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Weekend Manna: FRED SAID

Extracts from Manna Bible teaching commentaries by Fred Morris

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

Genesis Chapters 3 and 4. *Life outside the Garden of Eden*

"Adam and Eve had another son and they called him Abel. (Genesis 4:2). I am sure that Adam told his two boys about the garden in Eden and the things that happened there, how God put him and their mother out of the garden because they did not obey His command.

"There will always be war between those who follow Satan and those who have faith in the Lord God Almighty (3:15).

"When Adam sinned and did not obey God, his mind and heart turned away from God. Sin changed Adam's whole nature. Sadly, he passed his sinful nature on to his children and they passed it to us (Romans 5:12). We all have Adam's sinful nature! We have all sinned through our father Adam and our selfish nature rules over us. Without the Spirit of God in our lives, sin is our master. Because sin is our master, we do wrong things. God's word says, 'All have sinned...' (Romans 3:23). Our thoughts remind us of sin but our desire must be for God. This is why we must understand God's great salvation plan. God accepted the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, for our sins. There is no other way back to God and live a holy life."

Extracted from Genesis part 1 "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 18. *Abraham prays for the people of God*

Abraham came to God to ask Him to save his nephew Lot and his family in Sodom. Like Abraham, we must hate the sin in our wicked cities, but we must love the people who live in them. We should pray for them – and keep praying.

a) Abraham was sure that God would hear and answer his prayer. But He knew that God was right to judge Sodom.

b) Abraham repeated his prayer over and over again. He did not stop after asking just one time.

c) Abraham prayed for the people who truly obeyed God from their hearts. The

Bible speaks of Lot as a 'just man' who hated the sin and wickedness of the people around him (2 Peter 2:7).

d) God did not stop answering Abraham's prayers until Abraham stopped asking and believed God for the answer.

e) God postponed His judgement of fire to fall on Sodom until He brought the righteous Lot and his family out of Sodom. In the same way God saved eight people who trusted Him from the Great Flood by telling Noah to build the ark.

Extracted from Genesis part 2 "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis part 3, Chapters 22 to 36

Rachel, like Abraham's wife Sarah, was barren. Rachel had no children and she was jealous of her sister. Most of us are jealous of someone, sometime. Jealousy rises everywhere. It comes on us when we least want it. So Rachel was angry with her husband Jacob.

'Give me children or I'll die!' she shouted at Jacob. This made Jacob upset. 'Am I God?' he shouted back at her (30:2).

Every child is a gift from the Lord and in the Middle East a son was a very special gift. God heard Rachel's prayer and He gave her a son. But this was after Jacob had six sons by Leah, two sons by Leah's maid and two sons by Rachel's maid. Jacob had 12 sons in all.

Jacob worked hard looking after Laban's sheep and God blessed him. But he chose the best sheep to increase his own flock. The Bible says that in this way Jacob came to own large flocks as well as maid-servants, men-servants, camels and donkeys (30:43). He became very rich at Laban's expense. He was a cheat

This was part of God's plan to prepare a large family He promised to Abraham through the children of his grandson Jacob, later known as Israel. Both Sarah and Rachel were barren but God worked miracles to fulfil His promise.

Extracted from Genesis part 3 "ISAAC & JACOB" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis part 4, Chapters 37 to 50. *Jacob's final blessing on the twelve sons of Israel*

Jacob spoke this prophecy: "Benjamin is a hungry wolf!", he said (Gen. 49:27). Years later, Jacob's words proved true. The men of Benjamin were strong... King Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin and so did another Saul who became the Apostle Paul (Philippians 3:5)... The prophecy for Judah was the most important (Gen. 49:10). From the family of Judah came King David and finally Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, who would "come to rule" over all nations (Acts 13:21-23).

Almighty God, open our eyes to the fulfilment of Bible prophecies, past, present and future, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Extracted from Genesis part 4 "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Exodus Part 1, chapters 1 to 20. *The Passover meal*

God told the Hebrews always to remember the meaning of the Passover – how they were saved from the punishment of God [whilst in Egypt] through the blood of a sinless lamb. God saved them because of His love and care. This is why today Jews

remember the Passover every year at a special meal and remind themselves they belong to God.

Christians believe that under God's new covenant, people can only be saved by the blood of Jesus. Jesus always remembered the Passover meal. He also told His followers always to remember His own death. The death of Jesus, the perfect and sinless Lamb of God, means we are saved from the punishment of God through the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus saves us and leads us to everlasting life when we repent and believe in Him. *Almighty God, open our eyes to the need to remember the importance of the Passover when You saved Your people from Egypt and later provided the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of the world in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Extracted from Exodus Part 1, "MOSES PART 1" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Exodus Part 2, Chapters 21 to 40. *The people worship a golden calf*

When they came near the camp, Moses saw the golden calf idol and people dancing around it. He was overcome with anger. In his anger, Moses threw the stone tablets at his feet. He stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is on the side of Yahweh, our Lord God Almighty, come to me" (32:26). All the sons of Levi stood with Moses. They were from the same tribe as Moses and Aaron. God commanded the Levites to kill those who worshipped the idol. It was a sad day in the camp of Israel. All this happened because men and women refused to obey God's commands. They received the punishment from God that they deserved. We, too, deserve death when we sin, but Jesus died in our place so that we can repent and be forgiven and have everlasting life with Him. We must also forgive others and help them to receive this same salvation of God through Jesus.

When things go wrong and God seems a long way off, why is it so important to understand the heart and mind of God? Is it important to understand the mind of Satan? What do we teach others about the need to be holy?

Extracted from Exodus Part 2 "THE GROWTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Joshua Chapter 7. *The sin of Achan hinders the capture of Ai*

Talk about this:

1. Why was God's plan for Israel hindered at Ai?
2. Why was Joshua too confident to seek God's guidance in the battle of Ai?
3. Does God warn people before He punishes them (6:18)?
4. Did Achan repent before or after his sin was found out?
5. Why did Achan deserve to die? Why did God's Son, Jesus Christ, have to die?
6. 'Our own personal sins hurt others.' Is this true or false? Why?
7. How did God show mercy for Israel? How does God show mercy today?

Think about this: Compare how confident Joshua was in 6:27 with how sad and hopeless he was in 7:6. What did he do and say when things went wrong (7:7–9)? What did God say (7:10–12)?

Pray about this: Ask God to help you to trust in Him at all times. Tell Him that when things go wrong you do not want to blame Him. Talk to Him about your troubles and allow Him time to talk to you. Remember to ask Him why things go wrong. Give thanks to Jesus that He took the punishment we deserve for our sins.

Extracted from JOSHUA: "God's first Leader in Israel" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Ruth Chapter 2. *Ruth meets Boaz*

[Ruth asked Boaz] "Why are you being so kind to me? ... I am from another country" (2:10).

Boaz replied, "I know all about you. I have heard about everything you did for your mother-in-law [Naomi] since your husband died... May the Lord God Almighty reward you for what you have done. May the God of Israel bless you richly. You have come to Him to find safety under His care" (2:10-12).

In this way, Boaz shared the love of God with Ruth.

Naomi saw how God provided much food. She also saw how God opened the way for the future needs of herself and Ruth. It was a very special moment for her.

She said, "The Lord God Almighty is still kind to those who are living and to those who are dead" (2:20). Naomi was amazed how God had answered her prayers through Ruth and Boaz. Boaz was a relative of her dead husband. She believed that Boaz would provide for her and Ruth and protect them.

The firstborn son of Ruth and Boaz was in the family line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel) which led down through King David to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born to the virgin Mary in the town of Bethlehem, the same town where Boaz lived.

Extracted from RUTH AND HANNAH: "Two Women of Faith in God" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Mark Chapter 7. *Jesus heals foreigners in other nations.*

Jesus walked 60 km to Tyre (7:24)... The people who lived there were not Jews. They worshipped gods or idols. A woman saw Jesus and knelt down at His feet. 'She begged Jesus to drive out the demon from her daughter' (7:26)... Jesus ... told her, "You may go now. The demon has left your daughter" (7:29)... The Kingdom of God is for all people including foreigners. Jesus accepts anyone who confesses his or her sins, repents and follows Him.

...From Tyre, Jesus travelled back to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The people who lived there were also not Jews. He continued to perform miracles among the non-Jews. Jesus healed a man who was deaf and could not speak very well. The man was healed because the people brought him to Jesus with faith. 'They begged Jesus to place His hand on the man' (7:32)...The man was healed. The people were amazed.

Talk about this:

- What did the woman from Tyre believe about Jesus (7:25)?
- Who helped the deaf and dumb man to be healed (7:33-34)? What did they believe about Jesus?

Think about this: Do your church traditions reduce the witness of Jesus outside your church? Do you help only people inside the church or outside the church as well? Do you pray for foreigners and for those who do not worship the Lord God Almighty?

Extracted from THE EARLY TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST Bible teaching commentary, the Gospel of Mark, Part 1, by Fred Morris, p.35.

Mark Chapter 14. *The arrest of Jesus and the testing of Peter.*

Judas came with the Temple guards and chief priests. They carried swords and clubs (14:43). 'The one I kiss is the man: arrest him,' Judas told them.

The soldiers arrested Jesus, but He faced them calmly. The disciples were not so calm. 'Lord, should we strike them with our swords?' one of them shouted (Luke 22:49).

But Jesus made it clear that He did not want a fight. Then all the disciples ran away. Jesus was taken to the High Priest for the start of His trial.

Two accounts run side by side: (1) the trial of Jesus; and (2) the trial of Peter and how he denied Jesus. Peter was afraid, but he followed Jesus at a distance (14:54).

Peter failed his test. He let Jesus down by denying he was a follower of Jesus. It happened gradually, little by little, in this way:

- Peter followed Jesus but did not want others to know he was a disciple so he followed at a distance (14:54).
- Peter was afraid he might be taken prisoner so he said that he did not know Jesus (14:67-71).
- The more Peter denied he knew Jesus, the more angry he became (14:71).
- Peter cried very much when he remembered what Jesus had said to him about denying Him (14:72).

So Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and the other disciples ran away. All 12 disciples let Jesus down. Judas gave up all hope of being forgiven and killed himself but the others were sorry and came back to Jesus. Jesus forgave Peter and the other ten disciples and used them to build His church around the world.

Think about what Jesus suffered for us and yet forgives us when we are sorry.

Extracted from **THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST** Bible teaching commentary, the Gospel of Mark, Part 2, by Fred Morris.

John Chapter 11. *The plan to kill Jesus.*

Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest at that time, said ... 'It is better if one man dies for the people than if the whole nation is destroyed' (11:50).

The words that he said were prophetic. He was used to fulfil the purpose of God in Christ. Caiaphas also prophesied that Jesus would die for Jews and God's children everywhere. 'He would die to bring them together and make them one' (11:51-52). The followers of Jesus would become one kingdom under God (Acts 10:35; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 3:11,15).

The religious leaders then made plans to kill Jesus (11:53). However, this same plan to kill Jesus fulfilled God's own promise and plan to overcome sin and the power of Satan.

Let us give thanks for the love and mercy of God. The punishment and sacrifice of His Son was for our eternal salvation.

Talk about this:

How did the enemies of Jesus help to fulfil God's plan of salvation (11:46-53)?

Pray about this: Ask God to show you what helps and what hinders the work of Jesus today. Pray that you will see clearly how God uses believers AND unbelievers in His plan of salvation.

Extracted from **THE PERSONAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS: "The Gospel of John"** Bible teaching commentary, John Part 2, by Fred Morris.

John Chapter 16. *Sadness and joy in following Jesus.*

Jesus continued, "In a little while you will no longer see Me. Then after a little while you will see Me" (16:16). The disciples did not yet understand about the death of Jesus on a cross, His rising to life and His return to Heaven. They said to each other, "We do not understand what He is saying" (16:17-18).

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask Him about these things. "What I'm about to tell you is true... You will be sad, but your sadness will turn to joy" (16:19-20).

He explained it this way: "A woman giving birth to a baby has pain... But when her baby is born, she forgets the pain. She forgets because she is so happy that a baby is born into the world" (16:20-21).

Jesus said, "Now it is your time to be sad. But I will see you again. Then you will be full of joy" (16:22). The disciples cried at His death, but rejoiced when they saw Him again after He rose from death. This all happened in the next few days.

Next, Jesus said, "When that day comes... My father will give you anything you ask for in My name... Ask, and you will receive what you ask for. Then your joy will be complete" (16:23-24).

Talk about this: Why did Jesus promise three times that His followers will have joy (16:20-24)?

Extracted from JOHN'S GOSPEL PART 2, "The Final Days of Jesus on Earth" Bible teaching commentary, John Chapters 12 to 21, by Fred Morris.

Acts Chapter 6. *Preparing the Church to Grow.*

More and more people were joining the church (6:1). Soon they needed to choose extra leaders. They needed people to help in sharing the food. They needed more helpers and leaders to help the church to continue to grow.

The apostles asked the believers to choose seven men. Notice how they chose them:

- They saw that this work of serving others was important work.
- They chose men who were wise and full of the Holy Spirit (6:3).
- They chose them to do this work so that the apostles could be free to do their work of teaching.
- The apostles laid their hands on the seven men they chose and prayed with them and for them (6:6).

This was a very different way to choose leaders than the way used to choose Mathias in Acts 1:26.

What happened when they prepared in this way for the church to grow?

- It was a happy church (6:5).
- God's message, the Good News of Jesus, continued to spread (6:7).
- The numbers of believers in Jerusalem continued to grow (6:7).

Think about this:

What did the church leaders do to prepare the church to grow (6:2-4,6)? What was the result of a happy, well organised church (6:7)?

Extracted from ACTS OF THE APOSTLES PART 1, "The Early Church" Bible teaching commentary, Acts Chapters 1 to 12, by Fred Morris.

Acts Chapter 20. *Paul decides what to do*

Paul was a busy preacher and teacher but he listened to the Holy Spirit to guide him. Paul knew that he must:

- Fulfil his divine calling to preach the good News to the Gentiles.
- Plant new churches and teach and encourage the new believers.
- Obey his church leaders in Antioch who regularly prayed for him.

Paul also wanted to fulfil his personal desire to visit Jerusalem and then Rome and then Spain.

Paul learned of a plan to kill him (20:3), so he went back through Macedonia to Asia Minor (Turkey). Paul never saw Greece or Syria again. The others waited for him at Troas. He joined them there and stayed just seven days.

Then Paul went by boat to Miletus. He did not stop at Ephesus. In this way he saved time on his journey to Jerusalem (20:16).

While at Miletus, Paul sent for the church leaders from Ephesus. He spoke serious words to them.

'And now, compelled by the Holy Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem. I do not know what will happen to me there' (20:20–22). 'The Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, my life is worth nothing to me. I only want to complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me' (20:23–24).

Think about this: When you are in a hurry or busy serving God, do you find time to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying?

Extracted from "PAUL BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD" Bible teaching commentary, Acts Chapters 13 to 28, by Fred Morris.

Romans Chapter 5. *Death because of Adam; life because of Christ*

'Sin was in the world ... and death ruled ...' (5:13–14). God in His mercy, prepared a way for us all to be saved. God's day of salvation came when Jesus died for us on the cross then rose up again on the third day. This plan of God defeated sin and defeated death and defeated the rule of Satan in our lives.

This plan took place in the heart of God before He created the world. He gave the Law of Moses to show what is right and wrong and to prove that we need a Saviour. Even after God gave the Law to Moses, sin ruled. And it kept on ruling in the world. Sin had to be punished. But only Christ our Saviour can truly break the power and rule of sin in our lives, when we trust Him (6:6). He took the punishment in our place.

Adam's sin led to death. Man's spirit, the part of him that loves God, died. Because of sin, man turned away from God. 'Many died because of the sin of one man (Adam)' (5:15).

Although death came to us all because of the sin of this one man, Adam, many blessings come to us because of one man, Jesus Christ. His blessings fill the whole earth. Those who trust Jesus enjoy God's life, a life of blessing (5:17) even if we suffer.

Because Adam sinned, sin was passed on to all people. Therefore all people deserve to die. Because Jesus Christ died in our place, all people can have eternal life. People who know Christ as their Saviour, who believe and receive the gift of God's goodness, are forgiven and receive everlasting life (John 3:16). Adam's disobedience made us sinners; Christ's obedience makes us righteous (Philippians 2:8). Hallelujah!

Extracted from "IN CHRIST ALONE" Bible teaching commentary, Romans Part 1 Chapters 1 to 8, by Fred Morris.

Romans Chapter 11. *The kindness and justice of God*

The prophets told how the nations would be brought into the house of God (Zechariah 2:11). Paul called this 'the mystery of Christ' which has now been revealed (11:25). And then in the same way, all Israel will be saved (11:26). But those people of Israel who are enemies of Christ are still loved by God (11:28). 'He does not change His mind about those whom He has chosen' (11:29).

Paul ends Chapter 11 with several quotations from the Old Testament writings. Paul wants his readers to know the wonderful love and purposes of God are beyond human understanding (11:33-36). God's wisdom in 'the way He deals with people is more than we can understand'.

All things come from God in heaven and serve His purpose. And all things work together for His good (11:36). Paul adds, 'May God be given the glory! Amen!'

Talk about this:

1. Why should I praise God for His wisdom (11:33)?
2. Why is there hope that the Jews will be saved (11:26)?
3. Do you see everything in your life bringing glory to God (11:36)?

Extracted from "LIVING IN CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary, Romans Part 2 Chapters 9 to 16, by Fred Morris.

Hebrews Chapter 10. *A warning not to lose faith*

Walk by faith every day. Pray believing that God hears and answers prayer. Trust the Holy Spirit to tell you of any sin that stops you from coming close to God.

You may have suffered persecution for your faith. But do not give up! 'So do not throw away your bold faith' (10:35). Keep faithful in order to do the will of God (10:36). God will reward you (Romans 8:28).

The writer of Hebrews reminds his readers of the words of the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk. He urged the people not to fear. He told them to live by faith (Hebrews 10:38; Habakkuk 2:3). Why should I fear?

We must not be among those who go back to our old ways. 'We are people who believe and are saved' (Hebrews 10:39). We are among those who have a great hope. We are like the great faithful men and women of God who are described in the next chapter of the book of Hebrews. They were neither weak in faith nor disobedient towards God.

Think about this: What happens to our own faith when we help others to grow in their faith? How can I please God by serving others?

Extracted from "HEBREWS" Bible teaching commentary, Chapters 1 to 13, by Fred Morris.

Revelation Chapter 2. *Letter to the church in Ephesus*

John wrote down these words from Jesus: "I know your good deeds, your hard work and your perseverance" (2:2).

At that time, Roman temples were being built everywhere for the worship of the Roman Emperor. Christians were given the choice: give glory to Christ or to Caesar! Persecution and hardship – that is what it was like for these early Christians who refused to worship Caesar.

So Jesus knew all about their sufferings. He praised them for their hard work. He

also praised them because they had not grown weary (2:3).

However, Jesus had something to say against them. "You have left your first love" (2:4). In other words, "You no longer love to come into My presence to worship me." Nor were they eagerly looking forward to the return of Christ. Perhaps they enjoyed doing good works more than worshipping the Lord with other believers.

Jesus said, "Repent! Turn back to Me. You must light again that fire within you or your light will go out. If not, the Spirit of the Lord will depart."

Pray about this: Ask for the Spirit of Jesus to walk in your church and be seen by others.

Extracted from "MESSAGES TO SEVEN CHURCHES" Bible teaching commentary, Revelation Chapters 1 to 3, by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 3. *The choice between good and evil.*

All the angel spirits who did not obey God were put out of Heaven. In the Bible they are called devils or demons. Satan uses demon spirits to try to gain power over men and women. Like Satan, they are all liars and try to deceive us and control us.

In the Garden of Eden there were two special trees: the Tree of Life that offered eternal life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that offered death (2:9,17; 3:22).

Adam and Eve chose to disobey God (3:6). When they chose to eat from the wrong tree, they gained knowledge of both good and evil. And by disobeying God, they lost eternal life. Our everlasting fellowship with God was lost because of sin.

The Bible tells us all about God's love for mankind, His hatred of evil and the sin of mankind. It is the record of the greatest love story ever told of God's love for us despite the destruction, poverty and terror caused by our sins. Through Jesus Christ, His only Son, God provided a way for all of mankind to be saved from sin and to receive eternal life. This is possible if we truly believe that the sacrifice of the life of Jesus on the cross was so that our sins could be forgiven. It is only through this love of God that we can be saved, if we believe.

Extracted from "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary, Genesis Chapters 1 to 11, by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 15. *Abraham, the father of all who believe God*

God promised Abraham a son (15:4). To give birth to a son, Sarai would need a miracle. Her womb was dead. Did Abraham have faith for a miracle? It took another 25 years for the miracle to happen.

"The God that Abraham believed in gives life to the dead. Abraham's God also speaks of things that do not exist as if they do exist" (Romans 4:17,18). But Abraham and Sarai had to keep on waiting. Then they understood that people have to "live by believing, not by seeing" (2 Corinthians 5:7). It was not possible for Sarai to have a son without a miracle from God.

Through His grace we prove His promises and learn that He is faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:24). As we shall see later, in Abraham's lifetime his forward-looking faith was tested very much. There were many difficulties for Abraham before God began to fulfil His promises – he needed even more faith at times. This is why Abraham is called the father of all who believe God.

God added more words to his promises in Genesis 15:13–21. This time God told Abraham a great number of things. Sometimes God tells us a lot, sometimes He tells

us a little. That is OK. Keep believing in God! He always listens. He is Yahweh, our Almighty God and Creator.

Talk about this: Discuss the extra promises God made to Abraham in 15:13–21.

Extracted from "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary, Genesis Chapters 11 to 22, by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 25. *The death of Abraham*

After Sarah died, Abraham married again. He had several children by his second wife Keturah (25:1-4). When Keturah's sons grew up, Abraham gave them their share of his inheritance and he sent them away to the east (25:6). They and Ishmael had their own large families who gave a lot of trouble to Isaac's grandchildren later. They were unfriendly people, many of whom lived in Canaan, God's Promised Land for the nation of Israel. God used these unfriendly tribes later to test the faith and obedience of the Israelites, which remains true to this day.

Abraham died (25:8). He had lived 100 years in Canaan (12:4; 25:7). There was a brief meeting between Isaac and Ishmael when they came together to bury their father.

Isaac received God's blessing (25:11) and God's covenant promises, as well as his inheritance from Abraham (25:5). The covenant promises passed to Isaac and then to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15; 35:12). God chose to give His covenant to Isaac and to Isaac's son, Jacob. God made the covenant promise with Abraham pass to Isaac and not to Ishmael, nor to his half-brothers by Keturah, nor to Jacob's twin brother Esau.

Extracted from "ISAAC & JACOB" Bible teaching commentary, Genesis Chapters 22 to 36, by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 50. *The deaths of Jacob and Joseph*

Joseph mourned for his father and told the Egyptians to preserve his father's body. We do not preserve bodies today. Jesus told his followers that we would have new bodies when we are raised from death to be with Him.

Now that Jacob was dead, the brothers started to worry. "What if Joseph still hates us?" they asked each other (50:15).

When Joseph heard this, he wept. Joseph said to them, "You meant to hurt me, but God turned it to good... So then, don't be afraid. I will care for you and your children" (50:18–21).

Many people seek revenge for the bad things others have done, but Joseph forgave them.

When Joseph was very old he called his brothers and said to them, "I am about to die. God will be with you and help you and take you out of this land back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (50:24; Exodus 32:13). Like them, he was a great man of faith.

The long history of Joseph shows how God was in control, working out His plans for the people of Israel.

Extracted from "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary, Genesis Chapters 37 to 50, by Fred Morris.

Exodus Chapter 6. *Moses and the people doubt God*

Moses shared with the people what God said but they would not listen. They had

lost their hope in the promises of God and instead had to work very hard as slaves (6:9).

Between verses 13 and 27, the Bible reminds us of who Moses and Aaron were. They were brothers from the family of Levi (6:19,20). The Levites were chosen by God as priests to serve the people of Israel. God chose Moses and Aaron to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt (6:13,26,27). They must continue doing what God called them to do. Nothing would stop God's plans for His people. But the people doubted God (6:9). And Moses doubted God (6:12,30).

Talk about this:

What did the people of Israel hope for? What hindered their faith in God?

Think about this:

How can we renew our hope and continue what God has called us to do (Romans 8:28)? How can we use our faith to encourage others to see the power of God at work so that they will believe for themselves and worship Him (Exodus 4:29-31)?

Extracted from "THE BIRTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary, Exodus Chapters 1 to 20, by Fred Morris.

The Book of Leviticus

In his third book, Moses wrote down more laws and directions given to him by God. It shows how our powerful, Almighty God, Yahweh, Creator of the Universe, is interested in the smallest things in the lives of ordinary people.

In the third month after they left Egypt, the people of Israel camped in the desert in front of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1-2). It was here that God called all the tribe of Levi to serve Him as priests. They taught the Israelites the way God wanted them to worship Him at that time. The priests accepted the sacrifices to God from the people of animals, birds and also food (Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17).

1500 years later, God sent Jesus to be the great High Priest so that, by giving His own sinless blood, all sinners could repent, be forgiven and come close to God. 'Without the giving of blood there is no forgiveness of sin' (Hebrews 9:22).

Leviticus therefore gave answers to the question: How can a holy God meet with sinful people? Today, the blood of Jesus is sufficient for the forgiveness of all sins.

Think about this: The theme of Leviticus is holiness (Lev. 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7). What advice does Peter give us (1 Peter 1:14-16)?

Extracted from "THE GROWTH OF A NATION" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Israel at the time of Joshua. *Conclusions*

Israel became a great and holy nation during the time of Joshua [approx. 1400 BC]. They served God but they did not rule the world. However, their example of holiness brought glory to God in the world at that time. The nations around Israel feared Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel.

Joshua fought and won many battles. He was encouraged and used by God into old age. We must remember to share with children and with adults what God did through great people like Moses and Joshua. Remember, too, that the first convert in Canaan was Rahab from Jericho. Her faith served Israel and changed the world because she became an ancestor of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Through the people of Israel, the world now has the choice to receive salvation in Jesus Christ. Jesus was not called to rule the people of Israel. God, His Father, sent

Him to serve Israel and to serve the people of the world. He came to bring everyone back to Almighty God. Many people today are waiting for Jesus to return to rule as the promised Messiah.

The book of Joshua shows us the plan of God for His special people Israel to live in peace and security. It also reveals the plan of God to bring salvation to the world through Jesus Christ.

Extracted from "JOSHUA" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Ruth Chapter 4. *Ruth and Boaz have a son*

Boaz married Ruth and a son was born to them (4:13). The local women said to Naomi, "Give praise to the Lord God Almighty... May this child become famous all over Israel!" (4:14).

Naomi took the child in her arms and took care of him (4:16). They named him Obed (4:17). Obed means serving or servant.

The family name of Ephrath was saved through which Jesus was born 1300 years later. Obed became the grandfather of God's anointed king, David (4:17). King David became an ancestor of Joseph and his wife Mary. Mary was the virgin mother of Jesus, the Son of God (Matthew 1:16).

Jesus was the Christ or Messiah of Israel. He became the Saviour of the world. Joseph was told by an angel, "Mary will have a Son. You must give Him the name Jesus." This name means salvation or saviour in Hebrew. "This is because He will save the people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "He accepts people from every nation" (Acts 10:34-35).

Talk about this: How did God answer the prayer for Obed to become famous?

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Mark Chapter 2. *Jesus heals a lame man.*

Many people filled the house where Jesus was teaching (2:2).

Four men carried their friend to the house. He could not walk. They could not get inside, so they took the lame man up and removed part of the roof. Then they lowered their friend down on his mat to the feet of Jesus.

Jesus saw the faith of these four men. So He said to the lame man, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (2:5).

Some of the Jewish leaders heard what Jesus said. They complained, "Only God can forgive sins" (2:7). They did not understand the truth about Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?" (2:9). He said this to show that He was Son of God as well as Son of Man. He had power and authority from Heaven on Earth to forgive sins (2:10). He is equal with the Lord God Almighty. Today, God forgives sins in the name of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Then Jesus healed the man. He said, "Get up. Take your mat and go home" (2:11).

Extracted from "THE EARLY TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Mark Chapter 15. *How the cross changed world history.*

The Old Testament tells how God would send His Messiah to save His people from their sins. The New Testament tells how God sent His own Son to suffer and to die then to rise again from death so that we can be forgiven (Ephesians 4:32) and have everlasting life with Him.

To some people the cross means nothing more than a strange story. But to those who see in the cross the love of God, it is the greatest thing that ever happened. The cross and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have become the most important events in history!

To people everywhere, the cross means, 'I love you. I died for you. There was no other way for you to be saved from God's hatred of sin.' We all deserve God's punishment, for all have sinned (Romans 3:9,10). God saves us from the punishment we deserve (Psalm 103:10-12). Jesus took the punishment in our place (Romans 5:8). And for those who turn to the cross and accept that Jesus died for them, their lives are changed. Their sins are forgiven. They come closer to God. And they become more like Jesus. And they have hope of going to Heaven.

Extracted from "THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST"
Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

John Chapter 8. *Jesus and Abraham.*

Many people in the crowd put their faith in Jesus (8:30). He told them, 'If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free' (8:31-32).

Some asked, 'We have never been slaves of anyone. So how can you say that we will be set free?' (8:33).

Jesus reminded them, 'Everyone who sins is a slave of sin.'

The Jews were proud that they were sons of Abraham. Jesus told them that they were not really Abraham's children, because they did not behave like Abraham (8:39-40).

Then the Jewish leaders cried out, 'Are You greater than our father Abraham? ... Who do You think You are?' (8:53).

Jesus replied, 'You claim that My Father is your God. He is the One who brings glory to Me. You do not know Him. But I know Him... And I obey His word' (8:54-55).

Jesus then said, 'Before Abraham was born, I AM!' (8:58). As soon as He used these famous words 'I AM', they took up stones to kill Him (8:59).

Think about this: What is your answer to the question, 'Who do you think Jesus is?'

Extracted from "THE PERSONAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

John Chapter 17. *Jesus prays for all believers.*

Jesus told His Father that His prayers were not just for the twelve disciples but for all believers in Him, including those who are not Jews. His prayers were not just for then but for now. "I do not pray only for them. I pray also for those who will believe in Me because of their message" (17:20.)

He prayed for believers:

- to unite with each other and His Father (17:11).
- to be full of His joy (17:13).

- to be safe from the Evil One (17:15).
- to be holy and kept from sin (17:19).
- to share the Good News with others in a loving way (17:20).
- to make new followers of Jesus through showing true Christian unity with each other, with God and with our Lord and Saviour. "Then the world will believe" (17:21).

It is church unity that Satan often tries to destroy. Church unity is in love for God and other believers... through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. "This will let the world know that You sent Me" (17:23).

We must not let Satan destroy this witness of love and unity with others nor with our Saviour and our God.

Extracted from "THE FINAL DAYS OF JESUS ON EARTH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Acts Chapter 4. *The Church at prayer and at work.*

The Jewish leaders told Peter and John not to teach or speak in the name of Jesus again (4:18). They were allowed to rejoin the Jewish Christians. They prayed and praised God together.

Hundreds of years before this, King David wrote of Christ's coming. He said rulers and nations would be angry because of Jesus (4:25-26; Psalms 2:1-2). God always knows what will happen. He even showed King David what to write. We need not be afraid! God knows all things. He is in control.

When the believers prayed, they were happy, not sad; at peace, not worried; bold, not afraid:

- They praised God in their prayers (4:24).
- They read the Old Testament writings (4:25-26).
- They remembered how God anointed Jesus to be persecuted and punished (4:27).
- They rejoiced that God was working out His plans (4:28).
- They asked God to make them very bold (4:29).
- They asked for more miracles in the name of Jesus (4:30).

The believers were not afraid of persecution. 'After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were bold when they spoke God's word' (4:31).

Extracted from "THE EARLY CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Acts Chapter 16. *Demons obey the power in the name of Jesus.*

A slave girl with a demon spirit followed the apostles Paul and Silas. Paul spoke to the demon spirit in the girl. "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the demon left her (16:18).

The girl's owners saw that she had lost her power and they were angry. They could no longer make money through the girl telling the future. The city leaders ordered Paul and Silas to be whipped and put into prison.

In prison, in the middle of the night, Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed to God. An earthquake broke the prison open.

The prison officer was frightened. If the prisoners escaped, he would be in much trouble from the Romans.

The man fell on his knees in front of Paul and Silas. He cried out, 'Sirs, what must

I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved' (16:31).

The jailor and his family believed and were saved from sin and fear.

Think about this: What was the result of trusting the Holy Spirit power in the name of Jesus?

Extracted from "PAUL BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE WORLD" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Romans Chapter 8. *We will win through Christ.*

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him" (8:28). What amazing words! God makes everything come together for our good, if we follow in the path His Spirit shows us.

We have been saved by God for His purpose (8:28), not our own. If bad things happen to us, if we have pain or suffering, if someone we love dies, if we lose our job, if we are persecuted or if we are put in prison when we don't deserve it, we know God will work it out for our good. Why? Because he loves us and because Christ will be honoured (8:29).

Hold on to the faith that you have been given so that no one takes your prize (Revelation 3:11).

God wants us to be like His Son (2 Corinthians 3:18). Everything that happens to the Christian is to make us more like Him. In this way, God makes us right with Himself (Romans 8:30).

We cannot wish for a better life than the life that God wants for us. We trust Him to do what is best in the midst of our sufferings.

Paul asks believers several important questions (8:31-35) before concluding Chapter 8 with his famous words, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:39).

Extracted from "IN CHRIST ALONE" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Romans Chapter 13: *Obeying those who are over you*

Paul asks believers to work together in peace by obeying and respecting those in authority. It is right to obey them because God appoints our leaders to rule over us (13:1,5).

Paul gave this advice: "If you do what is right, you won't need to be afraid of your rulers. Only if you do wrong, be afraid" (Romans 13:3-4).

Christians may be a minority in some countries, but they have God on their side! Sometimes governments write laws that make it difficult for Christians to obey; then we must pray and follow God's way.

Daniel and his friends were ordered to worship a great idol which the king had set up. They refused and were punished (Daniel 3:28). Peter was ordered not to preach about Christ. He told the leaders, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29-32) and he went out and preached the Gospel, the Good News of God's salvation plan. He was punished but carried on preaching (Acts 5:40-42).

Sometimes we must choose between obeying God and obeying our leaders. Quietly resisting an unjust law without being violent may be a good choice in the same way as Daniel, Peter and many other faithful believers.

Think about this: How should we boldly pray for God's blessing on our country?

Extracted from "LIVING IN CHRIST" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Ephesians Chapter 1: *God chose us to be His holy sons and daughters*

Paul reminded the Ephesians about the great mystery of God who blesses us so much. He said:

- "God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created" (1:4).
- "He chose us to be holy and without blame in His eyes. He loved us" (1:4).
- "God chose us to have a new life in Him. He adopted us as His children"

(1:5).

Paul said, "All those things bring praise to His glorious grace" because of His love for Jesus (1:6).

God chose to have sons and daughters who love and obey Him. He chose them to be holy and blameless like Himself. Without blame means to be without sin.

When He first calls us, we have no faith in God. He takes the first step toward us. He gives us a longing to know Him and adds faith so that we can believe in Him. That is God's grace, His free gift of love and mercy.

God did all this for us because He is rich in grace. "We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died, our sins have been forgiven." In Him we have been spared the punishment we deserve (1:7).

Because God loves us, He wants freely to give us His blessings through Jesus from Heaven. He does not hold anything back from those who trust Him. "By giving us great wisdom and understanding, he has shown us the mystery of his plan... It was what he had planned through Christ" (1:8-9).

Extracted from "EPHESIANS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Hebrews Chapter 5: *A warning to grow up*

The writer suddenly stops to give a warning to all his readers and listeners. He says that there are many more things to tell them but they are slow to understand (5:11). Those who do not grow in understanding go backwards in their faith.

The writer obviously found it difficult to teach the Hebrew believers. We can sense the love and sadness in the heart of the writer. "By this time you should be teachers. But in fact, you need someone to teach you all over again. You still need the simple truths of God's word. You still need milk, not solid food" (5:12). This is why the believers are warned to be careful not to fall away from their faith.

"Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby" (5:13). They could not stay as spiritual babies. These Jewish believers in Jesus were like infants who did not know the difference between right and wrong. They did not understand the teachings on the righteousness of God. They behaved like people who did not want to learn more. They were content with their religious upbringing. They were also lazy or found other interesting things to do. They not discipline themselves to study and apply the words of God in their Old Testament writings.

Extracted from "HEBREWS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Revelation Chapter 1: *John sees Jesus, our risen Saviour*

John describes the face of Jesus Christ shining like the sun. His eyes were blazing with fire. Also, His hair was like snow and His feet like bronze in a furnace.

John fell at the feet of Jesus as though he were dead. But Jesus put his right hand on John and said to him, "Do not be afraid!" (1:17). The message John then received was given for all followers of Jesus Christ. He was told to share it. Jesus said to him, "Write ... what you have seen, what is happening now and what will

take place later" (1:19).

John recovered and obeyed Jesus. His writings survived and were copied and passed to the churches of the world at that time and up to this day.

John first wrote down in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 what Jesus wanted to say to seven churches. They were in the Roman province of Asia, now part of Turkey. The messages of Jesus to these seven churches reminded them what had happened in the past and what was happening at that time and warned them what was going to happen in the future. It was important for believers to fully understand the truth about themselves, what was right and what wrong.

Few of the churches actually survived for long. This is a warning for us today to obey these words of Jesus and to teach others to do the same.

Extracted from "MESSAGES TO SEVEN CHURCHES" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 4: *Cain knew right from wrong but failed*

Cain thought he could obey God in his own way, but God warned him, "If you do what is right, you will be accepted" (4:7).

Cain learnt from his parents that in everything we do, there is a right and a wrong way. But Cain rejected God's way of doing what is right.

God waited for Cain to repent. If Cain was sorry, then God could receive his true worship. Cain knew that God was not pleased with his offering. But he did not want to ask his brother for a lamb to sacrifice to God. He was too proud to ask. He knew what was right to please God but failed to do it. He disobeyed God.

Cain also became angry with his brother. It was not Abel's fault. It was Cain's fault. "Why are you angry?" God asked. God told Cain, "Do what is right, then you will be accepted." By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did (Hebrews 11:4).

God warned, "If you do not do what is right, sin is waiting at your door to grab you. But you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7). Cain knew what was pleasing to God. He knew that the sacrifice of an animal was acceptable to God. But instead he became angry and would not ask his brother for one of his lambs to sacrifice.

Think about this: Who was Cain angry with: his father, his brother, himself, or God?

Extracted from "BEGINNINGS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 16: *God's promises about Ishmael*

An Angel of God told Hagar, "You will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael" (16:11). The angel said that Ishmael would be a wild man and his sons would not fear anyone. They would not be friendly towards their relatives (16:12). They would become a great nation (17:20). They would fight many tribes including many of Abraham's family (25:18). Yet God would maintain Ishmael's family through all the centuries. He would use them for His glory to serve His people Israel who would bless the world through their Messiah.

The Arab nations descended from Ishmael and from the later sons of Abraham through his second wife Keturah. That is why the Arabs look to Abraham as their father just as the Jews do. The early Christians also looked to Abraham as their father because they all had the same faith in Yahweh, the one true God.

We should pray that all nations will come to believe that the God of the Jews and the Christians is the one true God who created the world (Ezekiel 38:23). His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Saviour and Messiah. Many Arabs and Jews now believe that Jesus is the Son of God but most believe He was only a prophet. Pray that they will all come to know the truth about Jesus and that the whole world population from Noah's family will believe He is God's Son and Saviour.

Extracted from "ABRAHAM" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapters 27-28: *Jacob runs away from his family*

Esau was so angry with his twin brother Jacob that he said that he would kill him! When their mother Rebekah heard this, she wanted Jacob to go quickly to his uncle's house and stay there until Esau's anger passed.

Jacob's sins against his brother caused many problems:

- He never saw his mother again.
- He deceived and hurt his father Isaac.
- He was treated badly by his uncle.
- He became afraid of his brother and his brother's family.

People often cause their own family problems. 'We reap what we sow' (Galatians 6:7).

Isaac took control and told Jacob what to do. "Go at once ... to the house of your mother's father, Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of [your uncle] Laban" (28:2). Then Isaac added a blessing for Jacob which was more important than any blessing or inheritance that he had promised before. This blessing was similar to God's own promise to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac prayed to God:

- a) to begin a great nation through Jacob having many children;
- b) to give Jacob the blessing that God promised to Abraham;
- c) to enable Jacob to take over the land that God promised to Abraham.

In this way, Isaac acted fully in God's will by sending Jacob to find a wife among Abraham's relatives – with the words of God's promises spoken over him.

Extracted from "ISAAC AND JACOB" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Genesis Chapter 48: *Jacob blesses Joseph's sons*

When Joseph heard that his father was ill, he went quickly to where all his family lived in the land of Egypt. When Jacob saw Joseph with his two sons, he told Joseph, "Ephraim and Manasseh will belong to me" (48:5).

In the Hebrew way, the eldest son always has the greatest blessing. It was the custom for the father to give God's blessing to his eldest son or grandson by putting his right hand on his head and praying over him.

Joseph wanted his father to bless Manasseh, his firstborn son. But Jacob crossed his arms so that his right hand was on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head (48:13-14). Then he asked God to bless the two boys (48:15-16).

Joseph took his father's hand to move it. "No, my father, this is the firstborn," he said. "Put your right hand on his head" (48:18).

But Jacob said, "I know, my son. He too will become great ... but his younger brother will be greater than him." So Jacob blessed Ephraim before his older brother and he called them both sons of Israel.

Later they became two of the twelve tribes of Israel (Joshua 14:4). The family of Ephraim settled in the best part of the Promised Land and became the largest tribe in the kingdom of Israel.

Talk about this: How did God use Jacob and Joseph in building the nation of Israel?

Extracted from "JOSEPH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.