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Weekend Manna: FRED SAID

Extracts from Manna Bible teaching commentaries by Fred Morris

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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.

Exodus Chapter 20: *The Ten Commandments*

Before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He reminded the people (20:2) that they were once slaves in Egypt. God saved them to be His special people. He promised this to Abraham nearly 500 years before. Now He told them how to live like holy people. The list below includes the teaching of Jesus, God's Son, which He added 1500 years later.

Commandment One: WORSHIP GOD ONLY

'I am Yahweh, the LORD your God' (20:2,3). See Matthew 4:10.

Commandment Two: NO IDOLS

'Do not make statues ... or worship them' (20:4–6). See Luke 16:13.

Commandment Three: RESPECT GOD'S NAME

'Do not use the name of the LORD your God in wrong ways' (20:7). See Matthew 5:34.

Commandment Four: REMEMBER GOD'S DAY

'Remember the Sabbath day. Keep it holy. Do all your work in six days' (20:8–11). See Mark 2:27-28.

Commandment Five: RESPECT YOUR PARENTS

'Respect your father and mother, so you will live a long time' (20:12). See Matthew 10:37.

Commandment Six: DO NOT KILL ANYONE

'Do not murder' (20:13). See Matthew 5:21,22.

Commandment Seven: NO SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE

'Do not commit adultery' (20:14). See Matthew 5:28.

Commandment Eight: DO NOT STEAL

'Do not steal' (20:15). See Matthew 19:21.

Commandment Nine: DO NOT LIE

'Do not accuse anyone falsely' (20:16). See Matthew 12:36.

Commandment Ten: DO NOT ENVY

'Do not wish for anything that belongs to your neighbour' (20:17). See Luke 12:15.

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

The Book of Deuteronomy

In the fifth book assembled by Moses, he tells the next part of the plan of God for the Hebrew people, the children of Israel. God wanted them to live in the land of Canaan as if in their own land. He had promised it to them; now they must take it. They must overcome the wicked tribes living in the land and be a witness for Yahweh, our Almighty God and Creator of all the Earth. God in His grace and mercy chose them to be His people and by obeying Him, to show people everywhere how men should live, and how they should honour Him.

In Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the new generation of people of the instructions God gave them and what happened to their parents who disobeyed.

No other nation had rules and laws like these (4:8). Moses told the people, "Obey these laws and that will show the nations how wise and understanding you are" (4:6).

God was with the people of Israel. He cared for them and protected them. As the people kept His laws, the heathen nations would see how right and holy God was. Moses asked them, "What other nation is like Israel, to have the Lord our God near us whenever we pray? What other nation had such good laws? Teach them to your children," he told the people, "and don't forget what God has done for you" (4:7-10).

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

Joshua Chapter 8: *The Covenant with God is renewed at Mount Ebal*

After the battles of Jericho and Ai, Joshua copied the Law of Moses onto altar

stones. 'He did it while all of the people of Israel were watching' (Joshua 8:32).

Then Joshua read the blessings and curses from the Book of the Law (8:34; Deut 27:1–26). All Israel agreed to do what Yahweh, God Almighty, said. No-one was left out. The God-fearing foreigners who had joined Israel also agreed to obey God (8:33,35). God's grace and mercy was for everyone in the camp.

Everyone who truly believed God came under the covenant blessings and curses of the Old Testament Law. 1500 years later, Jesus paid the price for sin that this Law required (Matthew 5:17). In Him, the blessings God promised to Abraham have now come to the rest of the world. This is possible through repentance and faith in Jesus and the promise of God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:14).

By sacrifice and worship, Israel gave God praise and thanks for the victories that He had won (Exodus 17:15). He gave Israel holy rules to obey. The people believed that all God's laws were good and necessary. To us, 3500 years later, God says, 'I have given you the victory through Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57). He speaks to His Father in Heaven on our behalf (1 John 2:1).

Talk about this:

Does God invite foreigners to worship Him (8:33)? Do we?

Extracted from "JOSHUA, God's first Leader in the Land of Israel" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

1 Samuel Chapter 2: *The future priests and kings of Israel*

Judgment may take time to come, but it will come in the end. 'God will judge everything people do ... good or evil' (Ecclesiastes 12:14; 1 Corinthians 3:13). The apostle Paul further warns, 'We will have to explain to God the things we have done' (Romans 14:12).

God told Eli, the chief priest: "I will cut your life short. I will also cut short the lives of those in your family line of priests" (2:31). "You will see trouble [but] good things will still happen to Israel" (2:32).

Then the unknown man of God said, "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest. He will do what My heart and mind want him to do. I will make his family line of priests very secure. They will always serve as priests to My anointed king" (2:35).

God began the new line of priests and prophets through Samuel. Samuel appointed and served the new kings of Israel beginning with Saul and David.

The prophets, priests and kings of Israel served God for hundreds of years. They replaced the judges of Israel. Then our Lord Jesus Christ came as Prophet, Priest, King and Saviour of Israel. Therefore, through Samuel, son of Hannah, God blessed Israel and through Jesus, God blessed the world.

The family line of Eli became beggars (2:36).

Talk about this: Describe how the gift of a son from God to faithful Hannah later blessed Israel and finally all nations.

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH, two women of faith in God" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Mark Chapter 6: How people responded to the Good News

Jesus went back to Nazareth where He grew up (6:1). He taught in the synagogue. Many who heard Him were amazed (6:2). But they did not believe that He was the

Messiah. They knew that He was the son of a carpenter. They knew His brothers and sisters (6:3). They could not believe in Him. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

Christians may go to many places taking blessing to others. However, they are not always valued in their home town (6:4). Jesus healed only a few people in Nazareth because they had little faith in Him (6:5). He was amazed at their lack of faith (6:6). They even tried to harm Him (Luke 4:29).

Jesus also sent the disciples out to tell the Good News to others. He gave them power over evil spirits (Mark 6:7) and to heal all diseases (Luke 9:2). They went in twos.

He said to them, "Take no bread, no bag and no money in your belts." They were doing this work for God so they did not need to worry about food or money or extra clothes (6:8-9). They could trust in God for their needs (6:10). But they did not stay where they were not welcome (6:11).

The same power that was in the disciples is in all believers. 'The disciples went out. They preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons. They poured olive oil on many people who were ill and healed them' (6:12-13). They did this in the power and name of Jesus and with His authority (6:7).

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

Mark Chapter 14: 'Remember Me'

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread. He gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples. 'This is My body given for you,' He said (14:22). 'Do this so that you will remember Me.'

When Judas had eaten some of the meal with them, he went out (John 13:30).

After the meal, Jesus took the cup and said: 'This cup is the New Covenant (Agreement) in My blood, which is poured out for you' (Luke 22:20).

Jesus then warned the disciples about His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Now they would see His enemies put Him to death.

From this day on they would remember the Passover supper as the Lord's Last Supper. They would remember the meaning of the bread and the wine. They would remember their Messiah who died to save them from sin. In this way, Jesus asked all His followers to remember His death when they broke bread and poured out wine together.

Jesus then warned the disciples (Mark 14:27-30):

- that they would all run away;
- that Peter would say three times that he did not even know Jesus;
- that Jesus must die as it says in the Old Testament writings (Zechariah 13:7);
- that He would come alive and meet them again in Galilee to explain

everything.

But the disciples could not understand these things until after they happened.

Think about this: Do we betray or deny Jesus at times?

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).

They asked, "We are Abraham's children. 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... If the Son of Man sets you free, you will really be free" (8:34,36). The Son of Man was one of the names of the promised Messiah given in the Old Testament writings which Jesus used for Himself.

The Jewish leaders were proud that they were sons of Abraham. Jesus told some of them that they were not really Abraham's children, because they did not behave like Abraham (8:39). They were born Jews, but that did not make them sons of Abraham nor sons of God.

Jesus heard the truth from God His Father. "Everyone who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you don't hear His truth is that you do not belong to God" (8:47).

Some shouted at Jesus, "You are controlled by a demon" (8:48).

"I am not controlled by a demon," said Jesus (8:49). "What I am telling you is true. Anyone who obeys My word will never die" (8:51). Jesus meant anyone who believes that He is the Son of God will have eternal life.

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

John Chapter 16: Jesus warns to expect big troubles

Jesus did not want His followers to lose their faith. He said, "I tell you this so that you will not go down the wrong path. The time is coming when someone may kill you and think they are doing God a favour" (16:1-2). He wanted to be sure that His disciples fully understood this.

Satan blinds the minds of people. They sometimes believe his lies when he tells them to attack or kill God's servants. But nothing can destroy God's church (Matthew 16:17-18). In Christ, all believers will live forever with Him (14:1-4).

Jesus repeated these words: "They will do these things because they do not know the Father or Me" (16:3). "Why have I told you this? So that when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you" (16:4).

The disciples were sad because Jesus was leaving them to go back to His Heavenly Father (16:5-6). They thought only of themselves and not about the purposes of God.

Jesus told them, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Friend will not come to help you" (16:7). Then Jesus told them again about His Friend, the Holy Spirit, who would come to them. "When He comes," Jesus said, "He will prove that the people of the world are guilty. He will prove that they are guilty [wrong] about sin, righteousness and judgment" (16:8).

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

Acts Chapter 8: The Good News preached in Gaza for Ethiopia

An angel came to Philip and said to him, "Go south ... down to Gaza" (8:26). Philip left for Gaza which is on the road from Jerusalem to Egypt and Ethiopia. A chariot came along the road pulled slowly by horses.

An officer from Ethiopia was sitting in it reading a scroll of the Old Testament. He was returning from worshipping God at the Temple in Jerusalem. Philip heard the man reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

"Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked him.

"How can I?" the man answered. "I need someone to explain it to me" (8:31).

Without the Spirit of God to help us, we cannot fully understand the Bible, so God sends us His Spirit to teach us His truth (John 16:13-14). When you read the Bible, always ask God to help you to understand His truth.

Philip told the officer that Isaiah wrote about the Good News of Jesus the Christ even though he lived 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

As soon as the officer understood this, he believed that Jesus was the Son of God. He asked Philip to baptise him in some water nearby to confirm his faith in Christ.

He went back to his home country 'full of joy' (8:39) to tell others the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Think about this: The Ethiopian came to faith through reading the words of God AND receiving help to understand it. Think about God's amazing connection between Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Gaza, Egypt and Ethiopia. What hinders the Holy Spirit from working in your life?

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

Acts Chapter 21: Paul goes back to Jerusalem

Paul travelled from Miletus, near Ephesus, by ship to Tyre (21:1-6). He met with the Christian believers there. They told Paul what the Holy Spirit said about the troubles in Jerusalem. They begged him not to go. But Paul believed that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go (20:22).

When the ship came to Caesarea, Paul stayed with Philip the evangelist. While he was there Agabus came from Jerusalem. He took Paul's belt and tied his own hands and feet with it as a sign. He spoke words given to him by the Holy Spirit: "In this way the Jews... will tie up the owner of this belt" (21:11). Paul, like Jesus, now knew what would happen to him in Jerusalem.

Paul answered Agabus and the believers: "Why are you weeping? I am ready to be tied up and to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (21:13).

The believers knew the dangers ahead for all of them, but they went up to Jerusalem with Paul. The next day Paul went to see James and the leaders of the Jerusalem church (21:17-18). In Greece and Turkey many thousands of non-Jews had believed. Paul wanted to tell the leaders what God had done there.

Think about this: In Jerusalem, Paul was in trouble with some of the Jewish leaders for preaching Christ to the Jews. Paul was also in trouble with some of the Christian leaders for preaching Christ to non-Jews. So why did the Holy Spirit take Paul back to Jerusalem?

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

Romans Chapter 4: Abraham was made right with God for us all

Abraham is the father of all believers in Christ because he showed us the way of

faith which puts us right with God.

Our relationship with God is made complete through faith in Jesus Christ. This is for Jews, Arabs and other non-Jews who seek to know Yahweh, the God of Abraham. Christ is the promised seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16; Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7).

Paul decides it is necessary to make these things very clear to the believers in Rome before he talks more in the next chapter about the grace of God and about salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (5:2). In Chapter 4, we read Paul's amazing understanding of God's salvation plan. Jesus met Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts Chapter 9). Therefore we can trust Paul's understanding of the Old Testament writings in the light of his knowledge of the risen Saviour.

Paul was also taught by the Holy Spirit in Arabia and by some of the early church leaders (Galatians 1:11–19). Paul, a Jew, strongly believes that both Jews and non-Jews must come to God by believing in Christ. In this way, Abraham is the father of all believers. He shows the way of faith which leads to God and makes us right with Himself. This is why Paul says that Abraham is father to us all. God said that this would happen (4:17; Genesis 17:5; Galatians 3:29).

Extracted from "PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS IN ROME" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Romans Chapter 11: 24-36. *The Purposes and Justice of God*

Paul says that our same just and loving God still pleads with the Jews to be saved. He loved them so much that He sent His Son to die for them. Jesus Christ did not come to condemn the hard-hearted, tradition-bound Jewish nation. Christ came 'to seek and to save those who were lost' (John 3:17; Luke 19:9-10).

When Jews accept by faith their Messiah Christ, God is willing 'and able to join them to the tree again' (Romans 11:23). God will work to save the Jews in a way that is just the opposite of the way in which man works (11:24).

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!'

Think about this: Do you see everything in your life is working together and bringing glory to God (11:36)? Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

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

Ephesians Chapter 2: *Changed through new life in Jesus*

Before Jesus saved the Christians living in Ephesus:

- They were living in their sins and far from God (2:1); they were spiritually dead.

- They disobeyed God and followed the evil ways of the world; they 'served the one who rules over the spiritual forces of evil' (2:2).

Satan stops people from seeing the truth. Paul says that he does this so that he can keep them as slaves. All who do not trust in Jesus are slaves to their own sinful nature. They cannot change the way they live. They need to hear God's truth and believe His Good News about Jesus. He is the only One who can change us.

All of us lived sinful lives at one time. We followed our own desires and thoughts (2:3). But Jesus sets Satan's slaves free. Satan is angry about this and goes around making trouble (1 Peter 5:8). You won't see him, for he is a spirit, ruling over the angels of darkness. Satan's demons are very busy at work in the lives of people who do not obey God. They make people ill and violent and confused. Satan is a cruel master.

When we followed the wrong ways of the world, God was angry with us (2:3). 'But God loves us deeply. He is full of mercy' (2:4).

God has therefore given us authority over Satan through Jesus. 'God is full of mercy' (2:4). Because of this, Paul wrote, 'He gave us life even when we were [spiritually] dead in sin. God's grace has saved you' (2:5).

The truth from God reveals the darkness in people's souls. It brings the light of Jesus to them (2:5-6).

Extracted from "PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Hebrews Chapter 10: *How to grow in faith.*

'God is faithful' (Hebrews 10:23). However, if we do not come close to God often, we will begin to lose our faith in God. Soon we might stop serving the Lord, or even stop meeting together with other believers.

The writer encourages us to serve other believers (10:24-25). Think about this. To grow in faith in God, Christians need to encourage other believers in their faith. This means that we ourselves grow in faith as we help others to grow in faith. Therefore:

- Care for others with godly love.
- Encourage others to do good deeds.
- Do not give up meeting together.
- Encourage others with words of hope.
- Act in faith more and more to fulfill the promises of God.
- Live waiting for the return of Jesus.

This also means that we should:

- Grow together in reading and understanding the Word of God.
- Spend time with others in prayer.
- Meet together to worship.
- Serve God together, seeking Him for the work He has for each believer to do.

Note that God does not do any of these things for us.

Christians meet together in large or small groups all over the world. It does not matter how large or small your group is. You should encourage and increase the faith of others. In this way, you will honour God and receive His blessing for yourself.

Extracted from "A LETTER TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Revelation 3:17-20. *Are you rich or poor in God's sight?*

Today, if we do not see people healed and set free from sin or controlling demons, the church lacks the power and the authority that Jesus promised. We then replace His power with our own strength. That is what happened to the church in Laodicea. They had confidence in their wealth and their own work for the Lord. But they had lost their dependence on the Lord and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, the work they did gained approval from men instead of approval from God. They tried to serve two masters but failed.

Jesus told them, "You say, I am rich... and do not need anything, but you do not realise you are poor, blind and naked" (3:17).

- Why does He call the wealthy, poor? Because they had little to offer in God's Kingdom.
- Why does He call those who see, blind? Because they were spiritually blind to God's truth.
- Why does He call the well-dressed, naked? Because they have no robe of God's righteousness.

It was important for Jesus to warn the church at Laodicea, "I correct and train those I love. So be sincere and turn away from your sins" (3:19). This is absolute proof of His unchanging love towards all believers. Praise God!

Jesus then said, "I stand at the door and knock. If any of you hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in..." (3:20).

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

Genesis Chapters 6 and 7. *Noah's Flood.*

God loves His creation but the world was filled with wickedness.

- God sees it all (6:5). God is never so far away that He cannot see our sins.
- God suffers when we sin (6:6). He has feelings.
- God judges sin and takes action (6:7). He waits and acts when we fail to repent.

God decided to destroy every living thing (6:7). Our sins deserve punishment and even death. However, God changed His mind and decided to start again using Noah and his family (6:18). God is always preparing for our salvation. Amazing grace!

God was pleased with Noah (6:8). Noah trusted God in a world that was filled with hate and murder. He loved and obeyed God (6:9,22).

God then told Noah how to build an ark (6:13-16). He called to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family" (7:1).

Noah and his wife, their three sons and their wives went into the ark. Then animals and birds came to Noah and God shut them in. God gave mankind a final seven days to accept His offer (7:4). The seven days passed like every other day, with men and women "eating, drinking and marrying..." (Luke 17:26-27).

Then God shut the door of the ark and it began to rain for the first time on Earth.

God's word to all people today is that anyone who repents can be saved by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (Revelation 22:12-17).

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

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

Ten years after Abraham and Sarai left Haran to live in Canaan, Abraham still had no son and heir. Sarai gave her slave girl Hagar to Abraham so that Hagar could have a son to give to Abraham and Sarai.

The story covers four things in Hagar's life:

1. *Abraham's love and protection.* The servant's children belonged to the wife. The husband provided for them all.
2. *Hagar's pride and rebellion.* When Hagar became pregnant she laughed at Sarai. Hagar's pride caused envy, jealousy and hatred. Then Hagar ran off into the desert.
3. *Hagar's repentance.* An Angel of the Lord God Almighty visited her in the desert. He told her, "Go back to your mistress and obey her" (16:9).
4. *God's forgiveness and provision.* The Angel added a promise from the Lord: "I will greatly increase your children. They will be too many to count" (16:10)

Then God gave a clear picture of the nations that would come through Hagar's son. Ishmael would be a wild man and his sons would not fear anyone. They would not be friendly to their relatives (16:12). Yet God would protect Ishmael's family through all the centuries. This shows how kind God is to all people and wants them to accept Him and His Messiah, Jesus Christ.

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

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

Genesis Chapter 31: *Jacob prepares to go back home.*

Jacob worked hard looking after his uncle Laban's sheep and God blessed him. Jacob came to own large flocks as well as maid-servants, men-servants, camels and donkeys (30:43).

This was also part of God's plan to prepare a large family He had promised to Abraham through his grandson Jacob, later known as Israel. Abraham's first wife and Jacob's second wife were both barren at first, but God worked miracles to fulfil His promise.

Jacob believed that it was the right time to go back home to Canaan. Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and your relatives and I will be with you" (31:3).

Jacob called his wives to the field where he was working. He told them how many times Laban had tricked him and changed his wages ten times! (31:7). But "the God of my father has been with me," he told them. This was Jacob's testimony. He was far from home, but not far from God.

His wives did not worship God as Jacob did. Jacob told his wives how the one true God of Abraham and Isaac had blessed him. Then he told them of an angel visitor who said to him, "Leave this land and go back to your own land" (31:13).

"Do whatever God has told you", they said to Jacob (31:16). They were ready to trust Jacob's God and not their own gods. This was an important step forward in God's purpose for Israel.

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

Genesis Chapter 38. *Jacob confesses his sin.*

Tamar was Jacob's daughter-in-law. She was a widow and wanted to have a son with Judah's family name.

One day, when Judah saw her, he did not recognise her. She was dressed as a temple prostitute. She offered to have sex with him and demanded payment. Judah agreed. This was the custom in the land of Canaan where he lived at that time. Judah willingly gave Tamar his personal seal and its cord as a promise that he would pay her later.

Judah did not let anyone know what he had done. He tried to protect himself from the shame. Three months later, news came to Judah that Tamar was pregnant. Judah wanted to have his daughter-in-law punished and killed for this (38:24). But Tamar was cleverer than Judah. She brought out Judah's own seal and cord. She said, "I am pregnant by the man who owns these" (38:25). Then everyone knew whose child Tamar was carrying.

Judah tried to deceive everyone, but God cannot be deceived or tricked. Judah had been selfish, but now he confessed his sin (38:26) and said sorry. We should not lie to people to cover our sins, and if we do, we must say sorry and change our ways.

God was pleased that Judah became a kind man. Tamar gave birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah. God chose to bless Perez in the family line of Judah. We read their names in the family line of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the promised Jewish Messiah, who came to save the world from their sins (Matthew 1:3).

Meanwhile, Jacob still mourned the loss of his son Joseph whom he presumed was dead.

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

Exodus Chapters 1 to 20. Saved from Slavery.

Moses was saved in Egypt from death as a baby in order to save the Hebrew people from slavery. He was called to do this by Almighty God, even though he murdered an Egyptian and ran away for 40 years leaving everything behind. His power in Egypt was destroyed but God later called him and gave him His own power to defeat the king of Egypt and his men.

The amazing story of Moses, the ten plagues and the Passover, the exodus from Egypt and the Ten Commandments, teach us a lot about God and about ourselves.

God's Ten Commandments guide us and also remind us that we are sinners, and therefore need Jesus Christ as our Saviour. He is the Son of God who was prepared to suffer and die on a cross to save us. Praise God for all that Jesus has done to give us a new life following Him and to know the love and forgiveness of Yahweh, Almighty God, and creator of all things. It is by the grace and mercy of God alone that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:5,8).

Through the Hebrew people Moses saved from slavery in Egypt, the holiness and purpose of God was shown to the world and written down for us to read. It was through these same people of God, the Jews, that Jesus the Messiah was born as a baby and came to live, suffer, die and rise from death to save the world from the slavery of sin and enable us to prosper as children of God.

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

Deuteronomy Chapters 32 to 34. *The final song and prayer of Moses.*

God told Moses to write down a song to teach the people. This song would be God's reminder of His truth. And it would be a witness against His people when they had gone away from His truth. He knew that many people would stop worshipping Him when they grew rich and had plenty to eat in the Promised Land of Canaan. They and their children must be reminded of God's salvation, provision and guidelines for holy living.

God has freely given us all we need for living our Christian lives. We, too, must continually teach and remind each other of God's truth (2 Peter 1:3–12) and live our lives to show thankfulness for the blessings of God's love, in good times and in bad.

The song of Moses was followed by a blessing and prayer for the people of Israel before he died. In it, Moses declares his faith in God's love for His people (33:3).

Moses wanted the truth of God to help the people to grow strong in faith. It was important to encourage the faith of the new young believers – the new generation of God's people. We, too, must encourage each generation of new believers and also those whose faith is shallow or whose faith has failed in times of testing and temptation.

It is our prayer that these Manna Bible commentaries will strengthen your understanding of the purposes of God for His people, which is finally fulfilled through faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

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

Joshua Chapter 5. *Joshua meets the captain of the Lord's Army.*

Joshua walked near the strong walled city of Jericho. He waited for God to show him what to do. He looked up and he saw a man standing in front of him. The man was holding a sword, ready for battle (5:13). Joshua, the brave leader of Israel, went up to him to ask questions.

The stranger told Joshua that he was not one of his soldiers nor on the side of the enemy soldiers. "I have come as commander of the army of Almighty God" (5:14). God is on the side of those who obey Him.

Then Joshua knew this was a divine person from God and bowed down with his face to the ground. He asked the man, "What message does my Lord have for me?"

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (5:15).

God spoke to Joshua in this way to show that He was there at Jericho with Joshua and with his men. He, the Almighty God of Israel, was in charge. Joshua should trust and obey His voice and not trust in himself.

Many people today say that they are Christians, but they do not humble themselves to listen when God tells them to obey His word. To win the battle over sin and over the evil around us, we must take orders from our Commander, Jesus Christ.

So Joshua humbled himself before Almighty God by taking his sandals off and bowing down before starting the battle of Jericho.

Extracted from "JOSHUA, GOD'S FIRST LEADER IN ISRAEL" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Ruth Chapter 3. *Ruth secretly visits Boaz*

The faith of Naomi [Ruth's mother-in-law] was now very strong because of the

provision of God through Boaz. She had great hope for the future. She looked beyond the need for food. She looked to God to provide a Jewish husband and children for Ruth. Naomi also trusted in God to meet her own needs.

Naomi spoke to Ruth. "You have been working for Boaz. He is a relative of ours (3:2). Tonight, Boaz will be separating the straw from his barley on the threshing floor. So wash yourself. Put on some perfume and your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor. But do not let Boaz know you are there. Wait until he has finished eating and drinking. Notice where he lies down. Then go over and uncover his feet. Lie down there [at his feet]. He will tell you what to do" (3:3-4). Ruth must wait there and trust Boaz to supply her future needs.

Naomi remembered the law of Moses. She knew that if a man died and left no children, a near relative should marry the widow to keep the family line and name (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

Boaz was therefore a family protector and redeemer for Naomi and Ruth. He was a relative of Naomi's former husband.

Ruth showed she was ready to trust in God. She replied to Naomi, "I will do whatever you say" (3:5). Naomi's own faith in God was strong. Ruth was happy to obey her. She did everything her mother-in-law told her to do (3:6-8).

Extracted from "RUTH AND HANNAH: TWO WOMEN OF FAITH IN GOD" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Mark Chapter 4: *The Parable of the Sower and the Seed*

Many people followed Jesus so He again sat in a boat to teach (4:1). Jesus taught the people many things using stories of life, called parables (4:2).

In this parable, the farmer or sower means someone who shares the Good News of Jesus. The seed he sows is the truth of the message from God. It is the Gospel or the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. The person who shares the truth from God sows the seed in the world. He shares the truth about what he has read or heard and seen or witnessed. A witness who explains this truth is a teacher or preacher or messenger.

In the parable, the sower scattered the seed on the ground as far as he could (4:4). Some seed fell on the path and the birds quickly ate it up. Some seed fell on stony ground and the plants did not live long in the hot sun. Some seed fell among weeds and the plants did not grow strong. But some seed fell on good ground. The soil was well prepared. It was open and ready to receive the seed. It produced a good harvest.

Later, Jesus explained this parable to His disciples (4:13-20). Some people are as hard as the path. Their hearts do not take in the Good News of Jesus. Satan quickly takes away the message that was given to them (4:15). Their hearts are not prepared ready to receive the Word of God.

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

John Chapter 9: *The healing of the man who was born blind*

The man went home. Some of his neighbours at first did not believe it was the same man (9:8-9). However, they asked him, "How were your eyes opened?" (9:10). He told them that the miracle was through "the man they call Jesus" (9:11).

Some of the religious leaders said that Jesus could not be from God because He

broke their rules. He had healed the blind man on the Sabbath day (9:16).

They wanted to know more about Jesus. They asked the man, "What do you ... say about Him?" The man replied, "He is a prophet" (9:17).

They then asked his parents, "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" (9:19).

They said, "We don't know how he can now see... We don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is an adult. He can speak for himself!" (9:21). His parents said this because they were afraid. Anyone who believed Jesus was the Christ would be thrown out of their local Jewish synagogue (9:22).

The religious leaders said to the man who was born blind, "Give glory to God by telling the truth! We know that the man who healed you is a sinner" (9:24).

He replied, "I don't know if He is a sinner or not. I do know one thing. I was blind, but now I can see!" (9:25).

Extracted from "THE GOSPEL OF JOHN" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

John Chapter 18: *Judas betrays Jesus*

Jesus finished praying and left the city of Jerusalem with His eleven disciples. They went out through the East Gate over the River Kidron to a farm of olive trees at Gethsemane. Judas knew where to find Him. Jesus went there often to pray. Jesus was now very troubled and prayed there with Peter, James and John nearby (Mark 14:33).

Soon Judas arrived. Roman soldiers and Jewish court officials came with him. 'The chief priests and the Pharisees had sent them. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him' (John 18:3-4). Divine understanding leads to peace in conflict or oppression. Pray for God to show you His purpose and plan to prepare you for troubles ahead. Then you will know the will of God and will also know what to say and do.

"Who is it that you want?" Jesus asked.

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. This was the name that He was known by.

"I am He," Jesus said. "If you are looking for Me, then let these men go" (18:8).

Peter pulled out his sword and struck a man called Malchus. He cut off his right ear. The man was a servant of the High Priest (18:10). Jesus told Peter to put his sword away (18:11). He did not want Peter to fight against the plan of God. Jesus knew that He had to suffer and die to save sinners. He called His sacrifice 'the cup of suffering'.

Jesus touched the man and healed his ear (Luke 22:51).

Extracted from "JOHN'S GOSPEL PART 2" Bible teaching commentary by Fred Morris.

Acts Chapter 4: *The church at prayer and at work*

Peter and John were set free and allowed to join the other 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 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 (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).

All this time, the Jewish Christians were meeting in homes. They were all caring for each other and sharing what they had. They all agreed together. The Holy Spirit began to make them kinder and more loving (4:32). Some sold their land and brought the money to the apostles (4:36-37). This was so that they could help those believers who were poor or unable to work (4:35). Jesus said, "You have received freely, so give freely" (Matthew 10:8).

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

Acts 14:1 to 25:12. *Paul on trial in Jerusalem*

Some of the Jews from Jerusalem came to Caesarea to speak to the Roman Governor Felix. They told him that Paul had caused a lot of trouble with the Jews all over the world.

Paul told Felix that he was a faithful Jew and also a follower of Jesus (24:14). Paul had done nothing wrong against the Law of Moses. He believed everything in the Old Testament writings. Felix understood everything that Paul said (24:22) and he sent the Jews away.

Felix wanted Paul to give him money to set him free (24:26). Paul refused to bribe Felix with money. Instead, Paul talked to Felix about God's truth.

To please the Jews, Felix left Paul in prison (24:27). After two years Festus became governor. He heard the Jews speak against Paul. They brought many charges against him, but they could not prove any of them (25:7).

Finally Paul said, 'I appeal to Caesar'. Festus replied, 'You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!' (25:12). Caesar was the Roman emperor Nero, the chief ruler in Rome. Rome ruled over Israel at that time. Later on, Nero persecuted the Christians.

Think about this. Do you remember to pray for the persecuted Jews and the Jewish believers in Christ?

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

Conclusion to Acts Part 1, Chapters 1 to 8.

In the first eight chapters of his letter to the Romans, Paul introduces his readers to some of the greatest foundational truths of the Christian religion and the meaning of true salvation from God through His Son:

1. **Repentance**, that is, turning away from sin toward God.
2. **Forgiveness** of our sins by God and a new beginning in life.
3. **Righteousness** of God, given by God to all believers.
4. **Justification**, that is, forgiven and accepted through Christ.
5. **Freedom** as a servant of Christ to know the joy of serving God.
6. **Assurance** of receiving everlasting life with God and Christ.

Anyone can enter into this truth through faith, through Christ alone, through God's grace. At times these things are beyond our understanding, but we can trust Paul's teaching. It is the inspired word of God. Paul knew very well the holy writings of God (History, Law and Prophecy).

He gives fresh understanding to the holy writings. He knew that God did not want His people to go back into slavery (Hosea 11:4,5). He was completely converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3–20). He was sure of his calling to preach and teach Jews and non-Jews the Good News of God in Jesus – the mystery of Christ and God's love.

Paul sums up the first seven chapters by saying those famous words in 8:1: 'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.'

Condemnation is the opposite of justification. Through the grace of God and the sacrifice of His Son Jesus, Christian believers are not condemned but are given a new start to life which promises:

- freedom from the punishment for sin.
- freedom from the guilt of sin.
- freedom from the control of sin.

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

Acts Chapter 17: *Paul preaches the Good News of Jesus in Athens*

Paul was greatly troubled to see all the idols in the city. He preached the Good News about Jesus Christ. In the synagogue he talked with those who worshipped Yahweh, the One True God (17:17). He explained to them how Jesus was their Messiah.

Paul spoke with great passion because the people did not have Jesus in their lives. Then some men took him to a meeting of the Areopagus where their law court met. 'What is this new teaching?' they asked him (17:19).

Paul told them:

1. The One True Almighty God made the world (17:24).
2. It is God who gives life and everything else (17:25).
3. All people on earth come from one man (Adam) whom God made (17:26).
4. God ... is never far from any one of us.
5. God is the creator of life (17:28). We were created to be His children.
6. God is not made out of gold or silver or stone (17:29).
7. Now is the time to repent and turn away from your sins (17:30).
8. God sent His Son to save us and He will judge us at the end (17:31).

When the Greeks heard about Jesus being raised from the dead, some laughed. Others said, 'We want to hear you again on this...' (17:32). But not many people believed in Yahweh, the One True and Almighty God and His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ (17:34).

Think about this: The believers in **Athens** were very religious but failed to know God personally. What do people think about your church and its members?

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

Romans Chapter 8:1-9. *A life of power through the Holy Spirit*

If we trust in Christ alone, He gives us the power of His Spirit (8:9). So now we can live, not governed by our old sinful nature, but by God. We live as the Spirit wants (8:4). We can keep God's Law because we begin to take on the righteousness of God. We want to do what He wants. Because

the Spirit is in our lives we no longer fear God's judgement. We are free from 'the law of sin and death'. We have God's Spirit all the time to give us power to live as God wants us to live. Paul called it 'the law of the Spirit that gives us life' (8:2).

Paul encourages every believer to know that he or she is completely free from the power of sin and the punishment we deserve. We are forgiven and not condemned (8:1).

How can we stay free? We begin to seek the good things the Spirit wants (8:5). As long as we let the Spirit of God lead us, we have peace in our hearts (8:6).

How we think changes what we do! Our thoughts rule our actions... And God's Spirit brings peace and changes the way we think and act. He dwells in us. Our sinful nature no longer controls us (8:9).

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

Romans Chapter 13:1-14. *When Men Rule Badly*

Paul says that God sets governments in place. He allows men (and women) to rule. Christians should obey their government. 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.

Talk about this:

1. Who rules over you at school, at work, in your village or town? Is it hard for you to obey them?
2. How can you help your government leaders to rule justly?
3. What order of the king did Daniel's friends disobey (Daniel 3:8-15)?
4. What did Peter say to the magistrates when they told him not to preach (Acts 5:29)?
5. Is it ever right to use violence when leaders want you to go against God's laws?

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 5:21-33. *Respect between Wives, Husbands, Families and Church Members*

Paul gave advice about being humble. "Follow the lead of one another. [Do this] because of your respect for Christ" (5:21). Paul warned against trying to control others in the fellowship. This causes division. Instead, respect and follow the spiritual leadership of others. This is what it means to serve one another in love.

Paul also applied this teaching to wives and husbands. He said, "Wives, follow the lead of your husbands as you follow the Lord" (5:22). This means to respect them and submit to them as they stay committed to Jesus. This means both husbands and wives should put the other person's needs before their own needs.

The husband in Christ is given authority over the wife for the benefit of the family. In the same way, Jesus is the head of the church family of believers and died for the benefit of its members (5:23).

Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives. Love them just as Christ loved the church. He gave himself up for her. He did it to make her holy" (5:25-26).

God holds the husband responsible for leading his family. He has a responsibility to care for them, not to crush or to control them. It means husbands loving wives as Christ loves the church and sacrificed Himself for her. Men often fail to do this, but that is the aim. Paul said, "He [Christ] wants a church that is holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands should love their wives" (5:27-28).

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

Hebrews 2:10-16. *What Jesus did for the Family of Believers*

Jesus was born to suffer and die for our sins. This was the amazing plan of God from the beginning. He acted in exactly the right way. He now brings His family of believers to share in His glory. God

made Jesus the perfect One to do this through His sacrifice (2:10).

Jesus offers us all a place in the family of God. This was promised by God long ago in the Old Testament (2:12-13; Psalm 22:22; Isaiah 8:18).

Jesus became a human being like us in order to die for us. 'By doing that, He could destroy the one who rules over the kingdom of death [who is] the devil' (2:14).

Jesus overcame sin and death for us. He set us free from the fear of death (2:15). Jesus robbed Satan of the power he uses to enslave us. He has brought us from death to life (Romans 6:13). We are the children of God. Therefore, we have His power working in us when we are born again.

Jesus came to help the family of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16). He helps all those who share the faith of Abraham in our Lord God Almighty. He blesses all who obey Him as Abraham did (Genesis 12:1-4). If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are children of God, both Jews and non-Jews. We receive what God promised Abraham (Galatians 3:29). God promised that the family of Abraham would be a blessing throughout the whole world for all who believe.

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