in Your faithful love and mercy" (through King Jesus). So when we are "weak*

*and beaten down", destroy the works of evil around us and keep us safe. Amen.*

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.** Deuteronomy 9:26-29. Moses said, "LORD and King, do not destroy your people. They belong to You. You set them free by Your great power. You used Your mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Forgive the people of Israel for being so stubborn. Do not judge them for the evil and sinful things they have done. If you do, the Egyptians will say, 'The LORD was unable to take them into the land He had promised to give them...' They are Your people. They belong to You... You reached out Your mighty arm and saved them."

Jude 24-25 says, "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 the only God. He is our Saviour. Glory, majesty, power and authority belong to Him. 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. Amen."

*Heavenly Father, raise up church leaders today who will seek Your forgiveness and salvation and healing for Your people in the midst of disobedience, persecution, destruction and even death. Forgive us for "the evil and sinful things we have done" so that your power and purpose is seen at work again in our midst and we are not mocked when we uphold Your truth. Save us and bring us into Your "heavenly glory without any fault... with great joy" as we seek to "praise You through Jesus Christ our Lord" without "falling into sin". Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.** Joshua 3:7-11 gives an example of how Almighty God goes ahead of His people to prepare the way to cease wandering in the wilderness and to move into the fullness of His provision and to face all the difficulties ahead. First, He confirmed His anointing was on Joshua as it was with Moses. "Today I will begin to honour you in the eyes of all of the people of Israel." Then God said, "Speak to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant. Tell them, 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan River, go into the water and stand there.'" Joshua obeyed and then spoke to the people of Israel. "Listen to what the LORD your God is saying... The priests will carry the Ark of the Lord... As soon as the priests step into the Jordan, it will stop flowing... That is how you will know that the living God is among you."

Luke 2:43-52 explains how Jesus spent three days as a 12-year-old, listening to the teachers in the Temple and being trained as a future Rabbi (2:46-47).

*Heavenly Father, thank You for showing us that whether we have been wandering in the wilderness for many years or brought up as a carpenter's son, we all need Your anointing on our future ministry, as did Joshua and Jesus, whose names mean "the Lord is our salvation". Hear prayers for teaching and obeying the word of God for training up leaders, whatever their background, who have Your anointing to bring the Lord's salvation in times of the great needs that lie ahead. So enable us all to enter into Your perfect purpose and provision in these Last Days. Communicate this clearly to Your leaders, Your priests and Your people with demonstrations of Your mighty power. We ask this in the name of Jesus and for His glory. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021.** Job 11:7-11 records Zophar's answers to Job's despair in the previous chapter, when he wanted to end his life. His friend Zophar asked, "Can you fathom [search and find, KJV] the deep mysteries of God?" Zophar was only able to criticise Job and tell him, without love, to "commit yourself to God completely and reach out your hands to Him for help." This did not satisfy Job at all (chapters 12 to 14) who ended up saying "All we feel is the pain of our own bodies. We are full of sadness only for ourselves" (14:22). This acknowledgement, however, was the beginning of Job's preparation for seeking further the true wisdom of God, not of man.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 is where Paul describes how the different parts of the body work together for the benefit of the whole body, as it is with the Church, the Body of Christ (v.12). But because each part is very different, we must make sure we use our different gifts fully by working together for the benefit of others. And we should not only seek after the benefits of the more important gifts, but do so in love, which is Paul's message in Chapter 13.

*Heavenly Father, thank you that You make us aware of the need not only to reach out to You for our well-being but to do so in thanks and love and then use the gifts we have to do the same for others. Help us then to reach out for the well-being of all and to do so in love, drawing out the benefits of the more important gifts available in the Body of Christ, your Church. Forgive us when we are "sad only for ourselves" or offer others Your divine truth with judgement and without love. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Psalm 28:6-9. King David says, "Give praise to the Lord. He has heard my cry for His favour. The LORD gives me strength. He is like a shield that keeps me safe. My heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart jumps for joy. I will sing and give thanks to Him. The LORD gives strength to His people. He guards and saves his anointed king [Your leader]. Save your people! Bless those [Your children] who belong to You! Be their shepherd! Take care of them forever!"

Timothy 4:10-16. The apostle Paul says, "We have put our hope in the living God. He is the Saviour of all people. Most of all he is the Saviour of those who believe. Command these things. Teach them... Set an example for the believers in what you say and in how you live. Also set an example in how you love and in what you believe. Show the believers how to be pure. Until I come, spend your time reading Scripture out loud to one another. Spend your time preaching and teaching. Do not fail to use the gift the Holy Spirit gave you... Be careful of how you live and what you believe. Never give up. Then you will save yourself and those who hear you."

*Heavenly Father, we seek to use our gift unhindered in the ministry You have anointed us to do. Give us Your Holy Spirit strength to do this and rejoice in serving You and in leading and serving those "who belong to You". Help us to "set an example" in love, taking time to "reading Scripture out loud to one another" or using modern communication methods in preaching and teaching Your word. For Christ's sake and for "Your children" who listen. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Isaiah 22 warns of the time when Jerusalem was surrounded by its enemies, causing much commotion, yet the people still indulged in wild parties (v.2-3)! Isaiah wept for Jerusalem (v.4) yet the people put their trust in their weapons, their water supplies and their strong walls, but "did not look to the One who planned everything long ago" (v.4-11). Isaiah warned that God would not forget this sin (v.14). He will raise up His servant Eliakim to ensure that the "key to the House of David" is maintained (v.20-24) for the great day of Israel's Messiah. But shortly, Jerusalem and its leaders would fall (v.25).

1 Thessalonians 3:2-6 shows Paul's concern for the church after much persecution by some of the Jews and the hindrances of Satan himself (2:13-19). "We sent our brother Timothy to give you strength and hope in your faith. He works together with God in spreading the Gospel of Christ. We sent him so that no one would be upset by times of testing. You know very well that we have to go through them. In fact,

when we were with you, we kept telling you that our enemies would make us suffer. As you know very well, it has turned out that way. That is the reason I sent someone to find out about your faith... I was afraid that Satan might have tempted you in some way... But Timothy has come to us from you just now. He has brought good news about your faith and love."

*Heavenly Father, make us strong in You during times of persecution and hindrance to the Gospel of Christ. Do not let us be deceived by those who seek after partying and revelry. May we encourage the believers as we wait, during times of testing, death and denial, for the return of Messiah. Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** 2 Kings 8:25 to 9:13 records the time when God intervened in the evil reign of Ahab and his successor Ahaziah and also Ahab's wife Jezebel. "Ahaziah followed the ways of the royal family of Ahab and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, just as the family of Ahab had done" (8:27). He reigned in Jerusalem for just one year. Then God instructed His prophet Elisha to find Jehu and anoint him as king over Israel. He also announced that the family of Ahab would be destroyed including his evil wife (9:6-9). Jehu was disbelieving at first but his fellow army officers blew a trumpet and shouted "Jehu is king!" He reigned over Israel for 28 years (10:36).

Revelation 19:11-21 records John's vision of Heaven revealing the white horse with its rider "Faithful and True" whose eyes were like blazing fire. He was dressed in a robe "dipped in blood" and His name is "The Word of God" (19:11-13). Out of the rider's mouth came a sharp sword to "strike down the nations". Scripture says, "He will rule them with an iron rod" (Psalm 2:9). The name that was written on the rider was "THE GREATEST KING OF ALL AND THE MOST POWERFUL LORD OF ALL" (19:15-16). The rest of the chapter describes how the beast and the false prophet and those who had received the mark of the beast were destroyed by the sword of the One who is called "The Word of God" (19:19-21).

*Heavenly Father, help us to believe that evil will not prevail but You will intervene in Your time in the lives of Your people and our rulers, through the mighty power of our resurrected Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Isaiah 13 records God's promise to bring down Babylon. "The LORD has sent soldiers ... to carry out His anger against Babylon." (13:3) "The LORD ... will punish evil people for their sins. He

will put an end to the bragging of those who are proud... who do not show any pity." (13:11) "The city of Babylon ... will be destroyed just as He did with Sodom and Gomorrah." (13:19) The next chapter begins with "The LORD will show tender love toward Jacob's people. Once again He will choose Israel." (14:1)

Matthew 27:62 to 28:4 describes how the body of Jesus was kept secure so that no-one could steal the body and spread false rumours about His resurrection (27:62-66). "It was dawn on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a powerful earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel went to the tomb. He rolled back the stone and sat on it. His body shone like lightning... The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here! He has risen, just as He said he would!' "

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for these important records of Your actions to destroy the wickedness of evil men and bring salvation and restoration to Your people. Encourage us to testify of Your merciful destruction and victory and resurrection power for all who support Your people Israel and believe in Jesus as Son of God and Saviour of the world. Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> July 2021.** Jeremiah 48 records the lament of the Lord God Almighty for Moab, the descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, who departed from the Lord. "I know how rude they are, but it will not get them anywhere... So I weep over Moab... The people burn incense to their gods. But I will put an end to those people" (48:30-35). "But in days to come, I will bless Moab again with great success" (48:47).

Acts 7:2-7 is the start of Stephen's speech before he was martyred in Jerusalem for his faith in Jesus Christ. "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. At that time Abraham was still in Mesopotamia... 'Leave your country and your people,' God said. 'Go to the land I will show you.' So Abraham left the land of Babylonia... God sent Abraham to this land where you are now living. [Lot and his family went with him.] God did not give him any property here... But He said they would possess the land... 'Your family after you will be strangers in a country that is not their own. They will be slaves and will be treated badly for 400 years... But after that, they will leave that country and worship Me here.' "

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the punishment and mercy You show to this day for the descendants of Abraham, despite worshipping*

*alien gods. Thank You that through Israel's Messiah, Jesus the Christ, You show mercy to all people of all nations who believe He is the Son of God Almighty. Forgive us and establish us in your salvation and righteousness. Make us worthy to witness and suffer faithfully for the sake of Christ who died on the cross for all who believe. Amen.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.** Genesis 50:12-21 covers the time after Jacob's death in Egypt when his twelve sons took his body back to Mamre, to be buried in Canaan, now Israel, where other family members of Abraham were laid to rest. "So Jacob's sons carried his body to the land of Canaan. They buried it in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre... After Joseph buried his father, he went back to Egypt. His brothers ... went back with him. Now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers were worried. They said, 'Remember all of the bad things we did to Joseph? ...They said to Joseph, 'Please forgive our sins. We, too, serve the God of your father.' They knelt before him and offered to be his slaves. Joseph, sobbed, 'You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done.' He set them free from their fears. And he spoke in a kind way to them."

Matthew 11:25-30 begins with the words of Jesus to Almighty God. "I praise you, Father. You are Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and educated. But you have shown them to little children. Yes, Father. This is what you wanted." This was also the time when He said, "I will give you rest. Become my servants and learn from me... You will find rest for your souls. Serving Me is easy, and My load is light."

*Thank You Heavenly Father for these records of Your everlasting love for those whose trust is in You, despite doing much wrong. Forgive us and permit Your purpose to be revealed and fulfilled in our lives as servants, not slaves, which is more than we deserve. Thank You Jesus for times of rest in the midst of trouble for the children in Your family of believers. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021.** Psalm 107 explains the futile and foolish lives of some of God's people (v.4,10,17,23). They cried out to Him when they were in the midst of their troubles (v.6,13,19,28) and ended up "giving thanks to the LORD for His endless love" (v.8,15,21,31). The psalm begins with the reminder to "give thanks to the LORD for He is good". It ends with: "Consider the great love of the LORD God Almighty".

1 Corinthians 11:17-32. Paul writes, "Your meetings do more harm than good... When you come together as a church, you take sides... On

the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, He took bread... He said, 'This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of Me.' In the same way, after supper He took the cup. He said, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Every time you drink it, do it in memory of Me.' ...So do not eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a way that is unworthy of Him. If you do, you will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A person should take a careful look at himself before he eats the bread and drinks from the cup... We should judge ourselves."

*Dear Father God, as Your special people, forgive our "futile and foolish lives" and the harm we do when we come to church and begin to "takes sides". Help us to judge our lives in the way You see us and cry out to You in the troubles we cause so that we can be forgiven and unite with other believers to "give thanks to the LORD for He is good". For the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour who died for us that we might be saved. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Proverbs 13:12-16 says, "Hope that is put off (delayed) makes one sick at heart. But a longing that is met is like a tree of life." The writer then gives words of spiritual and practical wisdom to renew hope and faith in God for those who lose heart and become weary of life. "Anyone who hates what he is taught will pay for it later. But a person who respects a command will be rewarded. The teaching of wise people is like a fountain that gives life. It turns those who listen to it away from the jaws of death. Good understanding wins favour. But the way of liars does not last. Wise people act in keeping with the knowledge they have. But foolish people show how foolish they are!"

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 gives Paul's own spiritual and practical wisdom to encourage obedience to the teachings of Christ. "I live in the world. But I do not fight my battles the way the people of the world do. The weapons I fight with are not the weapons the world uses. In fact, it is just the opposite. My weapons have the power of God to destroy the camps of the enemy. I destroy every claim and every reason that keeps people from knowing God. I keep every thought under control in order to make it obey Christ."

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for Your wise and powerful teachings. Praise You for the examples of perseverance in Your short life on Earth midst much persecution and suffering at the end for our sakes. Renew our hope and faith in our Father God's mercy and provision. Give us "spiritual and practical wisdom" with "weapons that have Your power to destroy the enemy" who "keeps people from knowing God." Help us to*

*"keep every thought under control" and live a life obedient to You.  
Amen.*

**5<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 2 Chronicles 34:29-33. "Then the king called together the elders of Judah and Jerusalem... All of them went, from the least important to the most important. The king had all of the words of the Scroll of the Covenant read to them... He agreed to the terms of the covenant in front of the LORD. He promised to follow Him and obey His commands, directions and rules... Then he had everyone commit themselves to the covenant... He removed all of the statues of gods from the whole territory that belonged to the people of Israel... As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their people."

1 Thessalonians 1:4-8 gives the words of Paul to the young believers in Thessalonica. "Brothers and sisters, you are loved by God. We know that He has chosen you. Our Good News did not come to you only in words. It came with power. It came with the Holy Spirit's help... You suffered terribly. Even so, you welcomed our message with the joy the Holy Spirit gives. So you became a model to all the believers in the lands of Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you... Your faith in God has also become known everywhere."

*Thank You heavenly Father for these records of faithful reading and preaching of your truth. May we all, "from the least important to the most important", obey Your "commands, directions and rules". Also, help us to realise we are Your chosen people with the power of Your Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Cleanse our land from false gods, refine us and use us as "a model to all the believers" near and far, as we joyfully suffer and await His return. Amen.*

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Job Chapter 37 gives advice from Job's friend Elihu, who prepared the way for God's amazing intervention in Job's life in the following chapters. Elihu concluded, "God comes in His shining glory... Everything He does is fair and right. So He doesn't crush people... He cares about all those who are wise."

Luke 22:20-32 records some of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper before His crucifixion. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood... But someone here is going to hand Me over to My enemies... The Son of Man will go to His death, just as God has already decided" (20-22). Then the disciples argued about who would betray Jesus and also who would be the greatest in His Kingdom. Jesus said to them,

"The kings of the nations hold power over their people... But you must not be like that. Instead, the most important among you should be like the youngest. The one who rules should be like the one who serves" (25-26). He then spoke to Simon Peter who would deny Him that very night. "Simon, Simon! Satan has asked to sift you disciples like wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon. I have prayed that your faith will not fail. When you have turned back, help your brothers to be strong."

*Father God, thank You for the Bible records that show us how You use believers who are good, bad, weak and strong to serve Your purposes. Elisha knew so little of the real truth about You. Judas betrayed our Saviour. Peter denied His master. Forgive us and enable us to encourage our brothers and sisters to be strong in You. Pray for us Lord Jesus! Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Leviticus 19 begins with more laws from God that were given to Moses on the way to the Promised Land, still relevant for today. These begin with, "Be holy, because I the LORD your God am holy" and end with "Keep all My laws and follow them. I am the LORD."

Revelation 1:3-7 says, "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and think everything it says is important. The time when these things will come true is near." It continues with confirmation of our eternal salvation and the Second Coming of Christ our Saviour. "Give glory and power to the One who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out His blood for us. He has made us members of His royal family. He has made us priests who serve His God and Father. Give Him glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds!"

*Father God, thank you for Your words of life recorded for us regarding holy living, salvation in Christ, eternal life and the return of Jesus. Help us to live in faith and obedience according to Your word, in ways that honour You and testify of our Salvation in Jesus Christ, with hope of His return soon. Teach us and encourage us to meet the needs of others through serving You as His modern-day priests. And may our love for You stir up a Holy Spirit revival in these days. Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 1 Chronicles 23. After King David ordered his son Solomon to build the Temple at Jerusalem (22:6), he made Solomon king over all Israel in 1015 BC. He then called together the leaders and priests of the tribe of Levi who were 30 years old or more to supervise the work of the Temple, assisted by those who were 20 years old or more (23:27). "They helped them serve in the LORD's temple... the

courtyards and the side rooms. They made all of the sacred things pure and clean. They also had other duties at the house of God. They were in charge of setting the holy bread out on the table. They prepared the flour for the grain offerings. They made the wafers without yeast. They did the baking and the mixing... They stood every morning to thank and praise the LORD. They did the same thing every evening. They also did it every time burnt offerings were brought to the LORD. Those offerings were brought every Sabbath day (23:28-31).

Mark 3:13-19 records the time when Jesus called His followers together. "He appointed 12 of them and called them apostles. From that time on they would be with Him. He would also send them out to preach. They would have authority to drive out demons" (3:14-15).

*Father God, thank You for the records covering the 1000 years leading to the fulfilment of Your plan for King David's greater Son, King Jesus, to authorise the priestly duties of His apostles for all the world to serve and worship You through eternal salvation in Him. Grant us the wisdom of Solomon, the appointing and anointing of Jesus and the power and authority of the Holy Spirit to minister today and prepare for Christ's second coming. Amen.*

**11<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Jeremiah 35 gives the account of the family of Recab who for over two centuries had remained faithful to the commands and traditions of their ancestors. God spoke to Jeremiah that the Recabites were a good example of faithfulness and obedience which the people of Judah at that time were not. Because of this, God told Jeremiah to warn them, "The children of Jonadab, the son of Recab, have obeyed the command Jonadab gave them long ago. But the people of Judah have not obeyed me. So the LORD God, who rules over all, speaks, 'I am going to bring disaster on Judah. I will also bring it on everyone who lives in Jerusalem... I spoke to them. But they did not listen. I called out to them. But they did not answer' " (35:16-18).

James 3 warns us that the tongue cannot be tamed since it is full of evil. With it we praise our Lord (Jesus) and our Father (God) and yet we curse mankind who has been created in God's likeness. "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... It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit."

*Lord Jesus, when we come to You to worship and praise You for our salvation achieved at great cost, help us to love others with the same compassion You have for the rest of God's creation. Enable us to*

*be faithful to the truth of God and obey the commands He has given to our people for generations. May our words be a testimony to You. Save us from disaster caused by unfaithfulness and careless talk. For Your sake. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Isaiah 24 prophesies, "The LORD is going to completely destroy everything on Earth... He will scatter those who live on it. Priests and people alike will suffer... The earth will be completely destroyed... The world will dry up and waste away... The earth is polluted by its people. They have not obeyed the laws of the LORD. They have not done what He told them to do. They have broken the covenant that will last forever. So the LORD will send a curse on the earth. Its people will pay for what they have done... Very few of them will be left."

Matthew 24:4-14, Jesus prophesies, "Keep watch! Be careful that no one fools you. Many will come in My name. They will claim, 'I am the Christ!' They will fool many people. You will hear about wars... Do not be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still isn't here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. People will go hungry. There will be earthquakes in many places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then people will hand you over to be treated badly and killed. All nations will hate you because of Me. At that time, many will turn away from their faith... But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. This Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world. It will be a witness to all nations. Then the end will come."

*Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for confirming and fulfilling the Old Testament scriptures. Fill us with Your compassion for the lost. Fill us with Holy Spirit power to save many lives through Your Good News of salvation for those who seek You and remain faithful and will greet You at the end when You return. Come Lord Jesus, soon! Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Isaiah 34&35 compares God's judgement on Edom, Esau's tribe (34:8), with His future blessings on Israel, Jacob's tribe: "Those the LORD has saved will return to their land. They will sing as they enter the city of Zion. Joy that lasts forever will be like beautiful crowns on their heads. They will be filled with gladness and joy. Sorrow and sighing will be gone" (35:10).

Acts 7 gives Stephen's testimony of God's mercy towards Abraham's family, including Isaac and Jacob, and their land of promise in Canaan, now Israel. But he accused his listeners, "You people! You

will not obey! You are stubborn! You will not listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your people did not try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the Blameless One. And now you have handed Him over to His enemies. You have murdered Him. The law you received was brought by angels. But you have not obeyed it" (7:51-53). Stephen died the death of a Christian martyr (7:39) because of his witness to Jesus, Israel's Messiah, and Saviour for all who believe He was and is the Son of God.

*Praise God for these faithful and true words from Scripture, which confirm His purpose past, present and future for His special people Israel and for all who trust in their Messiah. Father God, in these days as we await the return of Jesus to Jerusalem, help us fearlessly to proclaim the Good News about Jesus the Christ so that many more will know His eternal forgiveness, salvation, compassion and resurrection power. Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Jeremiah 52:28-34 records God's punishment and exile of 4600 Jews to Babylon and His mercy to Israel in giving honour to their king before returning to Israel 70 years later.

Romans 9:15-18 says, "God said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. I will show love to those I love.' (Exodus 33:19). So it does not depend on what we want or do. It depends on God's mercy. In Scripture, God says to Pharaoh, 'I had a special reason for making you king. I decided to use you to show my power. I wanted My name to become known everywhere on earth.' (Exodus 9:16). So God does what he wants to do. He shows mercy to one person and makes another stubborn."

*Father God, thank you for reminding us of Your love and mercy as well as Your need to apply divine punishment to encourage obedience. Forgive us for failing to obey You and praise You and apply the whole truth recorded in the Bible since the time you freed us over 70 years ago from World War 2. Forgive us for being over-confident and seeking selfish pleasures and riches since that time and grant us now the passion and compassion of our Saviour for the lost and disadvantaged and persecuted people of Your world. May we be more and more open to the power of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus as we proclaim and witness to Your truth and mercy and salvation. In the name of Jesus Christ who suffered so much to gain freedom from our sins. Amen.*

**17<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Psalm 146 says, "I will praise the LORD God Almighty... all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in human leaders... Blessed are those who ... put their hope in the LORD their God. He is the maker of Heaven and Earth and the seas. He made everything in them. The LORD remains faithful forever. He stands up for those who are beaten down. He gives food to hungry people. The LORD sets prisoners free. The LORD gives sight to those who are blind. The LORD lifts up those who feel helpless. The LORD loves those who do what is right. The LORD watches over the aliens who live in our land. He takes good care of orphans and widows. But He causes evil people to fail in everything they do... Praise the Lord."

Hebrews 1:1-8 says, "In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets... But in these last days, He has spoken to us through His Son. He is the one whom God appointed... God made everything through Him... He is the exact likeness of God's being... He provided the way for people to be made pure from sin. Then he sat down at the right hand of the King, the Majesty in Heaven... God's first and only Son is over all things... Your throne will last for ever."

*Thank You heavenly Father for these words from writers unknown to us who affirm You as Creator of the world and Saviour of all who put their trust in Your Son, Jesus Christ, who was with You from the beginning and now sits at Your right hand. May we too, through the power of the Holy Spirit, affirm these things to all whom we meet, in love. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 1 Samuel 9:15-16 records the time when the Lord God Almighty told the prophet Samuel he would meet Saul, God's choice for the first king of Israel. "He will save them from the hand of the Philistines. I have seen how much My people are suffering. Their cry for help has reached Me."

Romans 4:11-18 records the revelation of Paul, a Jew, regarding Abraham, the 'father of all nations'. "He was ... right with God before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all believers who have not been circumcised. God accepts their faith. So their faith makes them right with Him ... God promised that Abraham would receive the world. It would not come to him because he obeyed the law. It would come because of his faith, which made him right with God ... The promise is based on God's grace. The promise comes by faith ... Those who have the same faith that Abraham had are included. He is the father of us all. It is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations' (Genesis 17:5).

God considers Abraham to be our father ... He became the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised. God said, 'That is how many children you will have' " (Genesis 15:5).

*Thank You Father God for Your written word that confirms again and again Your truth in the Old Testament records which are fulfilled in New Testament times and teaching right up to today. Help us to see Your purposes and provision for all who believe in You and Your Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. For Your glory. Amen.*

**19<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Ezekiel 16:47-62 gives part of God's condemnation of the people of Jerusalem in 600 BC. He compares them to Sodom. "You lived exactly the way they did. You copied their evil practices. I hate those practices. Everything you did was so sinful that you soon became even worse than they were" (v.47). Despite God's condemnation, He shows mercy. "I will not only give you back what you had before. I will also do the same thing for Sodom and her daughters ... [They] will return to what they were before. And you and your daughters will return to what you were before" (v.53-55). Meanwhile, God declares, "You will be punished for your impure conduct" (v.58)... "But I will remember my covenant with you... Now I will make a new covenant with you. It will last forever... Then you will know that I am Yahweh, the LORD God Almighty" (v.58-62).

Matthew 26-28. After the persecution, arrest, trial, punishment, death and resurrection of Jesus, He meets his disciples. "All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

*Father God, thank You for the many examples of how You seek repentance and forgiveness through punishment and in Your mercy have used the punishment of Your own Son to bring salvation to all people who repent and put their trust in Jesus the Christ. Forgive us for the times and ways we bring fresh punishment upon ourselves. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Isaiah 22 warns there will be times when God's people will sin so badly that their sin "will not be atoned for" (v.14). God will continue to appoint and anoint and bless His chosen people (v.20-24) but the Lord will carry out His punishment (v.25).

Mark 1:14-18 says, "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee. He preached God's good news. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sins and believe the

good news!' One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. There he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen. 'Come. Follow me,' Jesus said. 'I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him."

*Dear God, for the sake of Jesus Your Son who died to save us from eternal death, help us to respond quickly to Your call to follow as His disciples and make a difference in the world through preaching the Good News of salvation through Christ alone. Have mercy on this sinful generation by appointing and anointing Your people to be a blessing to others as we work to prepare the way for Christ's return. Destroy man's attempts to rebuild Babylon and instead encourage us all to focus on what you are rebuilding in Jerusalem in these last days. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021.** Jeremiah 23:5-8 records God's prophecy for Old and New Testament times which is still relevant today for Israel: "A new day is coming. At that time I will raise up from David's royal line a true and rightful Branch. He will be a King who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land. In His days Judah will be saved. Israel will live in safety. And the Branch will be called 'The LORD Who Makes Us Right With Himself'. Other days are also coming. At that time people will no longer say, 'The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of Egypt.' ...Instead, they will say, 'The LORD brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north. He gathered them out of all of the countries where He had forced them to go... Then they will live in their own land."

2 Timothy 3:1-9 warns, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will love themselves. They will love money. They will brag and be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They won't be thankful or holy. They won't love others. They won't forgive others. They will tell lies about people... They will be wild. They will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving God. They will act as if they were serving God. But ... their foolish ways will not deceive anyone."

*Thank you Heavenly Father for reminding us about Your plans for Your people Israel and warning us about these last days. Stop man-made attempts to impose global control, peace and prosperity but empower us to pray, witness and minister to the needy as Jesus did. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 2 Chronicles 33:10-17 tells how King Manasseh and the people of Jerusalem and Judea ignored God's warning about their evil ways. So the LORD brought the army commanders of the king of Assyria against them. They took Manasseh as a prisoner ... to Babylon. When Manasseh was in trouble, he asked the LORD his God to show favour to him. He made himself very low in the sight of the God of his people. Manasseh prayed to Him. When he did, the LORD felt sorry for him. He answered his prayer. He brought him back to Jerusalem and his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God. After that ... Manasseh got rid of the strange gods. He removed the statue of one of those gods from the LORD's temple ... Then he made the LORD's altar look like new again. He sacrificed friendship and thank offerings on it. He told the people of Judah [Judea] to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

1 Peter 5:12-13 was written from Rome, often called 'Babylon' because of its evil ways. It gives spiritual advice to stand firm against evil. "I have written to cheer you up. And I have written to give witness about the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. The members of the church in Babylon send you their greetings. They were chosen together with you... May God give peace to all of you who believe in Christ."

*Thank You God our Father for reminding us that even under the influence of today's evil 'Babylon', you hear and answer prayers of repentance for the churches of Christ our Saviour. Encourage Your people to 'stand firm' in Your Word and serve You faithfully in peace. Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Ecclesiastes 9 confirms we all have a common destiny to die, but we are all in God's hands (v.1-2). The writer proposes that in life we must eat and drink and enjoy life for "it is now that God favours what you do" (v.7-8). "No matter what you do, work at it with all your might. Remember, you are going to your grave. And there isn't any work or planning or knowledge or wisdom there!" (v.10). At the end of the book the writer concludes, "Have respect for God and obey His commandments... God will judge everything people do. That includes everything they try to hide. He will judge everything, whether it's good or evil" (12:13-14).

Luke 2:42-52 records that when Jesus was 12 years old, Joseph and Mary found Him in the Temple courts at Jerusalem. 'He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at how much He understood... When His parents saw Him, they, too, were amazed... "Why were you

looking for Me?" He asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand what He meant by that... Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.'

*Thank You Father God for revealing that we must make the most of our short time on Earth, enjoying what You have created and provided. Help us to grow in wisdom through obeying Your commandments and avoid secretly yielding to temptation but become more Christ-like, 'wiser and stronger... pleasing to God and to people.'*  
*Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 2 Kings 23:1-3 records the time when King Josiah restored the covenant of God in Israel. 'Then the king called together all of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. He went up to the LORD's Temple. The people of Judah and Jerusalem went with him. So did the priests and prophets. All of them went, from the least important of them to the most important. The king had all of the words of the Scroll of the Covenant read to them... He agreed to the terms of the covenant in front of the LORD. He promised to follow Him and obey His commands. He promised to obey them with all his heart and with all his soul. So he agreed to the terms of the covenant that were written down in that scroll. Then all of the people committed themselves to the covenant.'

1 Corinthians 15 gives Paul's reminder that what we sow in life does not come to life unless it first dies. "When you plant something, it isn't a completely grown plant that you put in the ground. You only plant a seed... And to each kind of seed he gives its own body... People have one kind of body. Animals have another... The body that is planted does not last forever. [But] the body that is raised from the dead lasts forever."

*We praise You our God and our Creator for revealing the truth we need to know in order to live fruitful lives and be resurrected with Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Forgive and forget our past sins. Raise up leaders who will re-establish Your truth in our land with hope of resurrection for 'the least important to the most important' to meet our Saviour and not be ashamed. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** Isaiah 44:1-3 records the words of Almighty God to His chosen people: "I will pour out My Spirit on your children. I will pour out my blessing on their children after them."

Luke 7:36-50 gives the story Jesus told Simon the Pharisee and the teaching behind it. "Two people owed money to a certain lender.

One owed him 500 silver coins. The other owed him 50 silver coins. Neither of them had the money to pay him back. So he let them go without paying. Which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who owed the most money." "You are right," Jesus said. This happened in the company of a woman who was well-known for her sinful life who had come to Jesus to confess and receive His forgiveness. Jesus said to the Pharisee, "I tell you this. Her many sins have been forgiven. She has loved a lot. But the one who has been forgiven little loves only a little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

*Heavenly Father, thank You for Your desire to bless the families of those You have chosen to believe. Change our hearts towards our children and grandchildren and change the hearts of our children and grandchildren towards their parents and grandparents. May Your love and forgiveness flow freely among us and in turn may we express our love and forgiveness freely to be the blessing you want us to be to each other. Help us to realise that Your blessing on our families is often worked out through the love and forgiveness we have for them, whether they have loved a lot or a little, and whether they have sinned a lot or a little. Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> August 2021.** 2 Kings 8:25-29 describes the brief one-year reign of King Ahaziah, the wicked son of the wicked King Ahab of Israel. The next chapter describes how God sent one of his prophets to secretly anoint and appoint Jehu as king (9:1-10). The people welcomed this news (9:13) and Jehu reigned for 28 years (10:36). During this time the relatives of Ahab and Jezebel were destroyed.

Jude verses 20-23 instructs, "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. Show mercy to those who doubt. Pull others out of the fire. Save them. To others, show mercy mixed with fear. But hate even the clothes that are stained by the sins of those who wear them." *Dear Father God help us to show Your mercy and the compassion of Jesus Christ to those who doubt, with the hope of pulling some "out of the fire". May we proclaim Your truth boldly, fearful that we also will fall into sin if we love the sinner but fail to reject their sin. Keep us wise and obedient when You secretly guide us to those whom You are calling into ministry or leadership. Prompt us by Your Spirit in ways that do not hinder Your provision for church and state to "welcome this news" and to bring peace, stability, salvation and*

*revival in these needy and destructive end times. For the sake of Jesus who suffered and died to pay the price for our sins. Amen.*

**31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.** Genesis 1:24-31 gives part of the account of creation. 'God said, "Let the land produce all kinds of living creatures." God made all kinds of wild animals. He made all kinds of livestock. He made all kinds of creatures that move along the ground. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole earth. Let them rule over all of the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in His own likeness. He created them in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female. God blessed them. He said to them, "Have children and increase your numbers. Fill the earth and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Rule over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I am giving you every plant on the face of the whole earth that bears its own seeds... All of them will be given to you for food." ' Note that the record says, "Let Us make..." confirming the Holy Trinity of God.

John 1:1-4 says, "In the beginning... the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through Him. Nothing that has been made was made without Him. Life was in Him, and that life was the Light for all people." Note that John confirms that Jesus, the Word and the Light, was involved in creation as part of the Trinity.

*Father God, help us to believe, understand and teach the full truth about Jesus. Amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.** 1 Kings 9-13: "The LORD became angry with Solomon. That's because his heart had turned away from the LORD. He is the God of Israel. He had appeared to Solomon twice. He had commanded Solomon not to follow other gods. But Solomon did not obey Him. So the LORD said to Solomon, "You have chosen not to keep My covenant. You have decided not to obey My rules... So you can be sure I will tear the kingdom away from you. I will give it to one of your officials. But I will not do that while you are still living. Because of your father David I will wait. I will tear the kingdom out of your son's hand. But I will not tear the whole kingdom away from him. I will give him one of the tribes because of my servant David. I will also do it because of Jerusalem. That is the city I have chosen." Later, God relented and

spared not only the tribe of Judea but also Benjamin along with His chosen city of Jerusalem.

Acts 9:1-19 tells the story of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. He obtained permission from the high priest in Jerusalem to imprison men and women of "The Way". The resurrected Jesus met him on the road and said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Jesus then told him to go into Damascus to wait for further instructions.

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the mercy You show for those who are led astray by corrupt leaders. Also for those who are persecuted because of their faith in Jesus. Help us to keep watch on events in Your special city of Jerusalem as we wait Your further instructions for our own special calling. Also, raise up in these needy days more spiritual leaders to declare salvation through Your Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.** Ecclesiastes 4:13 warns that "a poor but wise young man is better off than an old but foolish king." The writer of Ecclesiastes then seeks to help believers to find a purpose in life by encouraging us to "be careful what you say when you go to God's house. Go there to listen" (5:1).

Acts 25:8-9 records what Paul said in his defence after being held two years in prison by the corrupt Roman governor Felix (24:25). The new governor Festus was also corrupt. 'Paul spoke up for himself. He said, "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the Temple. I have done nothing wrong against Caesar." But Festus wanted to do the Jews a favour. So he said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem? Are you willing to go on trial there? Are you willing to face these charges in my court?" ' Paul's answer was to appeal to Caesar for the truth to be upheld (25:11).

*Father God, thank you for reminding us to go to church to listen! Help us then to avoid giving in to the ways of foolish or corrupt leaders but stand up for the truth that brings glory to You. Help us to suffer even as Jesus did in order to fulfil Your purpose in life that many will hear and read Your truth, and listen and receive eternal salvation. For Christ's sake, enable us through His Spirit within us to make wise and brave decisions under all forms of persecution. And raise up more "poor but wise young men" in leadership roles to uphold the truth in these difficult times. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.** Deuteronomy 25:4 instructs, "Do not stop an ox from eating while you use it to separate grain from straw." This is a warning to care for the needs of the animal that provides food for

mankind so that nothing hinders God's provision. It is referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:9 who applies it to the preachers of the Good News of Jesus Christ. "We have planted spiritual seed [grain] among you. Is it too much to ask that we receive from you some of the things we need?"

Mark 3:13-16 gives the time when Jesus appointed the 12 disciples to be his preachers and healers. "Jesus went up on a mountainside. He called for certain people to come to Him, and they came. He appointed 12 of them and called them apostles. From that time on they would be with Him. He would also send them out to preach. They would have authority to drive out demons. So Jesus appointed the Twelve." This was the preparation for the work they were called to do after His death and resurrection to spread the Good News about God's salvation through faith in Christ.

*Father God, thank You that You have done everything possible to empower and prepare the way for believers to share the Good News of Jesus. Allow nothing or no-one to hinder what we do to extend Your Kingdom. Help us all to share in the responsibility of caring for each other and meeting the needs of those who travel near and far to spread the Good News. For the sake of Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us to achieve Your purpose and provision for mankind. Amen.*

**6<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Jeremiah 49 to 50 lists many promises of the LORD God Almighty regarding Israel and her surrounding enemies which make it clear He is in control and will destroy or bless nations as He chooses according to their past, present and future obedience and His purposes for the End Times. For example, Elam on the Persian Gulf, which God will batter, scatter and shatter (49:34-57), "but in days to come I will bless Elam with great success again" (49:39). Also, "A new day is coming. At that time the people of Israel and Judah will gather together. They will come in tears to Me... They will enter into the covenant I make with them. It will last forever. It will never be forgotten. My people have been like lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them down the wrong path... They have forgotten that I am their true resting place" (50:4-6). "I will forgive the people [the remnant] I have spared" (50:20).

Luke 16:19-31 gives the parable of Jesus about the rich man and the beggar who after death were separated by a great chasm. The beggar, who had trusted in the Word of God, was with Father Abraham. Jesus warned that many "will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead", clearly referring to Himself.

*Almighty God, thank you for Your repeated calls to stay obedient to You and the many times you forgave those who wander from the Truth and even changed the fortunes of whole nations. May the world know today that obedience to You and faith in Your resurrected Son, Jesus Christ, will lead to eternal fellowship with Father Abraham and the faithful who have gone before. Amen.*

**7<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Joshua 12:6-24 records the land on the east bank of the River Jordan that Moses conquered for some of the tribes of Israel to inhabit (v.6). This is followed by a detailed list of 31 kings who were conquered by the Israelites on the west bank under Joshua (v.7-24). The next 9 chapters give details of the conquering, in a short time, of the remaining land in Canaan that God promised for the Israelites. "Not one of the LORD's promises failed" (21:45).

Mark 4:30-34 is the parable Jesus told of the mustard seed. "What can we say God's Kingdom is like? What story can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed planted in the ground. But when you plant the seed, it grows. It becomes the largest of all garden plants. Its branches are so big that birds can rest in its shade." Using many stories [like this], Jesus spoke the word to them. He told them as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a story. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything."

*Dear God Almighty, help us to take in and understand these words recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Help us to realise that Your earthly and heavenly kingdoms can only be established by believers and their leaders who are obedient to You and Your Son, Jesus the Christ. Enable us, through the promised power of Your Holy Spirit, to learn and teach and preach Your word for today. Open our eyes to see how quickly You respond in these urgent times to prepare the way for Jesus to return and establish Your rule. For His sake, who shed His blood for us. Amen.*

**8<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** 1 Kings 10:24. "People from the whole world wanted to meet Solomon in person. They wanted to see for themselves [to hear, KJV] how wise God had made him."

Galatians 3:26-29. "You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. All of you who were baptized into Christ have 'put on Christ'... There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free person. There is neither male nor female. Because you belong to Christ

Jesus, you are all one in Him. You who belong to Christ are Abraham's seed. You will receive [as heirs, KJV] what God has promised."

*Father God, we praise you today for assuring us of our inheritance in Christ as sons and daughters of Abraham, in unity with all believers whatever their race, status or sex. Help us to reject traditions that hinder our salvation, or ignore how people judge us because of our backgrounds or whether we were born male or female. May we learn from Scripture divine wisdom about who You are and who we really are when we 'put on Christ'. So enable us to take up our calling to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, that the whole world will want to see and hear for themselves this same wisdom of God. Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Deuteronomy 8:1-3. God gave this warning to His people through Moses: "Make sure you follow every command I am giving you today. Then you will live. You will increase your numbers. You will enter the land and take it as your own. It's the land the LORD promised with an oath to your people long ago. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way. He guided you in the desert for these 40 years. He wanted to take your pride away. He wanted to put you to the test and know what was in your hearts. He wanted to see whether you would obey His commands. He took your pride away. He let you go hungry. Then he gave you manna to eat... He tested you to teach you that man does not live only on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."

1 John 2:28 gives this warning to God's people today through John: "Dear children, remain joined to Christ. Then when He comes, we can be bold. We will not be ashamed to meet Him when He comes."

*Dear Father, praise and thank you for Your constant love, mercy, purpose and provision from the beginning of time. Put the longing in our hearts to obey your spoken and written word and the teachings of Jesus, our Saviour and His apostles. Encourage us to feed daily on your spiritual food and "remain joined to Christ". Enable us to prepare for His coming return by sharing Your Good News of Salvation in Christ alone whilst there is time to increase the numbers of Your people to meet Him without shame when He comes. Test us and enable us to fulfil Your heart's desire! Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Isaiah 57:10-21. Isaiah speaks God's truth to His sinful people. "All of your efforts wore you out. But you would not say, 'It is hopeless.' ...You have not remembered Me. You do not even care about Me. (v.10-11) "I live in a high and holy place. But I also live

with anyone who turns away from his sins. I live with anyone who is not proud. I give new life to him. I give it to anyone who turns away from his sins. I will not find fault with My people forever. I will not always be angry with them. ... I turned my face away from them because I was angry. But they kept on wanting their own way. I have seen what they have done. But I will heal them. I will guide them. And I will comfort them just as I did before. Then the people of Israel who are sorry for their sins will praise Me. I will give perfect peace to those who are far away and those who are near. And I will heal them. But ... there is no peace for those who are evil." (v.15-21)

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 reminds us "There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It did not matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We have all been given the same Spirit to drink into."

*Lord Jesus thank You for Your sacrifice on the cross that brings our Father God's salvation through the resurrection power of Your Spirit. Forgive us for the times He turns His face from us when we go our own hopeless way. Comfort us and unite us in the peace of loving, worshipping and serving You this day. Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Deuteronomy 24:17-22 confirms God's concern for widows, orphans and aliens in our society. God's people must offer them justice (v.17) and surplus food at harvest time (v.19-21). "Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do... Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I am commanding you to do those things" (v.22).

Acts 22:21-29 explains how Paul was offered justice in the midst of persecution because he was a Roman citizen.

*Merciful Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing Your heart of love and mercy towards the vulnerable in society. Thank you that this includes those who are persecuted for their faith, even leaders of Your Kingdom on Earth, like Paul. Help us to realise as servants of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, we are saved from our slavery to the sin of our old lives and we have been promised justice and provision and a purpose in life through the resurrection power of Jesus Himself. Grant us the compassion of Christ to minister to the needy and faith to trust in His Spirit for their needs. May our calling in ministry, whether humble or mighty, witness to Your mercy and love with provision sufficient for our needs, so that we can impact the world in the power of Your Spirit, to prepare the way for the return of our Messiah. May Your mercy and our*

*understanding of the Good News of Jesus overcome weak faith and rebellion against Your commands as we await His return. For the sake of Jesus who suffered and died for our sins. Amen.*

**14<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Job 19 records how Job suffered the judgement of one of his friends (v.1-3) as well as feeling shut off from God (v.7), walking in darkness without hope (v.8-10) and assuming God is angry with him (v.11). He complains he has lost the support of family and friends (v.13-19) and suffers ill health (v.20). And yet his faith holds strong as he declares those famous words, "I know that my Redeemer lives. In the end He will stand on the earth. After my skin has been destroyed, in my body I will still see God. I myself will see Him with my own eyes. I will see Him, and He will not be a stranger to me. How my heart longs for that day!" (v.25-27).

1 John 5 begins with "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born again because of what God has done." And continues with, "I am writing these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God. I am doing it so you will know that you have eternal life. There is one thing we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us. If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it."

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the faith of Job recorded for us in the midst of his despair when he feared he had lost Your respect as well as the respect of his friends and family. In the midst of "walking in darkness without hope" or suffering persecution or ill health, reassure us of Your love, not anger. Hear and answer our prayers, that we may know our salvation is through our Redeemer Jesus, and we are born again with the promise of eternal life. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Genesis 19 describes how Lot, the nephew of Abraham, greeted and welcomed two angels. God had sent them to visit Sodom, whose sin, God told Abraham, "is so bad that I will go down and see for Myself" (18:20). When Lot invited them into his house, sinful men 'came from every part of the city of Sodom. Young and old men alike surrounded the house. They called out to Lot. They said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to have sex with them." ' (19:4-5). The two angels ordered Lot and his family to leave Sodom immediately. They said, "There has been a great cry to the LORD against the people of this city. So He has sent us to destroy it" (19:13).

Revelation 22:12-16 records the words of Jesus. "Look! I am coming soon! ...I will reward each person for what he has done ... I am the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will have the right to come to the Tree of Life. They will be allowed to go through the gates into the city. Outside the city are the dogs and those who practice witchcraft. Outside are also those who commit sexual sins and murder. Those who worship statues of gods, and everyone who loves and does what is false, are outside too. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this witness for the churches."

*Heavenly Father, may the words from the Holy Bible witness to the truth of these End Times. Help Your people to recognise and welcome Your angels and others who support the Truth of Your Word today and grant freedom of expression to let the words speak for themselves and reap a harvest of souls with times of revival. Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** 1 Kings 12&13 records how, in the year 975 BC, the ten northern tribes of Israel rebelled against King Rehoboam, grandson of King David, who ruled over Jerusalem and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Rehoboam raised up 180,000 loyal men to fight against the northern tribes of Israel (12:21). But a messenger from God came. "Do not go up to fight against your brothers. I want every one of you to go back home. Things have happened exactly the way I planned them.' " So the fighting men obeyed the LORD's message and went home again (12:22-24). That same year, the northern tribes of Israel built golden calves and altars for the people to worship and appointed priests who were not Levites (12:33). But a man of God visited one of the altars and told them that "A son named Josiah will be born into the royal family of David... Josiah will sacrifice the priests of [your] high places on you... This altar will be broken to pieces!" (13:2-4).

Romans 3:1-4, Paul asks, "Is there any advantage in being a Jew? ...There is great value in every way! The Jews have been given the very words of God. What if some Jews did not believe? Will the fact that they do not have faith keep God from being faithful? Not at all! God is true, even if every human being is a liar."

*Thank You Heavenly Father, that Paul, a Jew, could see from the Old Testament writings the importance of God's plan to establish the throne of David in Jerusalem where Israel's Saviour died 1000 years later to save the world from sin – and will return one day soon. Help us to see and trust Your plans, without going to war! Amen.*

**17<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Jeremiah 33:22-26 again confirms God's purpose for the two southern Israelite tribes of Judah and Benjamin centred on Jerusalem. "Here is what I will do for My servant David. And here is what I will do for the Levites who serve Me. I will make their children after them as many as the stars in the sky. And I will make them as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. It will be impossible to count them... I will bless My people with great success again. I will love them with tender love."

Matthew 24&25 records the words of Jesus regarding the End Times. "You will hear about wars. You will also hear people talking about future wars. Do not be alarmed. Those things must happen. But the end still isn't here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. People will go hungry. There will be earthquakes in many places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then people will hand you over to be treated badly and killed. All nations will hate you because of Me. At that time, many will turn away from their faith... Because evil will grow, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. This Good News of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world... Then the end will come." (24:4-14). Then Jesus told the parable of the talents about those servants who were faithful in many ways and those who were not. He declared that the unfaith servants will be thrown into darkness and there will be much weeping (15:14-30).

*Father God. Thank You for Your promised faithfulness to Jews and Gentiles who are faithful to You. Help us to live in these difficult times to teach Your truth and preach the Good News of Jesus and prepare for His return to Jerusalem soon. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Psalm 67. "May God show us Your favour and bless us... Then Your ways will be known on earth. All nations will see that You have the power to save... May all of the people on Earth praise You. May the nations be glad and sing with joy. For You rule the people of the earth fairly. You guide the nations of the earth... May all the peoples praise You. Then the land will produce its crops and God, our God, will bless us... People from one end of the Earth to the other will fear [respect] Him."

Romans 14:9-13 says, "Christ died and came back to life. He did this to become the Lord of both the dead and the living. Now then, who are you to judge your brother or sister? Why do you look down on them? We will all stand in God's courtroom to be judged. It is written, 'You can be sure that I live,' says the Lord. 'And you can be just as sure

that every knee will bow down in front of Me. Every tongue will tell the truth to God.' (Isaiah 45:23) So we will all have to explain to God the things we have done. Let us stop judging one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put anything in your brother's way that would make him trip and fall."

*Heavenly Father, may our focus today be on worshipping You and seeking Your mercy to bless us and Your people. Forgive us for failing to witness that Jesus Christ our Saviour died for us all. Help us to stop judging fellow believers and truly believe "You rule the people of the earth fairly and guide them" in love. Help us to apply this to those around us and freely share the compassion of Christ through the resurrection life we have been given at such great cost. Help us to encourage those who are growing in faith and using the gifts of the Spirit for today's needs so that "all nations will see that You have the power to save." Amen.*

**21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.** Psalm 36 begins with "Here are the words God has given me to say about the evil ways of anyone who sins. He doesn't have any respect for God. He praises himself so much that he cannot see his sin or hate it. His mouth speaks words that are evil and false. He has stopped being wise. He has stopped doing good." However, the psalmist quickly turns to praise of our LORD God Almighty. "LORD, your love is as high as the heavens... You are as holy as the mountains are high. You are as honest as the oceans are deep... You have the fountain of life. We are filled with light because you give us [Your] light. Keep on loving those who know you! Keep on doing right to those whose hearts are honest! Do not let the feet of those who are proud step on me. Do not let the hands of those who are evil drive me away."

Philippians 3:1-3 urges believers, "Brothers and sisters, be joyful because you belong to the Lord... Watch out for those dogs [who] do evil things... We worship God by the power of His Spirit. We boast about what Christ Jesus has done. We do not put our trust in our weak human nature."

*Dear heavenly Father, we note from these words of the choice that evil people have to sin or repent. But we admit before You that we, your children, are also free to sin and are easily tempted. May I be quick to praise and worship You and thank you for Your "life" and "light" and for "loving" and "doing right" through "what Christ Jesus has done". Save me from those who seek to "step on us" or who seek to "drive me away" from trusting You and "doing good". Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.** Ezekiel 13:13-23 warned God's people 2600 years ago whilst in exile: "The LORD and King speaks. He says, 'When I am burning with anger, I will send a powerful wind. Hailstones and heavy rains will come. They will fall with great force. I will tear down the wall you prophets painted [whitewashed]... You who painted it will be gone too. You prophets of Israel prophesied to Jerusalem. You saw visions of peace for its people. But there wasn't any peace... Then you will know that I am the LORD... When you told them lies, you made them lose all hope. You [even] advised sinful people not to turn from their evil ways... I will save My people from your powerful hands. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

Galatians 3:11-14 reminds us, "Scripture says, 'Those who are right with God will live by faith' (Habakkuk 2:4). The Law is not based on faith. In fact, it is just the opposite. It teaches that 'the one who does those things will live by them' (Leviticus 18:5). Christ sets us free from the curse of the Law. He did it by becoming a curse for us. It is written, 'Everyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse' (Deuteronomy 21:23). Christ Jesus set us free 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."

*Father God, save Your people from the powerful hands of those who tell us lies, who whitewash over walls built without foundations and fail to warn sinful people to turn from their evil ways. Renew our hope with the call to live by faith in Jesus Christ who promised us His Holy Spirit to guide us and bless us. For His sake. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021.** Proverbs 1:1-7 clarifies the aim of Solomon to think and live wisely and avoid crime. "Proverbs teach you wisdom and train you... They lead to what is right and honest and fair. They give understanding to childish [simple, KJV] people. They give knowledge and good sense to those who are young. Let wise people [also] listen and add to what they have learned." Solomon begins with "Respect [fear, KJV] for the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But foolish people hate wisdom and training [discipline, NIV; instruction, KJV]."

Revelation 12:1-12 portrays a pregnant woman and a huge red dragon. "The dragon stood in front of the woman waiting to eat her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son. He will rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was taken up to God and to His throne... There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon... The great dragon was thrown down to Earth, and

his angels with him. The dragon is that old serpent called the devil, or Satan. He leads the whole world down the wrong path. Then I [John] heard a loud voice in Heaven. 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God have come. The authority of His Christ has come... because the Lamb gave his life's blood for them... The devil is very angry. He knows his time is short.' "

*Father God, thank you for providing these teachings and visions to understand life on Earth and in Heaven, in the past, present and future. Grant us Your wisdom as you train, discipline and instruct us. Also Your Holy Spirit power promised by Jesus to extend Your Kingdom in His love, during these last days of wickedness by the enemy in his anger. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> September 2021.** Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 records these famous words. "There's a time for everything that is done on Earth... There's a time to be born, to die; to plant, to pull up; to kill, to heal; to tear down, to build up; to cry, to laugh; to be sad, to dance; to scatter stones, to gather them; to hug, not to hug; to search, to stop searching; to keep, to throw away; to tear, to mend; to be silent, to speak; to love, to hate; for war, for peace. What does the worker get for his hard work? I have seen the heavy load God has put on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also given men a sense of what He has been doing down through the ages. But they cannot completely understand what He has done from the beginning to the end... God does that so men will respect [revere, NIV; fear, KJV] Him."

1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Paul testifies, "Brothers and sisters, when I came to you I didn't come with fancy words or great wisdom. I preached to you the truth about God's love. I made up my mind to pay attention to only one thing while I was with you. That one thing was Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. When I came to you, I was weak and afraid and trembling all over. I didn't preach my message with clever and compelling words. As I preached, the Holy Spirit showed his power. That was so you would believe not because of human wisdom but because of God's power."

*Heavenly Father, forgive us for trying to understand life and all creation and help us instead to know the Creator and seek Your wisdom and purpose day by day. Above all, we seek to know and love and worship You and our Saviour Jesus Christ. So grant us Holy Spirit wisdom and power to proclaim Your truth and deliver us from worldly wisdom. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Psalm 78:51-72 gives some of the teaching by Asaph, King David's choir leader. It reminds the people of Israel how God struck down the fist-born males of Ham's descendants who settled in Egypt but led the Israelites, the descendents of Shem, safely out of slavery, "like sheep through the desert, to settle in the Promised Land of Canaan" (v.51-52). (Ham and Shem were sons of Noah along with Japheth, who settled in Europe.) But "they put God to the test and refused to obey the Most High God and did not keep His laws" (v.56). However, "He chose the tribe of Judah ... and His servant David. He took him from the sheep pens ... and made him shepherd of Israel, His special people" (v.68-71).

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 gives some of the teaching by Paul the apostle. He reminds the Jewish believers in Christ about "our people who lived long ago. They were all led by the [pillar of] cloud and walked through the Red Sea ... and ate the same supernatural food [manna]" (v.1-3). But "God was not pleased with most of them. Their bodies were scattered all over the desert" (v.5). "These things happened to them as an example to us and were written down to warn us... So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall" (v.11-12).

*Thank You Heavenly Father for writing these words down for us in the Old and New Testaments as warnings and examples for us today in case we fall. Forgive us when we disobey Your truth and stumble in our walk with You. Thank you for Your mercy in Christ's sacrifice for our sins. Help us to live to Your glory in His resurrection power promised to all who believe He is Your Son and Saviour of the world. For His sake. Amen.*

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Isaiah 34&35 refers to God's judgement on the nations. But Isaiah confirms that God's judgement will be followed by our redemption. And in the meantime, Isaiah asks God to encourage the faithful believers. "Strengthen the hands of those who are weak. Help those whose knees give way. Say to those whose hearts are afraid, 'Be strong. Do not fear. Your God will come' (35:3-4). Then only those who are pure and clean can travel on 'The Way of Holiness' and only those who lead a holy life can use it (35:8). The redeemed of the Lord will walk there... everlasting joy will crown their heads. They will obtain joy and gladness. And sorrow and sighing will flee away" (35:9-10, NKJV).

Revelation 2:4-7 Jesus warns, "Here is something I hold against you. You do not have as much love as you had at first. Remember how far you have fallen! Turn away from your sins. Do the things you did at first. If you don't, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from

its place... Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. I will allow those who overcome to eat from the tree of life in God's paradise."

*Heavenly Father, thank you for Your scriptures that speak of Your truth and remind us of what Your faithful people did in the past, both right and wrong. Help us to walk in "The Way of Holiness" in these difficult times with our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus our Saviour with renewed love for Him and His people and with hope of full redemption and a new Heaven and Earth with its "everlasting joy". Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Ezekiel 5 records the condemnation of Almighty God and His punishment for His special people Israel because of their great sinfulness. He tells His prophet Ezekiel, "I have placed Jerusalem in the centre of the nations with countries all around it. But its people are sinful and have refused to obey my laws and rules" (5:5-6). "I will punish you in the sight of the nations. I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. This is because you worship statues of gods. I hate them!" (5:8-9). But in His mercy, God also told Ezekiel to tell the people, "I will gather you from the nations. I will bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered. I will give you back the land of Israel. They will return to it and will remove all its statues of evil gods... They will be careful to keep My laws. They will be My people and they will be My God" (11:17-20).

Acts 7:49-60 records the speech by Stephen in Jerusalem over 600 years after the time of Ezekiel. Stephen warned that the prophet Amos, who lived 200 years before Ezekiel, said, "You lifted up the place where Molech was worshiped. You lifted up the star of your god Rephan. You made statues of them to worship. So I will send you away from your country" (Amos 5:25-27). Then Stephen told them, "You people! You won't obey! You are stubborn! You will not listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit!"

*Lord Jesus, prepare the way for many more believers to welcome your Second Coming to Jerusalem. Wake up and shake up Your Church to repent and proclaim now the Good News of salvation for all who put their trust in You as the Son of God instead of trusting in man-made attempts to save the world from pollution, crime, corruption and terror. Deliver us from false teaching and make us obedient to Your Spirit here on Earth. Amen.*

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2021.** Judges Chapters 4&5 records the time (1300 BCE) when Israel "once again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD God

Almighty" (4:1). This was after God had delivered them from the control of the Moabites and gave them 80 years of peace in the land. "So the LORD gave them over to the power of Jabin the king of Canaan... He treated the people of Israel very badly for 20 years. So they cried out to the LORD for help" (4:2-3). Israel's judges were often powerless to defend their land because they failed to unite the people because of their tribal background. However, God used Israel's prophetess, Deborah, to unite Israel and "God brought Jabin, under Israel's control" (4:23). Deborah sang a song of praise to the LORD. "The princes in Israel lead the way and the people follow them [willingly, KJV]... I will sing to the LORD, 'He is the God of Israel'... Lord, may all your enemies be destroyed. But may those who love You be like the morning sun" (5:2,3,31). So there was peace for 40 years.

Romans 1:17-21. Paul quotes from another Old Testament prophet (Habakkuk 2:4), "The righteous will live by faith." Paul adds, "God shows His anger against all the godless and evil things people do who say no to the truth [suppress the truth, NIV]... The truth about God is plain to them... Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God... So people have no excuse for what they do. They knew God but did no honour Him."

*Heavenly Father, raise up men and women of God for your people to unite and willingly follow, whatever our tribal background. Suppress evil and grant us the strength to live by faith and power to speak boldly the Good News of Jesus Christ so that Your truth is no longer suppressed in our schools, churches, businesses, governments or on the streets of our nation. Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.** Psalm 119: 41-46. "LORD, show me Your faithful love. Save me as You have promised. Then I will answer those who make fun of me, because I trust in Your word. Help me always to tell the truth about how faithful You are. I have put my hope in Your laws. I will always obey Your law, for ever and ever. I will lead a full and happy life, because I have tried to obey Your rules... I praise Your commands, and I love them. I meditate on them."

Philippians 2:12-16. Paul says, "My dear friends, you have always obeyed God. You obeyed while I was with you. And you have obeyed even more while I am not with you. So continue to work out your own salvation. Do it with fear and trembling. God is working in you. He wants your plans and your acts to be in keeping with His good purpose. Do everything without finding fault or arguing. Then you will be pure and without blame. You will be children of God without fault in a sinful and

evil world. Among the people of the world you shine like stars in the heavens. You shine as you hold out to them the word of life."

*Heavenly Father thank You for the faithful words of the psalmist as an example to us to "hope in Your laws" and value and obey them and meditate on them. Thank you, too, for Paul's testimony of the faithful and obedient believers at Philippi. Help us to "plan and act in keeping with Your good purpose" and become "children of God without fault in a sinful and evil world". May we then "shine like stars" in the world and "hold out to them Your word of life" even to "those who make fun of me/us". In the name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Job 40-41 records God's words to Job after he admitted he was unworthy. "Get ready to stand up for yourself... Would you dare to claim that I am not being fair? Would you judge Me in order to make yourself seem right? Is your arm as powerful as Mine is?" He adds to Job's shame by suggesting he has behaved as if "your own right hand can save you!" (40:7-14). Job said, "My ears had heard about You. But now my own eyes have seen You... I am really sorry [repent, KJV] for what I said about You." The remainder of the book is about God's forgiveness and restoration with Himself and God's rebuke for Job's friends who tried but failed to help him recover from despair.

Acts 5:12-42 describes how the apostles performed many miracles in Jerusalem in the name of Jesus with signs and wonders (v.12-16). The Jewish leaders became jealous of the crowds that gathered and put the apostles in jail. However, an angel of the LORD released them and told them to go back to the Temple area and "tell the people all about this new life". The leaders found them and told them, "We gave you clear orders not to teach in the name of Jesus!" They replied, "We must obey God rather than men!" (v.25-29). Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law told the leaders, "If it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men. You will only find yourself fighting against God" (v.39).

*Father God, forgive us for the times we have hindered "telling the people all about this new life" in Jesus. Like Job, we live our life as if "your own right hand can save you" and wonder why we despair. Deliver us from our own ideas and those around us and help us listen to You! Minister to us through angels and wise men like Gamaliel, so we can stand up against opposition. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Jeremiah 51 records God's condemnation of the unholy nations that surrounded His people Israel, and Babylon who destroyed Jerusalem and killed many Jews, taking a remnant into

captivity. God tells Jeremiah, "Babylon must fall." (v.49.) He then He gives a message to Jeremiah for the remnant of Jews at the end of their 70 years in exile to get ready to leave. "Do not wait!" He also commands them, "Remember Me and think about Jerusalem!" (v.50). But the people complained, "No-one honours us any more. People make fun of us... People from other lands have entered the holy places of the LORD's house." (v.51.) But God said, "A new day is coming!" (v.52).

Philippians 3:12-16 says, "I have not yet been made perfect. But I move on to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for. Brothers and sisters, I don't consider that I have taken hold of it yet. But... 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. 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."

*Dear God, in times of difficulty, help us to remember You and think of Your purpose for Jerusalem, past, present and future. Despite the shame and punishment that Jesus suffered there on behalf of the sins of His people, He was faithful to the end in His calling to provide salvation for all who believe He is Your Son. Help us to forget what is behind, believe a new day is coming, and push forward! Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Proverbs 11:19-20 declares that the truly righteous person gains eternal life but the one who pursues evil receives eternal death. Why? Because the LORD God Almighty detests a person with a twisted heart but delights in those whose ways are blameless.

John 15:1-8. Jesus said that He is the true vine. His Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch joined to Him that does not bear fruit. He trims [prunes] every branch that does bear fruit. Then it will bear even more fruit. Jesus told His followers that they were already clean because of the word He had spoken to them. "Remain joined to Me, and I will remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain joined to Me. I am the vine. You are the branches. Anyone who remains joined to Me, and I to them, will bear a lot of fruit. You cannot do anything without Me. Anyone who does not remain joined to Me, is like a branch that is thrown away and dries up. Branches like those are picked up and thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain joined to Me and my words remain in you, ask for

anything you wish. And it will be given to you. When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to My Father. It shows that you are My disciples.”

*Heavenly Father, thank you for these words that reveal how the choices we make in this world affect us in eternity. Lord Jesus, You died to set us free from our selfish ways. May Your promised Holy Spirit keep us joined to You in such a way that our lives will show much fruit to bring glory to God – in our meeting places and in the world around us. Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Deuteronomy 7:1-6. God told Moses, “The LORD your God will bring you into the land. You are going to enter it and take it as your own. He will drive many nations out to make room for you... Do not make a peace treaty with them. Do not show them any mercy. Do not get married to any of them. Do not give your daughters to their sons. And do not take their daughters for your sons. If you do, those people will turn your children away from following the LORD God Almighty. Then your children will serve other gods. The LORD's anger will burn against you. It will quickly destroy you. So here is what you must do to those people. Break down their altars. Smash their sacred stones... Burn the statues of their gods in the fire. You are a holy nation. The LORD your God has set you apart for Himself. He has chosen you to be His special treasure.”

1 John 2:28 to 3:1. The apostle John wrote, “Dear children, remain joined to Christ. Then when He comes, we can be bold. We will not be ashamed to meet Him when He comes. You know that God is right and always does what is right. And you know that everyone who does what is right has been born again because of what God has done. How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God! And that's what we really are!”

*Father God Almighty, thank You for making clear we must marry only those You have chosen who believe in You. Help us to be bold, "joined to Christ" against sin as "children of God" and as "a holy nation". Continue to keep us free from sin so that "we will not be ashamed to meet Him when He comes". Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> October 2021.** Exodus 6:1-5. Moses felt a failure and asked God why He had not yet saved the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Then the LORD God Almighty spoke to Moses. "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of My powerful hand, he will let the people of Israel go. Because of My mighty hand, he will drive them out of his country. I am the LORD God Almighty. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob as the Mighty God. But I did not show them the full meaning of my name, Yahweh, [Jehovah, KJV]. I also made my covenant with them. I promised to give them the land of Canaan. That is where they lived as outsiders [strangers, KJV]. Also, I have heard the groans of the Israelites. The Egyptians are keeping them as slaves. But I have remembered my covenant." These words convinced Moses that God had not forgotten His people or His promises, but had waited for His appointed time to act.

Revelation 11:10-12. The angel sent by Jesus told 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."

*Lord Jesus, our Saviour, keep us strong and faithful and righteous in Your sight. Complete our part in the preparation for Your return to Jerusalem to save and rule the world at Father God's appointed time. In Your mercy, may many tens of thousands be saved in the meantime to welcome You at Your return. Amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.** 1 Samuel 17:45-47. David stood boldly before Goliath and said, "You are coming to fight against me with a sword, a spear and a javelin. But I am coming against you in the name of Yahweh, the LORD God Almighty, who rules over all... The LORD does not save by using a sword or a spear. And everyone who is here will know it. The battle belongs to the LORD."

Revelation 12:4-12 records one of the visions given to the apostle John. "The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to have a baby. He wanted to eat her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son [Jesus]. He will rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was taken up to God and to His throne ... Michael and his angels fought against the dragon... But the dragon was not strong enough. He and his angels lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down to Earth, and his angels with him. The dragon is that old serpent called the devil, or Satan. He leads the whole world down the wrong path. Then a loud voice in Heaven said, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God have come. The authority of His Christ [Messiah] has come... But how terrible it will be for earth and sea! The devil has come down to you. He is very angry. He knows his time is short.' "

*Thank You Heavenly Father for the privilege of living at the time of fulfilment of Your Messiah's victory over Satan and His return to Earth to reign! Help us to stand boldly before our common enemy so that "everyone will know the battle belongs to the LORD". Overcome this day those who are persecuting Your people and are destroying this planet You created for us to look after. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.** Psalm 138:6-8 (NKJV). King David wrote: "Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly. But the proud He knows [only] from afar. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me. You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerns me. Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the works of Your hands!"

Matthew 21:12-16 (NirV) records, 'Jesus entered the Temple area. He began chasing out all those who were buying and selling there... He said to them, "It is written that the Lord said, 'My house will be called a house where people can pray.' (Isaiah 56:7) But you are making it a den for robbers.'" (Jeremiah 7:11) Blind people and those who were disabled came to Jesus at the Temple. There He healed them. The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did. They also saw the children in the Temple area shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But when they saw all of this, they became angry.'

*Lord Jesus, we see how King David knew that Father God rejects the proud and supports the lowly people just as You did when You turned out the rich traders in the Temple. Help us to be bold in standing up for the poor and needy against those who get angry if they cannot exploit the world for their own gain. Keep reminding us of the responsibility we have to care for the world we live in. "Do not forsake the works of Your hands!" This includes its people, especially the future generations, and those who are blind and disabled. Help us to reach those who seek Your salvation and to reject the selfishness of mankind. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.** Deuteronomy 5:6-21 gives the words of Yahweh, our LORD God Almighty, listing His Ten Commandments, 1500 years before the personal ministry of Jesus His Messiah who fulfilled every part of the Law before His sacrifice on the cross for our salvation. "Worship the Lord... Have no other gods... Do not misuse the name of the LORD... Observe the Sabbath... Honour your father and mother..."

Do not murder... Do not commit adultery... Do not steal... Do not lie... Do not envy your neighbour's possessions..."

Luke 22:40 & 46 give the last words of Jesus to His disciples on the Mount of Olives before He suffered and died on the cross as punishment for our sins. "Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation." A second time he said, "Why are you sleeping? Get up! Watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation."

*Heavenly Father thank you for these reminders how we have let You down and our Saviour down through disobedience and lack of self-discipline. We confess we let ourselves down and those around us when we sin or disobey. Help us to know and receive Your forgiveness and put the guilt of the past behind us. Help us to remain alert to the needs around us. So shake us up, wake us up and make us up to be Your ambassadors and examples of holiness! Empower us with Your Holy Spirit through the resurrection life made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus. May we be part of the preparation for His return as we worship, work and witness in these difficult Last Days. For Your glory and for the establishment of Your holy Law. Amen.*

**4<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Joshua 13:1 gives God's word to Joshua that in his old age "there are still very large areas of land to be taken over." The previous chapter summarises what had been achieved and the next 9 chapters list what had yet to be achieved!

John 17:20. Jesus prayed to His Father "for those who will believe in Me through their message..." meaning His teachings passed on by His disciples/apostles. This clearly gives the responsibility for us to act in reaching out to those God is calling into His Kingdom. So in fulfilling God's desire to save our families and others, we must fulfil our part in reaching them with the Gospel!

Revelation 22:12 gives the words of Jesus. "Look! I am coming soon! I bring my rewards with Me. I will reward each person for what he has done."

*Thank You Jesus, for clarifying the words You prayed to Father God 2000 years ago that are more urgent than ever now. Help us to realise that God will bring others into Your Kingdom as we do our part in declaring the truth by whatever means is available today. For Your return is surely very soon and there is so much left to do! Thank you for the records where we read how successful Joshua was, despite his old age. We remember that the name of Joshua is the same as Your name – Jesus or Yeshua – and means "God's salvation". Thank You that in this name we declare the truth from God to extend Your Kingdom on Earth.*

*Help us to understand how to live and communicate this Good News freely today without hindrance, so that many will be saved and welcome You back to Earth soon. For the sake of Your suffering on our behalf to save us that others might be saved. Amen.*

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Proverbs 24:1-12 warns God's people "not to envy the wicked or desire their company" for their hearts plan violence while they make trouble with their lips (v.1). Life is built like a house through wisdom, understanding and knowledge. From this comes power, strength, guidance and victory (v.3). Do not end up "weak when trouble comes" (v.10). Then you will "save those who are being lead away to death" and not need to say "but we did not know anything about this!" God knows what you are thinking and in His justice, "will pay every person back for what they have done" (v.11-12).

Romans 12:17-21 warns the followers of Jesus, "Do not pay back evil with evil. Be careful to do what everyone thinks is right. If possible, live in peace with everyone... Leave room for God to show His anger. It is written, 'I am the One who judges people. I will pay them back,' (Deuteronomy 32:35). Scripture says, 'If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink' (Proverbs 25:21) Do not let evil overcome you. Overcome evil by doing good."

*Father God, grant us divine wisdom to avoid us being physically and spiritually "weak when trouble comes". In turn, help Your people to "save those who are being led away to death" both physical and spiritual. Enable us to "live in peace" and leave You to judge others. Help us live with the "power, strength, guidance and victory" of Jesus to "overcome evil by doing good" in love. Amen.*

**8<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Joshua 5:14 to 6:3 gives the start of the occupation of the west bank of Jordan in the Promised Land of Canaan, later called Israel. "The LORD God Almighty spoke to Joshua. 'I have handed Jericho over to you... March around the city once with all of your fighting men. In fact, do it for six days.' " Joshua, whose name means 'God's salvation', had the same name as Yeshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus, Israel's future Messiah or Christ.

Revelation 6:9-17 describes the vision given by Jesus, the Lamb of God, to His servant John. "I saw the souls of people who were killed because of God's word and their faithful witness. They called out in a loud voice. 'How long, Lord and King, holy and true... will you wait to judge those who live on Earth? How long will it be until you pay them

back for killing us?’ Then each of them was given a white robe. ‘Wait a little longer... There are still more of your believing brothers and sisters who must be killed.’ The sky rolled back like a scroll... Everyone hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. This included the kings of the earth and every slave... They called out ‘Hide us from the anger of the Lamb!’ ”

*Heavenly Father, do not let Your servants suffer without hope of Your promise of eternal salvation and glory. Expose the deceit of evil people and those who cheat to gain power. Thank you for Your servants Joshua and John who helped prepare the way of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ. Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Psalm 37 encourages us with many positive words. “Do not be upset... Do not be jealous... Trust in the LORD and do good... Delight in the LORD... Commit your life to Him... Be still, patient and wait for the LORD to act... Turn away from anger...” (v.1-8). Also, “Turn from evil and do good...” (v.27). Again, “Wait for the LORD to act. Live as He wants you to” (v.34). King David ends with, “The LORD blesses those who do what is right [righteous, KJV]. He is their place of safety [refuge]” (v.39).

Colossians 4:2-6. Paul writes while in prison, “Spend a lot of time in prayer. Always be watchful and thankful. Pray for us too. Pray that God will open a door for our message. Then we can preach the mystery of Christ. Because I preached it, I am being held by chains. Pray that I will preach it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Let the words you speak always be full of grace... Then you will know how to answer everyone.”

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the amazing teaching in our Bibles from Your servants David and Paul. Help us not to be upset when we experience stress in times of difficulty. May our trust and delight be in You as we wait patiently for You to act. Keep our thoughts from evil and help us to do good. Encourage us to spend more time in prayer and be watchful of events around us. We pray for opportunities to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ – for ourselves and others in ministry. Help us to understand and preach sensitively the “mystery of Christ” in love and wisdom. Provide open doors for the messages You give us, whatever the cost in following Jesus. Be our refuge and protect us from persecution. Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Jeremiah 35 records the story of the Racabite family who were faithful to God and to their forefathers in refusing to

drink wine or to build houses but lived in tents. They said, "We have obeyed everything" (v.1-10). Jeremiah the prophet was told by God to instruct the Racabites to witness about their faithfulness. Then God sent a message to the people of Israel, "Will you never learn a lesson? Will you never obey My words? ...I have spoken to you again and again. In spite of this, you have not obeyed Me" (v.12-16). Then God promised that the Racabites "will always have a man from the family to serve Me" (v.19).

1 Corinthians 9:18-23. Paul asks, "What reward do I get? ...I do it [preach] to win as many as I can to Christ. To the Jews I became like a Jew. To those not under the Law I became like one not under the Law. [But] I am not free from God's Law. I am under Christ's law... I have become all things to all people so that in all possible ways I might save some. I do all of that because of the Good News [of Jesus the Christ]."

*Thank You heavenly Father for these examples of faithful people who obeyed wise traditions and the Old Testament Law without thought of selfish gain. Keep us faithful to obey our own godly forefathers as well as the teachings of Jesus our Saviour which He based on Your Ten Commandments. Thank you for the privilege and blessing of serving You, like Paul, as a witness to others without thought of selfish gain. Amen.*

**11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Isaiah 15 to 16 records the judgement of Almighty God on the Moabites, descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot. They had refused to worship Yahweh, the one true God, and the prophet Isaiah warned of the destruction of their nation east of Israel (16:12-14). This happened around 700 B.C.E. They were given three years to repent during which time they prayed to their shrine but their god could not help them. Meanwhile, Isaiah prophesied, "A man from the royal house of David will sit on Judah's throne" (16:5) This refers to Israel's coming Messiah, Jesus the Christ, who is God's salvation plan for the world.

Acts 10 records the salvation of a Roman army officer, Cornelius, who believed and worshipped the one true God. Peter, the former disciple of Jesus, was told by God to visit him and speak to him even though he was not a Jew. Peter told him, "I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same. He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for Him and do what is right. You [already] know the message God sent to the people of Israel. It is the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ." While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

Some Jewish believers had come with Peter. They were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on those who were not Jews.

*Thank You again heavenly Father, for these Bible records for us to rejoice that You treat everyone the same and give ample warnings and time to repent. Thank You for sending us our Saviour Jesus who died for our sins and gave us His Spirit of power and peace for today. Amen.*

**12<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Exodus 6 summarises part of the history of God's people Israel. It gives God's promise to Moses to deliver His people out of Egypt (v.1). God then told Moses to share this good news of His salvation, which was promised many years before to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (later called Israel) (v.4-8). But the people of Israel did not listen at first because of the persecution of their cruel slave masters. Moses said to the Lord God Almighty, "The people will not listen to me, so why should Pharaoh listen?" (v.12). The family history is then given of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son. It includes Aaron, the brother of Moses, whom God called to speak to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses and the people of Israel (7:1).

Matthew 17:1-13 describes the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain top. Moses and the prophet Elijah met with Him there and spoke with Him. On the way down from the mountain, Jesus told His disciples that a new Elijah had come to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus who was His cousin John. It was this prophet John who baptised Jesus in the river Jordan to begin His three years ministry to bring God's salvation to the people of Israel as their Messiah. He would then, through His sacrifice and resurrection, offer salvation to the rest of the world as Jesus the Christ.

*Lord God, thank You for these amazing words which reveal Your purposes over the centuries for Your special people Israel and for the rest of the world. Keep us listening and watchful in these cruel times for those You have called to prepare the way for Christ's return to establish His Kingdom on earth. For His sake. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** 2 Chronicles 34 to 36 tells of the good done by King Josiah when the lost book of God's Laws was read aloud for the people to repent from their evil ways. After his death, the prophet Jeremiah established the tradition of singing laments (sad songs) to remember Josiah. But the people returned to their evil ways under their new kings. "The LORD sent word to His people again and again. He took pity on them and His Temple in Jerusalem. But God's people made fun

of His messengers and hated His words. Finally, the LORD's burning anger was stirred up against His people. The Lord brought the king of Babylonia against them" (36:15-17).

Galatians 4:8-11. Paul wrote, "At one time you didn't know God. But now you know God. Even better, God knows you. So why are you turning back to those weak and worthless beliefs? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid for you."

*Father God, we have just lamented the sacrifices of innocent lives in two world wars from which You delivered us. Forgive us for turning back to "weak and worthless beliefs" instead of obeying Your Laws and trusting in Christ our Saviour. Do not let Your people ignore the writings of Paul and the other apostles and the Old Testament prophets. As we remember "special days and months and seasons and years" may we remember the sacrifice of the innocent life of Jesus to set us free from our selfish ways. Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Isaiah 22:8-13 tells of the time when Jerusalem was surrounded by its enemies. God's people put their trust in the weapons stored in the Palace and the water stored up in the Lower Pool and the Old Pool and the strong walls they had built from demolished houses. "But you didn't look to the One ...who planned everything long ago. The LORD who rules over all called out to you at that time. The Lord told you to sob and cry ...Instead, you are enjoying yourselves at wild parties! ...You are saying, 'Let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we will die.' " Isaiah warned them, "Your sin can never be paid for as long as you people live."

Philippians 2:12-16 gives the words of Paul from prison. "My dear friends, you have always obeyed God. You obeyed while I was with you. And you have obeyed even more while I am not with you. So continue to work out your own salvation. Do it with fear and trembling. God is working in you. He wants your plans and your acts to be in keeping with His good purpose. Do everything without finding fault or arguing. Then you will... be children of God without fault in a sinful and evil world. You shine among the people of the world... as you hold out to them the word of life."

*Oh God our Father, as we see weeping because of persecution, poverty and plague, whilst some of us eat, drink and hold parties, forgive us and help us to be true "children of God" to "shine among the people of the world" with Your "word of life". In the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.*

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Malachi 3:6-18 says, "I am the LORD. I do not change. That is why I have not destroyed you... You have turned away from My rules and not obeyed them. You have lived that way ever since the days of your people long ago. Return to Me. Then I will return to you," says the LORD who rules over all. Those who had respect for the LORD talked with each another. And the LORD heard them... "They will belong to Me," says the LORD. "They will be My special treasure. I will spare them just as a loving father spares his son who serves him."

Revelation 18-19. John saw an angel coming down from Heaven who shouted, "Babylon the Great has fallen! She has become a home for every evil spirit... The traders of the world grew rich from her great wealth." Then John heard another voice from Heaven say, "Come out of her My people" (18:1-4). Then another mighty angel picked up a huge rock and threw it into the sea. "That is how the great city of Babylon will be shaken down" (18:21). After these things a huge crowd shouted "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God" (19:1).

*Father God who rules over all. May our respect for You grow strong in these wicked days and talk of You to each other so that You may spare us as we obey You and not dwell with or trade with wicked people. Hear us shout "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God" as we believe Jesus our Messiah reigns! And help us to support all migrants who run away from wickedness. Amen.*

**18<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Exodus 21:28-30 gives one of many instructions given to Moses by Almighty God in addition to His Ten Commandments. "Suppose a bull kills a man or woman with its horns. Then you must kill the bull by throwing stones at it... The owner of the bull will not be held accountable. But suppose the bull has had the habit of attacking people. And suppose the owner has been warned but has not kept it fenced in. Then... the owner must also be put to death. But suppose payment is required of him instead. Then he can save his life by paying what is required." This reveals the mind of God from the beginning of time that punishment by death is what our sins deserve and payment can be made for freedom. 1500 years later, God sent His only Son, Jesus the Christ, to pay the price of our punishment by dying on the cross, so that all can be set free – for eternity – through faith in Him.

Galatians 3:11-14. "We know that no-one is made right with God [just] by keeping the Law. Scripture says, 'Those who are right with God will live by faith'... Christ Jesus set us free so that the blessing [promises] given to Abraham would come to Jews and non-Jews

through faith in Christ. We receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by believing in Him", the Son of God, our Messiah (Christ) and Saviour.

*So help us God our Father to truly believe that our faith in Christ alone brings freedom from the everlasting punishment we deserve and gains us eternal life with You! Help us to live in thanks and praise to You. Amen.*

**19th November 2021.** Psalm 34:15-22. King David wrote, "The LORD looks with favour on those who are godly. His ears are open to their cry... Godly people cry out, and the LORD hears them. He saves them from all of their troubles. The LORD is close to those whose hearts have been broken. He saves those whose spirits have been crushed. Anyone who does what is right may have many troubles. But the LORD saves them from all of them... Sinners will be destroyed by their own evil. The enemies of godly people will be judged. The LORD sets those who serve Him free. No one who goes to Him for safety will be judged."

John 15:12-17. Jesus said, "Here is My command. Love each other, just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than the one who gives his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command... I have told you everything I learned from My Father... I chose you. I appointed you to go and bear fruit. It is fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in My name. Here is My command. Love each other."

*Thank You heavenly Father for these reassuring words of Your servants King David and Messiah Jesus. This day we celebrate the lives of Fred and Lorna Morris who have departed this world and are now with You and their Saviour. Manna Publications volunteers around the world give witness to their faithful love and fruitful teaching. You appointed them to "go and bear fruit and it is fruit that will last". Thanks be to Jesus Christ, who suffered much to save His followers. Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.** 2 Samuel 14 tells the story of how a 'wise woman from Tekoa' was used to prepared the way for Absalom, third son of King David, to be restored to Jerusalem. She told the king, "God doesn't take life away. Instead, He finds a way to bring back anyone who was driven away from Him" (v.14). She also told David, "You know what is good and what is evil. May the LORD your God be with you" (v.17). History reveals that Absalom, after living two years in Jerusalem, refused to visit his father (v.28) but conspired against him and set up his own kingdom at Hebron (15:10). This eventually led to his downfall, but

in the meantime, King David suffered much because of the deceit of the 'wise woman from Tekoa'.

Luke 15:28-32 records the second part of the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus said, "The older brother became angry. He refused to go in. So his father went out and begged him. But he answered his father, 'Look! ...This son of yours wasted your money with prostitutes. Now he comes home. And for him you kill the fattest calf!' The father said, 'My son, this brother of yours was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.' "

*Father God, in your mercy, may we and our rulers discern and learn what is good and what is deceitful. Spare Your people from unwise decisions and resentment and eventual downfall over what we think is right and wrong. Help us avoid the suffering caused by big ideas about what we want and think we deserve. Bring love, peace and unity in our nation. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.** Jeremiah 50 gives a prophecy about Babylon and the Children of Israel who were exiles in that land. A 'nation from the north' would attack and destroy Babylon (v.3). God declared "At that time the people of Israel and Judah will gather together. They will come in tears to Me... They will ask how to get to Zion. Then they will turn their faces toward it. They will come and join themselves to Me. They will enter into the covenant I make with them. It will last forever. It will never be forgotten. My people have been like lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them down the wrong path" (v.4-6). "I will forgive the people [remnant] I have spared" (v.20).

1 Timothy 1:13-16. Paul testifies, "I used to speak evil things against Jesus. I tried to hurt His followers... But God showed me mercy... Our Lord poured out more and more of His grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus... Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst sinner of all. But for that very reason, God showed me mercy... I was an example for those who would come to believe in Him. Then they would receive eternal life."

*Thank You God for your truth revealed to Jeremiah and Paul. May Your people "come in tears" to You and live without guilt. Forgive those who have been "led down the wrong path". Bring revival in these Last Days. And may the world receive our testimony of Your grace, loving mercy and salvation in Christ Jesus. For His sake. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Exodus 4:10-12. Moses spoke to the LORD God Almighty. "Oh, LORD, I have never been a good speaker. And I have not

got any better since You spoke to me. I do not speak very well at all." The LORD said to him, "Who makes a man able to talk? Who makes him unable to hear or speak? Who makes him able to see? Who makes him blind? It is I, the LORD. Now go! I will help you speak. I will teach you what to say." But Moses said, "Lord, please send someone else to do it." Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses.

1 Corinthians 2:13-16. Paul says, "We do not use words taught to us by people. We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to teach the truths of the Spirit. Some people do not have the Holy Spirit. They do not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. Things like that are foolish to them. They cannot understand them. In fact, such things cannot be understood without the Spirit's help. Everyone who has the Spirit can judge all things... It is written, 'Who can ever know what is in the LORD's mind?' (Isaiah 40:13). But we have the mind of Christ." Forgive us heavenly Father when we provoke You to anger with our doubts and fears.

*Thank you for Your indwelling Spirit promised with the defeat of sin and the gift of resurrection life through Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Help us then to have "the mind of Christ". May we faithfully obey Your teachings and commandments – as Moses eventually did! Amen.*

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Psalm 60:1-5 describes King David's feeling that God is angry and has rejected His people. "Now restore us!" is his cry in desperate times. "You lead into battle those who have respect for you. You give them a flag to wave against the enemy's weapons. Save us! Help us with your powerful right hand, so that those You love may be saved." The writer finishes with strong words of faith. "With Your help we will win the battle" (v.12).

Revelation 20:1-3 describes how an angel comes down with the keys of Hell to lock Satan up for a thousand years. The apostle John was told that this will be to keep Satan from fooling the nations anymore until the 1,000 years are ended. After that, he must be set free "for a short time to deceive the nations once more before being thrown into the lake of burning sulphur for ever and ever" (v.10).

*Almighty God, in these desperate times, help us to stand firm with "strong words of faith". Forgive us for making You angry. Do not reject us but forgive us and restore us! Prepare us to serve You in power and love in these last days until Jesus returns "so that those You love may be saved". Help us to understand what is happening so that we may prepare others to be saved to meet their Saviour. Help us to hold Your*

*banner or flag high! For the sake of Jesus who suffered death on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. Amen.*

**26<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Psalm 150 gives the answers to praising the LORD God Almighty: Where? Why? How? Who? "Praise God in His holy temple. Praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His powerful acts. Praise Him because He is greater than anything else. Praise Him by blowing trumpets. Praise Him with harps and lyres. Praise Him with tambourines and dancing. Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes. Praise Him with clashing cymbals. Praise Him with clanging cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!"

1 Timothy 6:11-16. Paul encourages Timothy, "Try hard to do what is right and godly. Have faith, love and gentleness. Hold on to what you believe. Fight the good fight along with all other believers. Take hold of eternal life... In the sight of God and Christ, I give you a command. Obey it until our Lord Jesus Christ appears... Then no-one can find fault with it or you. God will bring Jesus back at a time that pleases Him. God is the blessed and only Ruler. He is the greatest King of all. He is the most powerful Lord of all... Give honour and power to Him forever. Amen."

*Thank You for Your teaching today to praise and worship You, Almighty God. Encourage us to work "with all other believers" to "fight the good fight". Encourages us to "give honour and power to You forever" as we await the return of Our Saviour. Meanwhile, may we be found making joyful noises in worship in the presence of the Spirit of Christ Himself! Amen. Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Psalm 35:1-10 says, "Lord, stand up against those who stand up against me... Rise up and help me... Say to me, 'I will save you...' Let those who plan to destroy me be turned back in terror... They set a trap for me without any reason... Let the trap they set for me catch them. Let them fall into their pit and be destroyed. Then I will be glad because the LORD has saved me. My whole being will cry out, 'Who is like you, LORD? You save poor people from those who are too strong for them.'" The psalmist concludes, "My tongue will speak about it and praise You all day long."

John 9:1-41 records the time when Jesus healed the sight of a man who was born blind. The Jewish leaders did not believe what the man said and questioned his parents who sent them back to the man. They did not want to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah who could not only restore sight but heal someone who was born blind. The

man told them "One thing I know. I was blind but now I can see!" The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man. He then went back to Jesus who told him, "I have come into this world so that the blind will see but those who see will become blind." *Heavenly Father, thank you for confirming to us that the world around us refuses to believe in Your salvation plan through Jesus. Help us to withstand the anger of those who refuse to listen or see the truth for themselves. Help us to "speak about it and praise You all day long." Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.** Leviticus 24:15-16 gives the punishment due under the old covenant for blasphemy before Jesus took our punishment on Himself. God told Moses, "If anyone calls down a curse on Me, he will be held accountable. If anyone speaks evil things against My Name, he must be put to death. The whole community must kill him by throwing stones at him. It does not matter whether he is an outsider or an Israelite. When he speaks evil things against My Name, he must be put to death."

Luke 24:25-27 records the words of Jesus to some of His followers on the road to Emmaus. "How foolish you are! How long it takes you to believe all that the prophets said! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then receive his glory?" `Jesus then explained to them what was said about Himself in all the Scriptures. He began with Moses and all the Prophets.' *Heavenly and holy Father, thank you that all your holy laws are recorded for us to read and apply. We have no excuse for disobedience. We deserve the punishment that is due. Thank You that in Jesus our Saviour, Israel's Messiah, we are forgiven through faith in Him as the Son of God who was punished for our sins. He was with You in creating this wonderful world and yet agreed to becoming as one of us. He was trained as a rabbi and taught His followers to understand His teachings before He submitted in fullness of love to the punishment which we deserve. Glory and honour and praise to Your holy name. Amen.*

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.** Ecclesiastes 1:13-18 says, "What a heavy load God has put on men! I've seen what is done on this earth. It doesn't have any meaning. It's like chasing the wind! ...I said to myself, 'Look, my wisdom has really been growing. In fact, I'm now wiser than anyone who ruled over Jerusalem in the past. I have a lot of wisdom and knowledge.' Then I used my mind to understand what it really means to be wise... I found out that that is also like chasing the wind. A lot of

human wisdom leads to a lot of sorrow. More knowledge only brings more sadness."

2 Timothy 3:1-9 warns, "There will be terrible times in the last days. People will love themselves. They will love money. They will brag and be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They will not be thankful or holy. They will not love others. They will not forgive others. They will tell lies about people. They will be out of control. They will be wild. They will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving God. They will act as if they were serving God. But what they do will show that they have turned their backs on God's power. Have nothing to do with those people... Their foolish ways will be clear to everyone."

*Dear God, grant us YOUR wisdom, not the folly of mankind. Keep us safe in these last days, preparing those around us for the return of our Saviour to Jerusalem. Amen.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.** Ezekiel 7. "I say to the land of Israel, 'The end has come! It has come on the four corners of the land... I will pour out my anger on you. I will judge you based on how you have lived. I will pay you back for all of your evil practices. I hate them. I will not spare you or feel sorry for you... I will pay you back in keeping with how you have lived... You will know that I am the LORD (7:1-5)... The people will try to get visions from the prophets. But there will not be any. The teaching of the law by the priests will be gone... The king will be filled with sadness. The princes will lose all hope. The hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will punish them based on how they have lived... Then they will know that I am the Lord" (7:27).

Romans 9:29-32. "Isaiah said, 'The Lord who rules over all, left us children and grandchildren. If He hadn't, we would have become like Sodom' (Isaiah 1:9). What should we say then? Those who are not Jews did not look for a way to be right with God. But they found it by having faith [in Israel's Messiah]. Israel looked for a law that could make them right with God. But they didn't find it. Why not? Because they did not look for it by faith. They tried to get it by working for it. They tripped over the Stone that causes people to trip and fall.' "

*Have mercy on us Father God, that we too do not trip up over Jesus our Saviour. Forgive our foolish ways and restore our prophets, priests, kings and princes, as we "look for a way to be right by faith" in Israel's Messiah. Amen.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.** Isaiah 6:1-5 records the vision Isaiah had of God Almighty seated on a throne surrounded by seraphs, each with six wings. And they called out "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty; the whole Earth is full of His glory!" Isaiah cried out "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips living among people of unclean lips!" He is aware that God can be worshipped everywhere but our sins have spoilt what He has created and without His Holy Spirit things would be much worse. God then purifies Isaiah to prepare him to tell the nations of the coming Messiah (Immanuel).

Luke 9:46-48 tells His disciples, "Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes Me. And anyone who welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me" Jesus added, "The least important person among all of you is the most important."

*Thank You heavenly Father for awareness of Yourself and awareness of our sin that hinders our worship of You and pollutes what You have created in us and the world in which we live. Prepare us and the world to welcome Messiah, the Christ-child, this Christmas. May the truth dawn in our lives that "anyone who welcomes Him welcomes the One who sent Him." Not only that, help us to tell the world that You welcome "the least important person as if they are the most important". For the sake of Jesus who died to save us from our sins. Amen.*

6<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Judges 9 is the story of Abimelech who killed 70 of his father Gideon's sons so that he would become king in Israel. A surviving son, Jotham, prophesied in the name of God that Abimelech, and the citizens of Shechem who supported him, would be destroyed (9:7-20). After reigning three years, a rebellion arose and many of the people of Shechem died. Abimelech was severely injured when a woman dropped a mill stone on his head from a tower and he ordered his armour-bearer to kill him so that word would not get out that a woman had defeated him. "That is how God paid Abimelech back for the evil thing he did to his 70 brothers [and] also the men of Shechem" (9:56-57). Titus 1:1-6. Paul said, "God sent me to help His chosen people believe in Christ. I have been sent to help them understand the truth that leads to godly living. Faith and understanding rest on the hope of eternal life. God promised to give that life... Titus, you are my true son in the faith we share... I left you on the island of Crete... to appoint elders in every town... An elder must be without blame. His children must be believers. They must not give anyone a reason to say that they are wild and do not obey."

*Father God, in Your mercy, raise up children of true believers to proclaim Your "truth that leads to godly living". May they be like Jotham and the woman of Shechem to stand firm against evil men who "are wild and do not obey". Raise up pray-ers and teachers of the truth as "elders without blame". For Christ's sake. Amen.*

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Psalm 106 begins by acknowledging "God is good and His faithful love continues for ever" (v.1). However, the psalmist also acknowledges, "We have sinned just as our people did long ago" (v.6). After delivering His people from Egypt, "they soon forgot what God had done" and many died of disease (v.13-15). Later, those who survived rebelled again against the Lord and even got Moses into trouble (v.32). The psalmist ends with the plea "Lord our God, save us... Then we will give thanks to You because Your name is holy. We will celebrate by praising You... Let all the people say, 'Amen!' " (v.47-48).

Acts 24 describes how Paul was brought before Felix, the Roman governor, with the unproven charge of causing riots in Jerusalem because he was "a leader of those who follow Jesus of Nazareth" (v.5). Felix was sympathetic, knowing much about the ministry of Jesus (v.22) and gave him a fair hearing but left him in prison for the next governor to decide about Paul (v.27). This eventually led to Paul being sent to Rome where he was under house arrest but free to entertain visitors from around the world and wrote many letters to the churches about the teachings of Jesus.

*Heavenly Father, forgive us and our forefathers who have disobeyed You. May we stand up and confirm Your "faithful love continues for ever" and "celebrate by praising You". And as followers of Jesus may we be prepared to face up to false accusations and persecution by proclaiming the truth about Jesus even at risk of imprisonment. Grant us faith and hope in obeying our calling to worship You and testifying of Christ our Saviour. May all God's people say, "Amen!"*

**8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Ezekiel 3:16-27 is where God told Ezekiel he had been appointed as a watchman to warn people about their evil ways. "I will hold you accountable!" (v.16-19). He must also warn the righteous person not to sin (v.21). However, the Lord would determine the time when Ezekiel speaks out and takes control. Why? "For they are a rebellious people" (v.27).

1 Corinthians 1:27-31. "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He chose the weak things of the world to shame the

strong... He chose what is not considered to be important to do away with what is considered to be important. So no one can boast to God. 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. It is written, 'The one who boasts should boast about what the Lord has done.' "

*Heavenly Father, thank you for making clear to us how You see us. Thank You for warning us not to seek after the foolishness of worldly things and people but to warn them about boasting of their own achievements, which are often selfish and sinful. Thank you for choosing us and holding us accountable for taking control and warning people around us. Also for choosing when and what we should say. Help us never to forget it was You who chose us when we were nothing and You have made us what we are in Christ today. You have "made us holy and set us free" through His sacrifice for our sins, with His wisdom, power and love at work within us as "accountable watchmen". Amen.*

**9<sup>th</sup> January 2021.** Isaiah 11:1-9 is the record of God's promise to the scattered Jews to return to their Promised Land in advance of the birth of Israel's Messiah. "Jesse's family [descendents of Ruth and Boaz from Bethlehem] is like a tree that has been cut down. A new little tree will grow from its stump. From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on that Branch. He will help Him to be wise and understanding. He will help Him make wise plans and carry them out. The Branch ... will always do what is right when He judges those who are in need. He will be completely fair when He makes decisions about poor people... He will put godliness on as if it were His belt. He will wear faithfulness around His waist... In the same way, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord."

Acts 11:19-21 records the time after the persecution of the early church in Jerusalem. "Some believers had been scattered by the suffering that came to them after Stephen's death. They... told the message [of the Messiah] only to Jews. Then some believers... went to Antioch. There they began to speak to Greeks also. They told them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's power was with them. Large numbers of people believed and turned to the Lord."

*Lord Jesus, we are amazed how Father God prepared His special people for Your birth in Bethlehem and ministry on Earth in Jerusalem. Thank You that Your suffering and that of the apostles also prepared the way for the salvation of the Gentiles. We rejoice that millions of Jews*

*are returning to Israel today to welcome Your return to Jerusalem.  
Come soon Lord Jesus! Amen.*

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Genesis 31:22-29 tells about Laban, the nephew of Abraham, whose daughters married Jacob, Abraham's grandson. Jacob, after 14 years serving Laban as shepherd, secretly journeyed back to Canaan to rejoin his parents Isaac and Rebekah. After one week, Laban caught up with him and his wives and children and his large flocks of sheep which once belonged to Laban. Then God spoke to Laban in a dream to warn him not to say anything to Jacob, good or bad. So they ended up making an agreement and had a meal together before Laban returned to his home without his family or his sheep (31:51-55).

1 Peter 5:10-12. "God always gives you all the grace you need. So you will only have to suffer for a little while. Then God Himself will build you up again. He will make you strong and steady. And He has chosen you to share in His eternal glory because you belong to Christ. Give Him the power for ever and ever. Amen. I consider Silas to be a faithful brother. With his help I have written you this short letter. I have written it to cheer you up. And I have written to give witness about the true grace of God. Stand firm in it."

*Heavenly Father, thank you for these examples of "the true grace of God". Help us to "stand firm in it" and ready to "suffer for a little while" assured that You have "chosen us to share in Your eternal glory because we belong to Christ". Do not let us become fearful of harsh punishment as with Jacob, but trust in Your eternal purpose and provision working out to Your glory in our lives. Thank You, too, for faithful friends. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

**13<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Jeremiah 28-29 records the words of the false prophet Hananiah who told the people of Israel that they would be set free from captivity within two years (28:3). That same year, Hananiah died. Then Jeremiah preached the truth from God to the exiles in Babylon. "Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. Get married... Increase your numbers there... Also work for the success of the city I have sent you to. Pray to the LORD for that city. If it succeeds, you too will enjoy success. The LORD who rules over all is the God of Israel. He says, 'Do not be fooled by those who claim to have secret knowledge. All of them are prophesying lies to you in My name. I have not sent them. You will be forced to live in Babylonia for 70 years. After they are over, I will come to you. My gracious promise to

you will come true. I will bring you back home. I know the plans I have for you. I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come' " (29:4-11).

Jude 4 warns, "Certain people have slipped in among you in secret... They are godless people. They use the grace of our God as an excuse for sexual sins. They say no to Jesus Christ. He is our only Lord and King.

*God of mercy, spare us from ungodly wisdom and false preaching in Your name! In the midst of great difficulties and temptations, fulfil Your "gracious" plans for Your people. Grant us "success and hope" as we await Your coming Kingdom on Earth at the return of Israel's Messiah, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ! Amen.*

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** 1 Chronicles 3:1-16 gives the genealogy of King David's family written down 1000 years before Jesus was born. These family records are so important to Jewish families. It is why Matthew recorded the genealogy of Joseph who married Mary the mother of Jesus who was born through the Holy Spirit while she was still a virgin. The Old Testament prophets spoke about Israel's Messiah descending from the family line of Judah and King David. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph was told by an angel to take Mary as his wife so that Jesus was legally adopted as Joseph's son (Matthew 1:18-25). This is why Matthew's genealogy from Abraham, Judah and David to Joseph adds at the end, "Joseph was the husband of Mary from whom was born Jesus who is called the Christ or Messiah" (Matt 1:16). Jesus was therefore the legal son of man and divine Son of God as prophesied in the Old Testament. Many Jews rejected this but through Him, the family of Abraham was enlarged by the adoption of Gentiles who believed Jesus was Israel's Messiah.

Acts 11:1-18 says that after Cornelius and his family accepted Jesus the Christ as Saviour, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem criticised Peter and his fellow believers for entering the house of a Gentile, preaching and then baptising them. However, after Peter spoke to them they praised God and believed. "God has allowed even those who are not Jews to repent and receive eternal life" (v.18).

*Thank You heavenly Father for this account in the season of Advent of Your purposes of salvation for Your special people to prevail over many generations to this day which includes all Gentiles who repent and accept Jesus as Saviour. Amen.*

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Isaiah 45:1-6. God tells King Cyrus of Babylon to return the Jews from 70 years in exile to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple. "I will march out ahead of you... Then you will know that I am the LORD God Almighty. I am the God of Israel. I am sending for you by name, Cyrus... I am doing it for Israel. They are My chosen people. You do not know anything about Me. But I am the LORD... I will make you strong. Then people will know there is no God but Me."

Acts 17:16-31. 'Paul was very upset to see that the city of Athens was full of statues of gods. So he went to the synagogue. There he talked with Jews and with Greeks [Gentiles] who worshiped God... Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus. He was telling them that Jesus had risen from the dead' (v.16-19). Then Paul gave his testimony. "We are God's children. So we shouldn't think that God is made out of gold or silver or stone. He isn't a statue planned and made by clever people. In the past, God didn't judge people for what they didn't know. But now he commands all people everywhere to turn away from their sins. He has set a day when he will judge the world fairly. He has appointed a Man to be its judge. God has proved this to all people by raising that Man from the dead" (v.29-31).

*Thank You heavenly Father that the leaders of this world are under Your control, whether they know You or not! Thank you for the miraculous birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. He is our Saviour if we confess our sins and believe He is Your Son. Raise up Your leaders today to establish Your Kingdom on Earth and prepare for Messiah's return! Amen.*

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Psalm 106:40-47. "The LORD became angry with His people. He turned away from His own children. He handed them over to the nations. Their enemies ruled over them... Many times the LORD saved them. But they refused to obey Him. So He destroyed them because of their sins. But He heard them when they cried out. He paid special attention to their suffering. Because they were His people, He remembered His covenant. Because of His great love, He felt sorry for them... LORD our God, save us! Bring us back from among the nations. Then we will give thanks to You, because Your name is holy. We will celebrate by praising You."

Luke 24:36-49 gives the last ministry of Jesus to His followers before His ascension. "Why are you troubled? Why do you have doubts in your minds? ...Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must come true... The Christ will suffer. He will rise from the dead on the third day. His followers will preach in His

name. They will tell others to turn away from their sins and be forgiven. People from every nation will hear it, beginning at Jerusalem... I am going to send you what My Father has promised. But for now, stay in the city until you have received power from Heaven."

*Heavenly Father, forgive us when we make You angry by failing to obey You and follow Your Bible truth. Thank You for Your great love for us which is more than we deserve. We "give thanks to You and celebrate by praising You". Lord Jesus, we admit we are often "troubled and have doubts". So renew Your Spirit's power within us to "preach in Your name and to tell others to turn away from their sins and be forgiven." Amen.*

**17<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Deuteronomy 9:26 to 10:2 records part of the conversation Moses had with Almighty God before the people of Israel crossed the River Jordan into the Promised Land. "LORD and King, do not destroy Your people. They belong to You. You set them free by Your great power. You used Your mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt... Forgive the people of Israel for being so stubborn. Do not judge them for the evil and sinful things they have done... They are Your people. They belong to You... You reached out Your mighty arm and saved them." The LORD said, 'Carve out two stone tablets, just like the first ones... I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets... Then you must put the tablets in the chest.' Then the LORD wrote on the tablets what He had written before. It was the Ten Commandments."

2 Corinthians 12. Paul writes, "I was given a problem that caused pain in my body [a 'thorn in the flesh']... Three times I begged the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak.' " (v.7-9). Paul then explained the things that make an apostle are signs, wonders and miracles which he had done with perseverance (v.12).

*Thank you Father for the records which reveal the "signs, wonders and miracles" at work among Your people over the centuries. Help us, like Moses and Paul, to persevere in times of much rebellion and overcome personal difficulties to reveal Your Commandments to Your people. Help us extend the influence of Your Promised Land and to prepare the way for Christ's future Kingdom on Earth. Amen.*

**20<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah prophecies that "the LORD will do a new thing on Earth: a woman will guard over [encompass, KJV] a man" (v.22). Then Jeremiah prophecies that "the

Lord will make a new covenant with His people" (v.32). He goes on to explain "I will write my law in their minds and on their hearts" (v.33).

Acts 2:17-18. Peter quotes the words of the prophet Joel, "In the last days, God says, 'I will pour out My Holy Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will have dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit on those who serve Me, both men and women. When I do, they will prophesy.' "

*Thank You heavenly Father for confirming to us today the new things you spoke about centuries ago. Women will minister to men and Your Spirit will work through all who serve You, young and old alike. In your mercy, prepare believers who are restrained by traditions to discern the truth that sets us free. In Your mercy, prepare older believers to experience new dreams and visions and may their sons and daughters teach and prophesy Your truth. Interpret, establish and apply Your laws for today's needs in our minds and on our hearts with new power and inspiration from Your Holy Spirit. May we witness what Peter witnessed, that "those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 people joined the believers that day." May such miracles of repentance happen again and again until Jesus our Messiah returns to reign over His Kingdom on Earth. For His sake who suffered much for our salvation. Amen.*

**21<sup>st</sup> December 2021.** Jeremiah 50:20 records God's mercy for the remnant of His special people Israel. "A new day is coming," announces the Lord. "At that time people will search for Israel's guilt. But they will not find any. They will search for Judah's sins. But they will not find any. That is because I will forgive the people I have spared."

Matthew 24:36-42 warns the faithful people of God in the days leading up to the return of Jesus our Saviour. Jesus said, "Remember how it was in the days of Noah. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. They were getting married... They did all those things right up to the day Noah entered the ark. They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes... So keep watch. You do not know on what day your Lord will come." According to *The Applied New Testament Commentary* by Tom Hale, a friend of Manna Publications author Fred Morris: "To keep watch means to look always for the Lord, to meditate on Him, to desire His company, to remain obedient to His

will, and to immediately repent of any known sin. Only if we do these things will we be ready for His coming." (p.218).

*Father God, as we celebrate the first coming of Jesus our Christ and our Saviour, help us prepare for His second coming. Also to prepare others by sharing the teachings of Jesus and the assurance of Your mercy towards the faithful remnant of believers in Him, both Jews and Gentiles. Amen.*

**22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.** Psalm 106 begins with three verses of praise to God Almighty but quickly turns to petitions (v.4-5). It then records the sins of the people over many generations (v.6-39) beginning with "we have sinned just as our people long ago". It then records how God became angry and handed them over to their enemies (v.40-42). "Many times the LORD saved them. But they refused to obey him. So he destroyed them because of their sins. But He heard them when they cried out... Because they were His people, He remembered His covenant. Because of His great love, He felt sorry for them." (v.43-45). The psalm ends with more petitions and praise (v.47-48).

James 4:3-10 says, "When you ask for something, you do not receive it. Why? Because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to spend your money on your sinful pleasures. You are not faithful to God. Do you not know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? ...The spirit that God caused to live in us wants us to belong only to God... Scripture says, 'God opposes those who are proud. But He gives grace to those who are not.' So obey God. Stand up to the devil... Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make your hearts pure... Change your laughter to crying. Change your joy to sadness. Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up."

*Father God, in these days of danger, doubts and depression, may we seek joy in You, not in worldly pleasures! Make us aware of "the sins of the people over many generations". Then before we offer You our "petitions and praise" encourage us to repent! For the sake of Jesus who died for our sins and called us to preach Your Good News. Amen.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.** Job 40-41 is where Job begins to repent and admit "I am unworthy!" This readiness to repent prepares the way for him to listen to nearly 1000 words from God Almighty! Job needed to repent further, humble himself, stop trying to justify himself, and stop complaining that righteous people often suffer while the wicked people prosper. Job ended up not only confessing again his unworthiness but also confessing his sin before God (42:6). Through Job's patience and

suffering, he found God in a new way as Creator of the universe and as Someone who loved him. The first thing God asked Job to do was to forgive and pray for his misguided friends (42:8).

John 14:12-31 is where Jesus confirms to His followers, "Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. In fact he will do even greater things" (v.12). Jesus explains this will happen when He returns to His Father and "I will ask the Father to give you... the Spirit of truth" (v.17). In the remaining verses of the chapter Jesus refers to the importance of our love for Him six times.

*Lord Jesus, thank you for the promise of the Holy Spirit to live with us and in us to guide us in the truth from Your Father. Like Job, may we learn to praise God for His love in good times and bad. And encourage us again and again to express our love for You who suffered so much in order to pay the price for our sins. Thanks be to God we are saved even though we are unworthy. Holy Spirit, help us to become good listeners to the truth from God, to be quick to give You all the glory and to forgive and be aware of the need pray for those around us. Amen.*

**24<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Kings 9 describes the anointing of Jehu as king of Israel who reigned for 28 years. He rose up from a lowly position and had the privilege of hearing and believing prophecies from both Elijah and Elisha regarding the evil reign of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Jehu helped fulfil these prophecies of the Lord God Almighty. He first destroyed the evil influence that Jezebel had on her husband and on Israel at that time. She died and was eaten by dogs as prophesied. Then later, Ahab and his heathen family and followers were also destroyed through God's purpose in the life of Jehu.

Luke 20:9-19 gives the parable of the vineyard tenants who benefited from its fruit but failed to respect the servants and the son of its owner. When they killed the son, the owner returned and destroyed the tenants. Jesus then quoted from Psalm 118:22, "The stone the builders rejected has become the most important stone of all." The Jewish religious leaders knew that Jesus had told this story against them. He was that "Important Stone" which they had rejected.

*Thank You Father God for reminding us how you raised up Jehu, of lowly birth, to free Israel from its evil rulers. Hear our praise on this Christmas Eve of raising up Jesus Your Son, our Saviour, over two thousand years ago. He came of lowly birth to destroy the evil reign of sin in this world by suffering and dying in place of the punishment we deserve. While we await His return, hear our prayers for Your truth to be upheld boldly by Your faithful servants, whatever the cost. And we*

*thank You for "the privilege of hearing and believing" Your purposes and plans for Jesus, Your "Important Stone", which we can help fulfil in our time. Amen.*

**27<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Ezekiel 43:1-7 continues the vision given to Ezekiel of the new Temple to be built in the new Jerusalem after the exile of God's people in Babylon. "Then the man brought me to the east gate. There I saw the glory of the God of Israel. He was coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters... I fell with my face toward the ground. The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the east gate. Then the Spirit lifted me up. He brought me into the inner courtyard. The glory of the LORD filled the Temple." This is the same east gate through which Jesus our Messiah is prophesied to return one day soon. Then Ezekiel heard a voice saying, "This is where I will live among the Israelites for ever."

John 7:1-9 records the time when Jesus stayed away from Jerusalem to avoid the Jewish religious leaders who were waiting to kill Him (v.1). His own step-brothers did not believe he was Son of God at that time. They tried to make Him travel back to Jerusalem to prove who He was (v.3-5). Jesus said, "The right time has not yet come for Me" (v.6 & 8). Jesus trusted in God's timing for Him to sacrifice His life for the forgiveness of sin for all who believed He was Israel's Messiah and Saviour of the world.

*Praise You our Almighty God for reminding us again and again of the second coming of Your Son our Saviour. We believe this will be through the east gate of Jerusalem at a time which You have appointed. Keep us faithful and strong as we prepare the way for His return. Amen.*

**28<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Psalm 107 confirms how Almighty God blesses His people and also oppresses His people to keep them humble. (v.38-39) "But he lifted needy people out of their suffering. He made their families increase like flocks of sheep. Honest people see it and are filled with joy. But no one who is evil has anything to say. Let those who are wise pay attention to these things. Let them think about the LORD's great love." (v.41-43)

Revelation 2:1-7 is the message of Jesus Christ to the first of seven churches in the first century AD. "I know what you are doing. You work long and hard. I know you cannot put up with those who are evil. You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not. You have found out that they are liars. You have been faithful and have put up with a lot of trouble because of Me. You have not given up. But here is

something I hold against you. You do not have as much love as you had at first. Remember how far you have fallen! Turn away from your sins. Do the things you did at first. If you do not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you do have this in your favour. You hate the way the Nicolaitans act. I hate it too. Those who have ears should listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. I will allow those who overcome to eat from the tree of life in God's paradise."

*Heavenly Father, in these difficult times keep us, Your people, faithful and humble. May our love for You never fade! We praise You for Your great love and the salvation, power and provision we have through Jesus our Saviour who suffered on the cross for the sins of His followers. Amen.*

**29<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Genesis 28:1-4. "Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. 'Do not get married to a woman from Canaan... Go to the house of your mother's father and find a wife for yourself there... May God give you children. May He increase your numbers until you become a community of nations. May He give you and your children after you the blessing He gave to Abraham. Then you can take over the land where you now live as an outsider. It's the land God gave to Abraham."

Jude writes about unfaithful people like Cain (v.11). "Those people complain. They find fault with others. They follow their own evil longings. They brag about themselves. They praise others to help themselves (v.16). 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 longings.' They are the people who... 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." (v.17-21).

*Father God, thank You for these reminders of Your everlasting love and salvation for those who remain faithful to You. Thank You for Your mercy shown to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and later to us all through Jesus, Israel's Messiah. May His promised Spirit of holiness and power give faith and hope in these Last Days as we prepare for His return according to Your will and purpose. Amen.*

**30<sup>th</sup> December 2021.** Judges 8:22-34 records what happened after God used Gideon to save the Israelites from the Midianites. 'The people

of Israel spoke to Gideon. They said, "Rule over us. We want you, your son and your grandson to be our rulers. You have saved us from the power of Midian." But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you. My son will not rule over you either. The LORD God Almighty will rule over you" (v.22-23). Israel brought Midian under their control... So the land was at peace for 40 years. The peace lasted as long as Gideon was living (v.26). As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel joined themselves to the gods that were named after Baal. Israel wasn't faithful to the LORD... They forgot what the LORD their God had done for them. (v.33-35).

2 Peter 1 describes important teachings for true believers to inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (v.1-11). Peter adds, "I will always remind you of these things... that you will always be able to remember these things after I am gone (v.12-15). Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding... Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy comes from God" (v.20-21).

*Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us through Gideon and Peter that righteous authority and wisdom comes from You, through Your written word and through those who believe "the LORD God Almighty will rule over you". Guide us and free us up through Your Holy Spirit power to proclaim today the authority and wisdom of Jesus Christ. For His sake, who died for our sins. Amen.*

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.** Ecclesiastes 1 to 12 tells how the author tries to understand what life is all about and concludes that "human wisdom leads to a lot of sorrow and knowledge only brings more sadness" (1:18). He learns to enjoy life to the full that God has given us without going beyond what He has planned for us. In the last chapter, he says, "Remember the One who has created you" seven times. He concludes, "Have respect for God and obey His commandments. That is what everyone should do. God will judge everything people do. That includes everything they try to hide. He will judge everything, good or evil!" (12:13-14).

2 Corinthians 7 describes Paul's joy in the believers who lived in Macedonia. He declares the promises of God will be fulfilled in those who keep themselves holy and honour Him (7:1). He told them that when they repent in sorrow, "Godly sadness causes us to turn away from our sins and be saved". It leaves us without regrets for "you are [now] ready to make sure that the right thing is done" (7:10-11).

*Heavenly Father, we accept You know the end from the beginning so we ask You to forgive us for trying to use our own worldly wisdom to plan ahead, which ends up in sorrow. At the beginning of a new year, help us to "remember the One who has created you", obey Your commandments, and put our trust in Jesus our Saviour and His Holy Spirit power. We promise to keep ourselves holy and honour You in all things, believing that sorrow leads to repentance and salvation without regrets or guilt. Thank you that You will equip us so "that the right thing is done" to fulfil Your vision at work in us in the days ahead. Amen.*