

2022

ST. JOHN'S

ALL MONTH VERSES

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
JANUARY

Verses for 3rd January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 10 to 14

What Psalm 14 means

Verse 1:

David says that the world is full of Nabals. “Everyone is bad”.
We often feel like this.
There are many bad people in the world.
But there are some people that love God.
The Bible calls them righteous.

Verses 2 to 4:

The LORD is looking on the “sons of man”.
In Hebrew this means the leaders of the enemies of God.
It does not include righteous people.
“Eat my people as they eat bread” means that bad men kill righteous people.
They do it as easily as they eat a meal.
They feel no shame. (Refer Matthew 18: 11).

Jesus called himself “the Son of man” but it does not mean the same thing!

Verses 5 to 6:

But God is with his people.
When this happens, bad men feel afraid.
They feel that God is not there.
They cannot explain it.
They feel as the Egyptians that drowned in the Red Sea.
(The story is in Exodus 14.)
The Jews thought that “there” in Psalm 14: 5 meant the Red Sea.
“Hid in the LORD” means that they believed God.
They hoped that he would give them help.

Verse 7:

David prays for somebody that will make Israel safe.
“Safe” in Hebrew is the word that we get our word Jesus from.
God answered David many times.
At last God came to earth.
He came as Jesus Christ.
That is why Christians sing and dance!
Believers are the true Israel of God, not the country of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 3: 1 to 17

Leviticus 3: 1
peace offering.

The peace offering was brought before God in order to have fellowship with God, to express thanksgiving , or to make a vow.

For the offering involved commitment to the covenant and celebrated peace and reconciliation between God and worshipers.

Leviticus 3: 17

neither fat nor blood.

Fat and blood are both vital to life.

Thus they are used to represent the life of the sacrificial victim, a life that belonged only to God.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5: 1 to 20

Matthew 5: 5 to 7

Sermon on the Mount.

Chapters 5: 5 to 7 commonly called Christ's Sermon on the Mount, contain a revelation of God's principles of righteousness by which all Christians are to live through faith in the son of God and through the power of the indwelling Spirit.

Matthew 5: 20

except your righteousness.

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was external only.

They kept many rules, prayed, praised, fasted, read God's Word and attended worship services.

However, they substituted the outward acts for the correct inner attitudes.

Jesus said the righteousness that God requires of the believer is more and just conform to God's will in faith and love.

Verses for 4th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 15 to 17

The Story of Psalm 16

Saul was trying to kill David.

David ran away to the woods, the hills and the fields.

He hid there from Saul.

400 men went with David.

Saul had 3000 soldiers.

Saul was king of Israel.

One night Saul and all his men slept.

David came near in the night and took some things from Saul.

David did not kill Saul.

In the morning David told Saul, "It was easy to kill you but I did not.

What have I done wrong?"

You sent me away from my own country.

You told me to find other gods. Why?"

It was probably at this time that David wrote Psalm 16.

It has two ideas in it:

1) The inheritance of David.

Your inheritance is what your parents give you when they die.

David says Saul made him go away from his own country.

The inheritance of David was there.

But David had a better inheritance.

The LORD was his inheritance.

2) The God of David.

Saul told David to find other gods.

But David already had the best God that there was.

David had the only God.

He had no need to make a change.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 4: 1 to 21

Leviticus 4: 3

sin offering.

God required a sin offering in order that those who sinned in ignorance, out of weakness or without deliberate intention could receive forgiveness.

Deliberate, rebellious sins, on the other hand, were to be punished by death.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5: 21 to 42

Matthew 5: 39

resist not evil.

Jesus is not speaking against the administration of proper justice towards those who do evil.
He is referring to loving ones enemies.

When wronged we are not to react in a spirit of hatred but in a way that shows we have values that are centered in Christ and His kingdom.

Verses for 5th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18

What Psalm 18 means

Psalm 18 describes in pictures how God works.

David did not see God.

David only saw how God gave him help.

Here are some examples: David called God a rock.

God was not really a rock.

But when David needed help,

God led David to a rock.

David hid from his enemies behind the rock.

So, David thought that God and the rock did the same job.

When David saw a rock he remembered God!

Can you think of other ways that rocks make us remember God?

– God sent a bad storm to the enemies of David. There was rain, wind, clouds, hail, thunder and lightning.

To David God was in the storm.

God was enjoying it.

The thunder was like God speaking.

The storm obeyed God and it destroyed the enemies of David.

So, when David saw a storm he remembered God.

Can you think of another storm that obeyed God?

– When David ran in the hills he did not fall.

He was as good as a wild animal.

His feet were like the feet of a goat.

Really the animal in the psalm was a deer.

A deer is like a small cow.

It runs very fast and does not fall.

David believed that God gave him feet as good as the feet of the deer.

You will find other examples in the psalm.

Make your own list.

Write examples from other psalms.

Note down everything that makes you remember God.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 4:22 to 5:13

Leviticus 5: 5
he shall confess.

To confess sin is to admit to God that we have sinned and that our thoughts, words and actions were wrong.

Confession of sin is required by God for forgiveness and must always be accompanied by turning away from confessed sin.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5:43 to 6:8

Matthew 6: 6
pray...in secret.

Every child of God should have some place to be alone with God.

Unless such a place exists, secret prayer will not be long or consistently maintained. Jesus had His secret places.

Secret prayer is especially important, in the morning to commit our day to God and in the evening to give thanks for His mercies and also at other times when the Holy Spirit prompts us to pray.

Verses for 6th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 19 to 21

What Psalm 19 means

Psalm 19 is about words.

In verses 1 to 6 nobody speaks the words.

We see the moon and the stars and the sun.

We see the earth and the animals and the plants.

They all make us feel inside ourselves, "Somebody made all this".

The psalm tells us in verses 1 and 4 who that is. His name is God.

We have a special name for all these things that God made.

We call them all "nature".

Nature is like a very big book.

It tells us, "God made everything".

Now look at verses 7 to 11.

Can you find the name "God" in it?

No, because here God has a different name.

Here he is the LORD.

This is the name that people use when they decide to follow God.

He becomes their LORD.

This part of the psalm is not about the book of nature.

This is about the book that we call the Bible.

Psalm 19 is a very small part of the Bible.

You are reading Psalm 19 in a small book.

The small book of Psalms, it has only 112 pages.

Bigger books have a lot of pages.

David did not have books like ours.

He had scrolls.

These were long piece of paper.

Scrolls were several metres long.

God did not write the nature scroll down.

It is just a picture to give us help.

So, here are 2 important books about God.

In the book of nature we learn how great God is.

We learn that he is wonderful.

We may feel afraid of him.

Christians call this "awe".

It makes us want to tell God that he is wonderful.

We call this "worship".

The other book is the Bible.

It tells us how to follow God, and make him our LORD.

OLD TESTAMENT

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Leviticus 5:14 to 6:7

Leviticus 5: 15

trespass offering.

The trespass or guilt offering was required when someone intentionally or unintentionally disregarded the property rights of another person.

This offering was also necessary when any of the Lord's commands was unintentionally broken .

An offering had to be brought along with restitution for the wrong done , plus a 20% fine.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 6: 9 to 34

Matthew 6: 33 seek....kingdom...righteousness.

Those who follow Christ are urged to seek above all else God's kingdom and His righteousness.

The verb seek implies being continually absorbed in a search for something or making a strenuous and diligent effort to obtain something .

Verses for 7th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 22 to 24

What Psalm 23 means

Verses 1 & 2:

God is like a shepherd.

In Israel, sheep followed their shepherd.

The man that wrote Psalm 23 said:

- he makes me to lie down in green fields: these were fields where the grass was new.
Grass is a plant that grows in fields.
Cows and sheep eat grass.
Green fields means that the sheep would find plenty to eat.
And they would sleep easily.
- he leads me to waters where I can rest: this was the best water.
It was probably a well, not a river.

The shepherd leads the sheep to all that they need: food, rest and water.

Jesus leads his people to all that they need.

Remember – what we NEED is not always what we WANT.

Verses 3 & 4:

God is like a guide.

We do not know who led David to Barzillai.

There was a guide.

Just as the old shepherd Barzillai made David think about God, so the guide made David think about God.

Some Christians think verses 3 and 4 are also about the shepherd and his sheep.

Others think that it is about a guide.

That guide led David through the wild places to where Barzillai lived.

The two ideas are true.

GOD IS LIKE A GUIDE.

GOD IS ALSO LIKE A SHEPHERD.

The valley of the River Jabbok was very dark.

But with God as guide and shepherd, David was safe.

God brought David through the shadow of death.

He will do the same for us – if we believe in Jesus.

We must all die.

It is a great help to know that:

- Jesus died and God raised him from the dead
- if we believe in Jesus God will raise us from the dead

Verses 5 & 6:

God is like a friend.

Psalm 23: 1 to 4 is about life on earth.

Psalm 23: 5 & 6 is about life in heaven.

Heaven is the home of God.

People that believe in Jesus go there.

They go there after they die.

In the psalm, Barzillai made a great dinner for David.

He poured oil, from plants, on David's head.

This was usual in those days.

He gave David wine to drink.

You can make wine from a fruit that we call the grape.

It made David feel very happy.

But it also made David think this: **I WILL ALWAYS LIVE WITH GOD.**

It is the same for us.

If we believe in Jesus we can say, "I will always live in the house of the LORD."

The house of the LORD is in heaven.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 6: 8 to 23

The daily sacrifice of a lamb is chiefly referred to.

The priest must take care of the fire upon the altar.

The first fire upon the altar came from heaven, by keeping that up continually, all their sacrifices might be said to be consumed with the fire from heaven, in token of God's acceptance.

Thus should the fire of our holy affections, the exercise of our faith and love, of prayer and praise, be without ceasing.

The law of the burnt-offerings put upon the priests a great deal of care and work; the flesh was wholly burnt, and the priests had nothing but the skin. But most of the meat-offering was their own.

It is God's will that his ministers should be provided with what is needful.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 7: 1 to 20

Matthew 7: 16

know them by their fruits.

Teachers who outwardly appear righteous but inwardly are ravening wolves can at times be identified by their fruits. The fruits of false teachers will be unwholesome characteristics in the lives of their followers, they will be professing Christians whose loyalty is more to personalities than to the Word of God.

They worship the creature more than the Creator.

They will be more concerned with their own desires than the God's glory and honor.

Their doctrine will be self centered.

Verses for 8th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 25 to 28

The Story of Psalm 25

We do not know when David wrote Psalm 25.

In it he writes about his enemies (Psalm 25: 2 and 19).

But David always had enemies.

This means that he might have written Psalm 25 at any time in his life.

The Psalm is in 3 parts, with an extra verse at the end.

1. Psalm 25: 1 to 7:

David prays that God will not remember his sins and that God will be his guide.

David also asks God for help, against his enemies.

2. Psalm 25: 8 to 14:

David tells us about God.

Because God is like this, he will answer David, and give him help.

3. Psalm 25: 15 to 21:

David tells God that his enemies have hurt him and made him unhappy.

Again he asks God for help.

Somebody else probably wrote verse 22.

This meant that everybody might use the psalm, not just David.

This includes Christians.

This is because Israel in the psalm means two things:

1. the Jews that lived in the land of Israel;

2. all the people that believe in the Jews' God (this includes Christians).

Psalm 25 is an alphabet psalm, like Psalms 9 and 10.

So, verse 1 begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Verse 2 begins with the second letter and so on.

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

One is missing in this psalm, the letter q.

So, Psalm 25: 21 begins with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Psalm 25: 22 does not begin with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

This is another reason why we think that David did not write it.

Alphabet psalms were hard to write.

They were special psalms to show people how much the writer loved God.

Other alphabet psalms are 9 and 10, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

In Psalm 1 we learn that there are two roads, or ways.
One is right and leads to God.
The other is wrong and does not lead to God.
Psalm 25 is about the right road.
It tells us that it is not easy.
The enemies of God are also the enemies of the people that believe in God.
Psalm 25 teaches us not to stop believing in God just because life becomes hard.
We must not do things in our own way.
We must do things God's way.
He will always send us help.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 6:24 to 7:10

Leviticus 7: 2

upon the altar.

In the Old Testament, ritualized forms of worship were a means of communication between God and His people.

They were dramatized and their pleas for forgiveness and reconciliation.

They also expressed the Israelites gratitude and dedication to God.

On God's part they were dramatized divine promises, warnings and teachings which declared God's attitude towards His people and what He expected from them.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 7:21 to 8:13

Matthew 7: 21

doeth the will of my Father.

Jesus emphatically taught that carrying out the will of His heavenly Father was a condition of entering the kingdom of heaven.

However this does not mean that we can gain merit salvation by our own efforts or works.

This is true for the following reasons.

God's forgiveness comes to us through faith and repentance made possible by the grace and sacrificial death of Christ .

Matthew 8: 10

great faith.

The centurion's faith surpassed anything that Jesus found among the Jews, for it combined a loving concern for one another person with great trust in Christ.

This story, along with Christ's application to the unbelieving Jews warns us that, we may be excluded from what God is doing by adhering to human traditions or by failing to believe in the power of His kingdom.

Verses for 10th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 32 & 33

The Story of Psalm 32

David probably wrote Psalm 32 after he had slept with Bathsheba.

She was the wife of Uriah.

David sent Uriah to die in battle.

Then David married Bathsheba.

For a while he did not ask God to forgive him.

As a result he was very unhappy.

Then he told God that he was sorry.

God forgave him.

David became happy again.

Christians have a special word for being sorry for their sins.

The word is repentance.

There are 7 Repentance Psalms.

The others are 6,38 51,102, 130 and 143.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 7: 11 to 38

Leviticus 7: 13

leavened bread.

Leavened bread could be used with peace offering because it was not placed on the altar.

Leviticus 7: 20

uncleanness ...cut off.

Persons who were ceremonially unclean and yet participated in the sacrifices and offerings were subject to the severe judgement of God .

This rule was designed to teach the people how great an abomination it was for a person to claim to be in a covenantal relationship with God, yet deliberately and knowingly to cling to sin.

Leviticus 7: 30

wave offering.

The wave offering was the priests portion of the peace offering.

It was waved toward the sanctuary as a sign of dedication to God and then waved toward the offerer or priest , indicating that the Lord was now putting the offering at his or her disposal.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 8: 14 to 34

Matthew 8: 16 to 17 healed all those who were sick.

The problem of sickness and disease is intertwined with the problem of sin and death, the consequences of fall. Whereas medical science views the causes of sickness and disease in physiological or psychosomatic terms, the Bible presents causes as the underlying or basic problem.

Matthew 8: 22

Let the dead bury their dead.

Christ's saying means , Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.

Verses for 11th January 2022

PSALMS

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Psalms 34 & 35

The Story of Psalm 34

Saul was King of Israel.

He wanted to kill David.

David ran away.

Saul followed him.

David went to Gath, which was a Philistine city.

The king of Gath was Abimelech.

He was not a friend to David.

David became afraid.

He should have trusted in the LORD.

He did not, but made a plan of his own.

He made Abimelech think that he, David, was crazy.

For this reason, Abimelech did not kill David.

In those days they thought that it was wrong to kill crazy people.

Abimelech sent David away.

He went to a cave in Adullam, which was a few miles away.

400 people went to the camp that David made in Adullam.

They were running away from a difficult life in Judah.

Today we would say that they were refugees.

The story is in a Part of the Bible that we call I Samuel, chapters 21 and 22.

In Psalm 34 David thanked God that he was safe.

Psalm 34 is an alphabet psalm.

There are 22 verses in it.

Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.

Verse 1 begins with aleph, verse 2 with beth, and so on.

We have put verse 16 before verse 15, because this makes it easier to understand.

Because it is an alphabet psalm there are a lot of different ideas in it.

Other alphabet psalms are 9, 10, 25, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

OLD TESTAMENT

?

Leviticus 8: 1 to 21

Leviticus 8: 2

Aaron and his sons.

Chapter 8 describes the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.

In the Old Testament the worshipper who approached God needed not only an offering but also the mediation of a priest .

The Levitical priesthood described here finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the believer's high priest.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 9: 1 to 17

Matthew 9: 11
eateth..with ..sinners

Jesus gives the rule to guide us in our contact with nonbelievers: it should not be for pleasure or intimate friendship, but in order to do good to them and to show them the way of salvation.

Matthew 9: 17
then they shall fast.

It is clear that Jesus expected believers to act after He was gone .

This age is the time of His ascension until His return .

The church awaits this return of the bridegroom's absence, from the time of His ascension until His return.

The church awaits this return of the bridegroom. Therefore fasting in this age is sign of believer's longing for the Lord's return.

Verses for 12th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 36 & 37

What Psalm 37: 1 to 11 means

How do you wait for God to do something?

How do you stop yourself getting angry because godless people have everything that they want?

The psalmist tells us how: do something else!

In verse 3 he starts telling us the things that we should do so that we do not become angry.

He says:

- trust in the LORD, or ask God for help
- do good things, or give help to people around us
- enjoy what the land gives, even if it is not much

We are happy with the LORD if we obey him.

He will then give us all that we need.

It might not happen immediately, but it will happen.

We must learn to wait for God's time.

This means the time when God decides to do something.

In verse 6 there are 2 pictures.

One is of the dawn, the other of the sun at midday.

Just as everybody sees these things, so everybody will see what sort of people we are.

But, as verse 7 says, we must wait for God to do something.

He will show people what we are like.

We must not become angry if they do not see it.

We must be still and wait!

The Hebrew word for "be still" in verse 7 means "do not make a noise" as well as "do not move".

We have written "with God" in brackets ... () ... in verse 8.

We usually do this when the words are not in the Hebrew Bible.

We include them to make it easier to understand.

Bible translators have always done something like this.

Some people think that we should write it as "with evil people" in brackets, not "with God".

Both are probably true.

We should not get angry with anyone.

Another way to say "get angry" in English is "get heated (hot)" about something.

As you can see in verse 8, it is the same in Hebrew.

When we get angry with someone it usually leads to trouble.

The word "cut off" in verse 9 means "destroyed".

When the Jews came from Egypt to Israel with Moses, God cut off or destroyed their

enemies.

Then the Jews received their land.

The enemies were the Canaanites that lived in the land before the Jews.

This verse tells us that what God did in the past he can do again.

This time it is not the Canaanites that God will destroy.

It will be all the evil people that make life hard for God's people.

Then there will be peace.

There are 3 sorts of peace:

- no fighting wars with other people
- no fighting against yourself
- no fighting between us and God

Jesus taught his people that the land that they would inherit (or receive) would be the kingdom of heaven.

That is the place where Jesus is king.

When the psalmist wrote Psalm 37, "the land" meant where the Jews lived.

It is important to understand that Jesus said that it meant more than this.

The psalmist thought that "waiting for God" meant that one day things would change, perhaps for his children.

Jesus taught that one day things would change for everyone.

That day will be when Jesus comes back to the earth.

But everybody must wait for God: he may do something now!

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 8: 22 to 36

The covenant of priesthood must be made by sacrifice, as well as other covenants, Psalm. 50: 5.

And thus Christ was consecrated by the sacrifice of himself, once for all.

Sacrifices of each kind must be offered for the priests, that they might with the more tenderness and concern offer the gifts and sacrifices of the people, with compassion on the ignorant, and on those that were out of the way, not insulting over those for whom sacrifices were offered, remembering that they themselves had had sacrifices offered for them, being compassed with infirmity.

1. A bullock, the largest sacrifice, was offered for a sin-offering (verse 14), that hereby atonement might be made, and they might not bring any of the guilt of the sins of their former state into the new character they were now to put on.

When Isaiah was sent to be a prophet, he was told to his comfort, Thy iniquity is taken away, Isaiah 6: 7.

Ministers, that are to declare the remission of sins to others, should give diligence to get it, made sure to themselves in the first place, that, their own sins are pardoned.

Those to whom is committed the ministry of reconciliation must first be reconciled to God themselves, that they may deal for the souls of others as for their own.

2. A ram was offered for a burnt-offering, verse 18 to 21.

By this they gave to God the glory of this great honour which was now put upon

them, and returned him praise for it, as Paul thanked Christ Jesus for putting him into the ministry, 1 Timothy 1: 12.

They also signified the devoting of themselves and all their services to the honour of God.

3. Another ram, called the ram of consecration, was offered for a peace-offering, verse 22, etc.

The blood of it was part put on the priests, on their ears, thumbs, and toes, and part sprinkled upon the altar; and thus he did (as it were) marry them to the altar, upon which they must all their days give attendance.

All the ceremonies about this offering, as those before, were appointed by the express command of God; and, if we compare this chapter with Exodus 29, we shall find that the performance of the solemnity exactly agrees with the precept there, and in nothing varies.

Here, therefore, as in the account we had of the tabernacle and its vessels, it is again and again repeated, As the Lord commanded Moses.

And thus Christ, when he sanctified himself with his own blood, had an eye to his Father's will in it.

As the Father gave me commandment so I do, Jn 14:31; 10:18; 6:38.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 9:18 to 10:4

Matthew 9: 37

The harvest truly is plenteous.

Jesus viewed each person as invaluable everlasting soul who will spend eternity in heaven or in hell.

The harvest field represents the lost, many of whom can be saved if there are workers to proclaim Christ's salvation to them.

Matthew 9: 38

Pray ...that he will send.

This verse expresses one of God's own spiritual principles.

Before He acts, He usually calls His people to pray

Only after His people have prayed does God accomplish that work.

Verses for 13th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 38 & 39

What Psalm 39 means

Verses 1 to 3:

David says that he is not going to say anything. Even though godless people make him want to speak, he will not.

But this makes him feel worse.

So David decides that he will say something.

Verses 4 to 6:

David asks God how long he will stay alive.

He says that his life is “as wide as my hand”.

A hand is not very wide so this means that his life is not very long.

Our lives are so short they seem like the wind blowing for a short time, or a shadow that goes when the sun goes down.

Verses 7 to 9:

Now David says what he really wants.

He wants God to make him safe from the results of the bad things that he did.

David thought that one of the results was his illness.

Verses 10 to 13:

Here David says that God is hitting him, hurting him and destroying him.

He means that God is punishing him for his sin.

David believes that God is doing this by making him ill.

“fly away like a moth” means that for a while you can see it, then it flies away and you cannot see it.

“do not be dumb” means “speak to me”. Until God speaks, David will feel that he and God are in different places!

“my fathers” means father, grand-father and so on.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 9: 1 to 14

Leviticus 9: 8

slew the calf.

God instituted animal sacrifice as an ordinance whereby sinners might draw near to Him in repentance and faith and so experience His forgiveness, salvation and fellowship.

The offering of the animal was an object lesson, pointing to the principle of vicarious

sacrifice and substitutionary atonement.

The life of the innocent animal was offered in the place of the sinful and guilty worshipper.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 10: 5 to 31

Matthew 10: 7 Preach ..The kingdom.

The context makes clear that the preaching of the kingdom is to be accompanied by God asserting His power against the forces of sin, sickness and Satan.

It is Christ's purpose that the kingdom of heaven and its power be at hand to bring salvation, grace and healing to God's people.

Verses for 14th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41

What Psalm 40 means

Verse 2:

It is not easy to get out of very wet (muddy) ground.

Verse 5:

We do not know what God has planned for each of us.

Verse 6:

A master would make a hole in his slave's ear and fasten it to the door, if the slave wanted to stay with his master.

Verse 7:

In the New Testament Jesus said that this was about him.
This is in Hebrews 10: 7.

Verses 12 to 17:

Here the psalm changes.

It is not a song of praise and thanks any more.

David has more problems, so he asks God for more help.

In verse 15 "Aha, aha" is just a noise that is not kind!

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 9:15 to 10:7

Leviticus 10: 1

strange fire.

Nadal and Abihu may have put into their censers coals of fire from unauthorized source, note also that the offering of the incense on the altar was to be done by the high priest.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 10:32 to 11:10

Matthew 10: 32

confess me before men .

To confess Christ means to acknowledge Him as Lord of ones life and to openly before others, even before those who oppose Him His ways and His standards.

Verses for 15th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 42 to 44

What Psalm 44 means

The psalm is in 3 parts. Verses 1 to 8 tell us what God did for the Jews when they came into their country.

It was not the Jews that won the land for them, but God.

His hand (verses 2 and 3) and his arm (verse 3) mean “what God did”.

(Some Christians say that God’s hand is “the *Holy Spirit” and his arm is Jesus.)

The “light on your face” (verse 3) means “the good way that God looked at people so that he did good things for them”.

The enemies of the Jews were the people that lived in the land before they did.

But in verses 9 to 22 we read that something bad has happened.

The Jews had done nothing wrong, but their enemies had done bad things to them.

This often happens to Christian people.

Why does God let it happen?

He does it to make his people strong.

Sheep were animals that people killed for the meat.

“Thrown us into other countries” means “put us in countries where we did not live before”.

The *covenant in verse 17 is what God agreed to do if his people obeyed him.

Here, in verses 17 to 22, the people are saying that they kept their part of the *covenant, but God did not keep his.

In other words, they obeyed God, but he did not care for them.

We often feel *like this. When it happens we must remember that:

- God lets it happen to make us strong
- we must go on believing in God.

It happened to Jesus, and we must be *like him!

In verses 23 to 26 the person that wrote the psalm prays.

He (or she) asks God to wake up and send help!

Whatever happens, we must always ask God to send help!

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 10: 8 to 20

Leviticus 10: 9

Do not drink wine.

Abstinence from intoxicating wine was required of all priests when performing priestly duties

.

They were expected to be holy vessels before God and the people whom they were to teach soberly the ways of God .

The violation of this ordinance about abstinence was serious enough to incur the penalty of death .

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 11: 11 to 30

Matthew 11: 28

Come unto me.

Jesus gracious invitation comes to all who labour and are heavy laden with the troubles of life and the sins of their own human nature.

By coming to Jesus , becoming His servant and obeying His direction, He will free you from your insurmountable burdens and give you rest, peace and His Holy Spirit to lead you through life.

What trials and cares you carry will be borne with His help and grace .

Verses for 17th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 47 to 49

What Psalm 48 means

Verses 1 & 2:

The holy mountain is Mount Zion, where they built the temple.

But, in this psalm, the *holy mountain is all the city of Jerusalem.

They had built it on the edge of high land, so when you came to it, it looked beautiful.

The High Place of Zaphar was where all old religions thought that their god came to the earth.

The psalmist is saying that there is only one Zaphar, and only one God: Jerusalem is the real Zaphar, and the LORD is the real God.

Verses 3 to 8:

The kings in verse 4 were the leaders of the Assyrian army. (Read the Story of Psalms 46, 47 and 48 again.)

They attacked Jerusalem, but God kept his city safe, and the people that were in it.

The kings saw something that frightened them away. We do not know what it was. Perhaps it was the 185 000 dead bodies!

God did this just as easily as he could send a wind to destroy a ship!

Tarshish was a place in Spain that had the biggest ships in the world at that time.

The people living in Jerusalem saw that what they had heard was true: God will keep his people safe!

But they must believe in him, obey him and love him.

Later, when the Jews did not do these things, God did not keep their city safe.

Verses 9 to 13:

After the war was over, the psalmist tells the people to remember what happened.

They were to look at all the places that God had made safe.

Then they could tell their children what had happened, and the places where it had happened.

This would help their children to believe, obey and love God also.

The Bible teaches us that it is important to tell our children what God has done for us.

Verse 14:

“God will be our guide until we die” means that he will lead if we will follow him.

“*for ever and ever” means “always”.

After we die, we will be with God if we believe, obey and love him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 11: 1 to 47

Leviticus 11: 44

ye shall be holy.

The instructions concerning clean and unclean, were given apparently for health reasons, but also as standards to help Israel remain a people separated from the ungodly society around them.

These dietary instructions are still valid today.

Christians today must distinguish themselves from surrounding society by eating, drinking and dressing so as to glorify God with their bodies and by rejecting all unholy social customs of unbelievers.

They must be holy in all manner of conversion.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 12: 1 to 21

Matthew 12: 1

Sabbath.

The weekly Sabbath was the seventh day of the week set apart by the law of Moses as a day for ceasing from normal work and for giving oneself to rest and to the worship of the Lord.

There are strong reasons to believe that the principles of the Sabbath have permanent validity for Christians.

Verses for 18th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 50 & 51

The Story of Psalm 50

Asaph was one of King David's music leaders. Either Asaph wrote this psalm, or someone wrote it for him. Or perhaps someone wrote it long after his death, for singers that lived after him.

The psalm is very *like Isaiah 1: 11 to 20, and Micah 6: 6 to 9.

Isaiah and Micah wrote their books about 250 years after David and Asaph died.

Psalms 73 to 83 are also psalms of Asaph.

The psalm is a picture of a Court of Law.

This is a place where people decide whether someone has done right or wrong.

If they have done wrong, the Court can send them to prison, or worse.

In the psalm, Israel is in Court.

God is telling them what they have done wrong.

Everything in the sky and on earth must decide whether Israel has done right or wrong.

God says that they have done wrong and that he will *punish them if they do not obey him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 12:1 to 13:11

Leviticus 12: 2

born a man child ...unclean. Parenthood is God's will for man and woman and can be one of the greatest Joys of life.

However the discharges associated with childbirth had to be treated as unclean and symbolized the fall of humankind.

Now children are born with a sinful nature.

The psalmist words apply here .

Behold I was shaken in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Leviticus 13: 3

pronounce him unclean.

Uncleanness here must be equated with whatever did not accord with God's holiness.

It could be caused by that which was associated with parenthood, sickness or death.

All these things deviate from the perfection God intended at creation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 12: 22 to 50

Matthew 12: 31

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit involves attributing the ministry and miraculous kingdom power of the Holy Spirit (such as authority to drive out demons and power to heal the sick) to Satan rather than to God.

It involves a deliberate rejection of the Holy Spirit's witness to Christ and the gospel.

Verses for 19th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 52 to 54

The Story of Psalm 52

Saul was trying to kill David.

David and his men ran away from Saul.

They came to a house of God in Nob.

They asked Ahimelech the *priest for food.

He gave them the special bread that only the *priests should eat.

He also gave David Goliath's *sword.

It was in the house of God at Nob.

Doeg was a man from the country of Edom.

He saw what Ahimelech did.

Doeg worked for Saul.

He went and told Saul what had happened.

Saul thought that Ahimelech was giving David help to kill Saul.

Doeg knew that this was not true, but he did not tell Saul.

Saul told Doeg to kill Ahimelech and the other *priests in Nob.

*Priests were special servants of God.

They worked in the houses of God, or *temples.

Doeg killed 85 *priests, and their wives and children.

Doeg was an important man.

He worked for Saul at Saul's farm.

He was the leader (or boss) of all the men that kept Saul's animals.

He got a lot of money for his job.

He became a rich and powerful man.

But he was also a very *cruel man.

He said things that hurt people.

What he said about Ahimelech was true, but Saul thought that he meant something else!

Doeg was clever *like this.

In the psalm, David tells us that God will destroy people that say bad things and hurt other people.

But people that trust in God instead of money will always praise God.

The "always" means that they will praise God in heaven after they die.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 13: 12 to 39

The priest is told what judgment to make, if there were any appearance of a leprosy in old sores; and such is the danger of those who having escaped the pollutions of the world are

again entangled therein or, burn in an accident, verse 24.

The burning of strife and contention often occasions the rising and breaking out of that corruption, which proves that men are unclean.

Human life lies exposed to many grievances.

With what troops of diseases are we beset on every side; and thy all entered by sin!

If the constitution be healthy, and the body lively and easy, we are bound to glorify God with our bodies.

Particular note was taken of the leprosy, if in the head.

If the leprosy of sin has seized the head; if the judgment be corrupted, and wicked principles, which support wicked practices, are embraced, it is utter uncleanness, from which few are cleansed.

Soundness in the faith keeps leprosy from the head.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 13: 1 to 17

Matthew 13: 12

whosoever hath... shall have more.

Jesus states here a principle of His kingdom: believers must continue to acquire truth and grace or they will loose even what they have.

Growth in grace or spiritual decline may be hardly perceptible in the lives of many.

Nevertheless it is a fact that a Christian either grows or degenerates.

Verses for 20th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 55 & 56

The Story of Psalm 55

David had a friend.

They did a lot of good things together.

But one day the friend *betrayed David. David thought that his friend liked him, but he was wrong. His friend worked for David's enemies.

This is like Jesus' friend Judas. Judas told Jesus' enemies where to find Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus as David's friend betrayed David.

But who was David's friend?

· Maybe it was Ahithophel. You will find the story in 2 Samuel 15: 31; 16: 15 to 23 and 17: 1 to 23. Old Jewish Bibles tell us that it was Ahithophel, but not everyone agrees.

· Maybe it was Absalom. Absalom was King David's son. So, he was a *prince.

“A man just like me” in verse 13 may mean “a king or a prince like me”.

Again, not everyone agrees. The story of how Absalom tried to kill David and become king himself is in 2 Samuel chapters 15 to 19.

· Maybe we will never know! David had many friends whose names we do not know.

Many Christians now think that one of these *betrayed David. They said that they were David's friends, but they helped David's enemies in a secret way.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 13:40 to 14:9

When the priest had pronounced the leper unclean, it put a stop to his business in the world, cut him off from his friends and relations, and ruined all the comfort he could have in the world.

He must humble himself under the mighty hand of God, not insisting upon his cleanness, when the priest had pronounced him unclean, but accepting the punishment.

Thus must we take to ourselves the shame that belongs to us, and with broken hearts call ourselves “Unclean, unclean;” heart unclean, life unclean; unclean by original corruption, unclean by actual transgression; unclean, therefore deserving to be for ever shut out from communion with God, and all hope of happiness in him; unclean, therefore undone, if infinite mercy do not interpose.

The leper must warn others to take heed of coming near him.

He must then be shut out of the camp, and afterward, when they came to Canaan, be shut out of the city, town, or village where he lived, and dwell with none but those that were lepers

like himself.

This typified the purity which ought to be in the gospel church.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 13: 18 to 30

Matthew 13: 24 to 25

good seed ..tares.

The parable of the wheat and the tares emphasizes that Satan will sow alongside those who sow the Word of God

The field represents the world and the Good seed. represents the true children of the kingdom. The Gospel and true believers will be planted throughout the world. Satan also will plant followers .

Verses for 21st January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 57 and Psalms 59: 1 — 4; & 9 — 17

What Psalm 57 means

The psalm is in two parts: verses 1-5 and verses 6-11.

Both end with the words “God, lift yourself above the skies. Lift your *glory above all the earth” (verses 5 and 11).

God is already above the skies, in his home in *heaven.

These two verses mean “God, show everyone that you are *Lord of everything”.

Verses 1 – 5:

Here David is asking God for help. He asks God to be gracious, or to “have mercy”. (Look at Psalm 56.)

He wants God to be kind to him and save him from Saul.

In verse 1 he says that he will hide under the shadow of God’s *wings.

This is like a mother bird hiding her babies under her wings. She hides them from danger.

This is a picture of God hiding David from danger.

In verse 2 “his plan for me” means “all the things that God wants to happen to me”.

In verse 3 heaven is where God lives. His word is what He wants to happen. His truth is everything that He says.

In verse 4 David sees Saul and all his other enemies as wild animals: they want to eat him like a lion eats smaller animals.

“Their tongues are like swords” probably means the unkind things that they say. They hurt David.

Verses 6 – 11:

Here David is thanking God because God saved him.

Saul did not find David in the *cave!

In verse 8 David tells his harp and his lyre to wake up. This means that he has not made music on them. They have been quiet, or “asleep”! Now he wants them to make music to praise God.

He will start so early in the morning that he will “wake up the dawn”.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 14: 10 — 31

The cleansed leper was to be presented to the Lord, with his offerings.

When God has restored us to enjoy public worship again, after sickness, distance, or otherwise, we should testify our thanksgiving by our diligent use of the liberty. And both we and our offerings must be presented before the Lord, by the Priest that made us clean, even our Lord Jesus.

Beside the usual rites of the trespass-offering, some of the blood, and some of the oil, was to be put upon him that was to be cleansed.

Wherever the blood of Christ is applied for justification, the oil of the Spirit is applied for sanctification; these two cannot be separated.

We have here the gracious provision the law made for poor lepers.

The poor are as welcome to God's altar as the rich.

But though a meaner sacrifice was accepted from the poor, yet the same ceremony was used for the rich; their souls are as precious, and Christ and his gospel are the same to both.

Even for the poor one lamb was necessary. No sinner could be saved, had it not been for the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God with his blood.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 13: 31 — 53

Matthew 13: 41

gather out...things that offend.

At the return of Christ to earth after the tribulation and at the end of the age, there will be a time of harvest of both the wicked and the righteous living upon earth . The wicked are first gathered. The righteous are gathered next. This gathering will be from out of His kingdom. After the harvest destruction then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.

Verses for 22nd January 2022

PSALMS

Psalm 60; Psalm 61 & Psalm 119: 161 to 176

The Story of Psalm 61

David is far from his home in Jerusalem. Maybe he is in Syria, as in Psalm 60. Or, maybe, he is in Edom after he had run away from his son Absalom, when Absalom tried to become king. Sometimes he was sad. This was because he did not think that he could do anything. This is what “my *heart is weak” means in verse 2. He did not feel brave enough to fight, he just wanted to die.

But he knew that this was wrong, so he asked God for help. He thought of things around him that made him think about God.

To David, God was *like a special rock where he could hide.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 14: 32 to 57

The leprosy in a house is unaccountable to us, as well as the leprosy in a garment; but now sin, where that reigns in a house, is a plague there, as it is in a heart.

Masters of families should be aware, and afraid of the first appearance of sin in their families, and put it away, whatever it is.

If the leprosy is got into the house, the infected part must be taken out. If it remain in the house, the whole must be pulled down. The owner had better be without a dwelling, than live in one that was infected.

The leprosy of sin ruins families and churches. Thus sin is so interwoven with the human body, that it must be taken down by death.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 14: 6

danced before them.

The unquestionably lewd public dancing of an ungodly young woman for Herod and his guests led to the death of one of the holiest people.

According to Scripture spontaneous dancing was done by Hebrew women and girls was done on exceptionally joyful occasions and specially after victory in battle as they sang to the Lord

.

Worldly parties and sensual dancing lead to forgetfulness of God, an inciting of worldly passions, a hardening of heart and a clouding of one's ability to discern sin, righteousness or

judgement.

In these things true children of God do not participate.

Verses for 24th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 66 & 67

The Story of Psalm 66

Every year the Jews have a Passover. They have done it now for nearly 3 500 years. In it, they remember that God took them from Egypt to the Promised Land. They called the Promised Land "Israel".

This Psalm is about a special Passover. Many Bible students think that it is the one after God saved them from the Assyrians. This was about 2700 years ago. Their king at that time was Hezekiah.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 15: 1 to 33

Leviticus 15: 5

wash his clothes and bathe.

Chapters 11 to 15 show God's concern over the physical health and well being of His people. The ancient people around them did not know anything about hygiene, sanitation, the importance of washing of the prevention of infectious diseases nor did they show adequate care for the poor and the sick.

The laws of God promoted concern for these things and encouraged the people to treat their lives and their God as holy.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 14: 13 to 36

Matthew 14: 23

pray....alone.

While on earth, Jesus often sought time to be alone with God. Time alone with God is essential to spiritual well being .

The lack of desire for solitary prayer to and communion with our heavenly Father is an unmistakable sign that our spiritual lives are in decline. When this happens, we must turn from all that offends the Lord and renew our commitment to seeking God and His grace for our daily lives.

January 25th, 2022, TUESDAY

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

OT Jer 1:4—10

Psalm 67

Epistle Acts 9:1—18

Matt 19:27—30

COLLECT: Almighty and merciful God, we Thank You for Your servant and apostle Paul whom You called to preach the Gospel to the people of all nations. Raise up, we pray, in this and every land evangelists and heralds of your kingdom, that Your Church may reveal to all the world the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

Verses for 27th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 72 & 73

What Psalm 72: 15 to 20 means

There is a special word that comes 4 times in this part of the psalm: *bless (verses 15, 17, 18 and 19).

There is no English word that means the same as the Hebrew “bless” (baruch). It means more than “say and do good things to”.

Also, it does not have the same meaning when:

- God *blesses us (which means we will have many children, so will our animals, our plants will grow well and we will have much money, houses and fields)
- We bless God (which means we say how good, great and glorious he is, in other words, we praise him).
“Glorious” is the adjective (a word that describes) from “glory”.
“Glory” means “shining as the sun”.

In verse 16 *grain is what we make bread with. In Lebanon, all the plants grew well. In verse 17 “for ever” means “always” ... even after we die!*

Verse 20 tells us that Psalm 72 completes the Second Book of Psalms.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 17: 1 to 16

Leviticus 17: 7
unto devils.

The word translated devils literally means hairy ones and probably refers to goat idols. Evidently during the time of Moses , Israel offered sacrifices to desert demons in order to secure their help or their favor.

This kind of action represented spiritual unfaithfulness to the Lord God and was strictly forbidden.

Leviticus 17: 11

the life of the flesh is in the blood.

This passage gives the reason for the shedding the blood of a sacrificial animal, and its meaning for atonement.

The blood of the animal was identified with its life, thus the blood atoned for human sin at the price of life.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 16: 13 to 28

Matthew 16: 18

the gates of hell shall not prevail.

The gates of hell represents all the demons and evil strategy that Satan can marshal in an attempt to destroy the church or to withstand its mission in the word.

In spite of Satan doing the worst , the Church that Jesus Christ is building cannot , in the end be overcome by Satan .

God's true church will rise up in faith, authority and the power of God Holy Spirit to righteously assault Satan's kingdom.

Verses for 28th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 74 & 75

The Story of Psalm 75

The psalm tells us that God has done something good for his people.

Many Bible students think that the good thing was this.

God saved them from the King of Assyria.

His name was Sennacherib.

Assyria was a country north and east of Judah. Sennacherib fought against many places near Judah and won.

But when he fought against the capital city of Judah, he did not win. The capital city was Jerusalem.

The *temple was in Jerusalem.

God kept the *temple and his people that lived near it safe.

You can read the story in Isaiah chapters 36 and 37.

About 100 years later God did not keep the *temple and his people safe.

You can read about this in Psalm 74.

There are three pictures in Psalm 75.

The *psalmist tells us three things in these pictures. He does this because he thinks that we will remember pictures better than words!

The pictures are of earthquakes, horns and a cup of wine.

But all three of them say one thing: God is our *judge, not men.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 18: 1 to 30

Leviticus 18: 3

Neither shall you walk in their ordinances.

The people of God have always been tempted to accept the practices and standards of morality of the society to which they belong .

Therefore God commands His people to make His laws the only standard by which to judge right and wrong. We must never conform to the surrounding society and accept it's way of life .

God must be the sole source and standard for all human moral or spiritual conduct.

Leviticus 18: 21

pass through the fire to Molech .

The Canaanites sacrificed infants to their gods as part of their religious rites. This detestable practice was strictly forbidden by God .

Today the practice of killing unborn children for the sake of convenience or as a form of birth control is an equally detestable sin and abomination to God.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 17: 1 to 27

Matthew 17: 17

faithless and perverse.

This text reflects Jesus estimation of disciples and churches who fail to minister to others the real power of God's kingdom.

Failure to deliver those oppressed by Satan and demons, demonstrates lack of faith, understanding and spiritual authority.

Jesus not only drove out the demons but also desires his disciples to do the same thing through faith.

Verses for 29th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 76 & 77

What Psalm 76 means

Verse 1:

When King Solomon died, his country became two countries. One was Judah and the other was Israel. They had a king each. But Assyria destroyed Israel in 721 BC.

BC means “years Before Christ came to the earth”.

So, when Sennacherib attacked Judah, there was no country of Israel. That means that in this psalm, Judah and Israel are both names for God’s people. They do not mean two different countries.

Verse 3:

Breaking the enemy’s weapons (bow, shield and sword) is another way to say that God destroyed the enemy.

Verse 5:

“sleeping” is a Bible way to describe death.

Because the soldiers are dead, they cannot use their hands to fight.

Verse 9:

We have said that “to *judge” means “to say who is right and who is wrong”.

But it really means more than that in many places in the Bible.

This is one of those places.

God *judged the Assyrians to be wrong: the result of this was that they died.

God *judged the poor people to be right: the result of this was that they became free.

They were not *oppressed any more. This means that the enemy did not hurt them, or take their food, money, animals and children.

Verse 10:

Bible students do not really know what this verse means.

This translation says what the *Hebrew words say.

Maybe it means that when people like Sennacherib are angry with people like the Israelites then people will praise what God does.

Verse 12:

“Breaks the *spirit” means “stops them wanting to fight”.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 19: 1 to 22

Leviticus 19: 18

love thy neighbour.

Neighbour refers to anyone we come into contact with, not just someone who lives near us. This commandment regulating Israel's treatment of others was cited by Christ.

Paul and James describe practical ways for us to show love and care for our neighbours.

Leviticus 19: 34

love him as thyself.

Loving one's neighbour includes loving strangers who come to live in one's community.

Jesus emphasizes the same thing in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

He is the God who wants to Bless all nations of the world.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 18: 1 to 20

Matthew 18: 7

woe to that man.

Jesus warns that those who are instrumental in placing sinful things before others especially before children will receive the ultimate condemnation.

Matthew 18: 19

if two ...shall agree.

There is authority and power in the prayer of agreement.

Jesus statement points to the principle of synergism in the realm of faith and prayer.

Verses for 31st January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 40 to 72

What verses 40 to 55 mean

These verses look back to when Israel was in Egypt.

God did two things there:

- He sent 10 *plagues to make the King of Egypt (Pharaoh) let God's people go free
- He led his people through the Red Sea and the *desert and finally to the land he had promised them.

In verses 44 to 51 are 6 of the 10 *plagues.

A *plague is when something bad happens to a group of people.

Here is where you can find them in the Bible. The other 4 are also in the list.

1) Psalm 78: 44 – Water to Blood – Exodus 7: 17 to 21; and Psalm 105: 29

2) Psalm 78: 45 – frogs – Exodus 8: 1 to 7; and Psalm 105: 30

3) lice (insects) – Exodus 8: 16 to 19; and Psalm 105: 31

4) Psalms 78: 45 – flies – Exodus 8: 20 to 24; and Psalm 105: 31

5) Cattle died- Exodus 9: 1 to 7

6) Boils- Exodus 9: 8 to 12

7) Psalm 78: 47- hail and storm – Exodus 9: 18 to 26; and Psalm 105: 32

8) Psalm 78: 46 – locusts – Exodus 10: 1 to 20; and Psalm 105:34

9) Darkness – Exodus 10: 21 to 29; and Psalm 105: 28

10) Psalm 78: 51- Death of first born sons –
Exodus 11 and 12; and Psalm 105: 36

Pharaoh would not let God's people go. God sent these 10 *plagues to make Pharaoh let God's people go, verses 43 to 51.

Then God took them to the *holy land, a Bible name for the country of Israel, verses 52 to 55. But verse 42 tells us that 'they chose not to remember what he did'. This made God very sad, verse 40, and *unhappy, verse 41.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 19:23 to 20:8

Leviticus 19: 34

love him as thyself. Loving one's neighbour includes loving strangers foreigners, residents, who come to live in ones community.

Jesus emphasizes the same thing as parable of the Good Samaritan.

God Himself loved His people while they were foreigners, and He expects us to do the same. He is the kind of God who wants to Bless all the nations of the world.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 18:21 to 19:12

Matthew 18: 35

if he...forgive not.

In this parable, Jesus teaches that the forgiveness of God though freely given to repentant sinners, nevertheless remains conditional according to a person's willingness to forgive others. In other words, if we are unmerciful and unforgiving towards another person, that will block the flow of God's forgiveness towards us.

Where Paul maintains that bitterness, resentment and animosity are totally incompatible with the Christian profession and must be done away with.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
FEBRUARY

Verses for 1st February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1 to 5; & 8 to 13 and Psalms 80

Psalms 80

What Psalm 80 means

Study this psalm in three parts: each part ends “Make us return (to you). Make your face shine (on us) and make us safe”.

Bible students are not sure if “return” means “return from *exile” in Assyria or Babylon; or “return to God from the wrong things we have done”.

Our translation chooses the second meaning, but both could be true.

“Make your face shine” is how the *Jews said, “Do something good for us”.

This is what we call “The *covenant”. If God’s people obey him, he will make them safe.

In verse 1 *Joseph means the same as Israel, God’s people. Maybe the *psalmist used the name Joseph because he was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The words “shine on” at the start of verse 2 are in verse 1 in the *Hebrew Bible.

As in verses 3, 7 and 19, “shine” here means “do something good”. The good thing the *psalmist wants is for all the people to be united in their own country.

“Get up” in the *Hebrew Bible is “wake up”.

In the second part, verses 4 to 7, the *psalmist asks God how long it will be before:

- God stops being angry with them
- God stops making them cry buckets full of tears
- God stops their enemies fighting them and laughing at them

In verses 4 (and 19) we have the name *LORD God of *Shabuoth. Isaiah and Jeremiah often used this name. Each part of the name means something. *LORD means that he will always be alive. God means that he is powerful. *Shabuoth means that he has great armies, both on earth and in *heaven.

In the last part of the psalm, the *vine is a picture of God’s people.

He brought them from Egypt to the *Promised Land of Israel, verse 8.

They lived in it from the Sea in the west to the River in the east, from the mountains in the south to Lebanon in the north, verses 9 to 11.

They used to build walls round *vines to keep them safe. But God knocked down these walls and let wild animals attack and destroy it, verses 12 to 13. The wild animals are a picture of Israel’s enemies.

Then the *psalmist prays that God will do something and send help to Israel, verses 14 to 19. “Hand” and “right hand” are Bible-pictures of God doing something in our world.

“The son”, verse 15, and “the man” and “the son of man”, verse 17, are all names for God’s people Israel. Some Bible students think that it may be the king of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 20: 9 to 27

These verses repeat what had been said before, but it was needful there should be line upon line. What praises we owe to God that he has taught the evil of sin, and the sure way of

deliverance from it! May we have grace to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; may we have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 19: 13 to 30

Matthew 19: 21

Go and sell that thou hast.

Jesus tested the heart of the rich young man in the area of his greatest weakness His wealth. He was not willing to put Christ before and above his possessions.

Does Christ's statement mean that all believers should sell everything they own? No for we must care for the needs of our families and others. However, we must be willing to give up anything that Christ asks of us.

Our commitment to Him can be nothing less.

Verses for 2nd February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 81 & 82

Psalm 81

Asaph, a temple singer, is calling out to sing aloud, joyfully shout and make music with timbrel to “God our strength.”

Is God your strength?

When we trust and make God our refuge (our hiding place in times of trouble), He will be our strength. But if we look to men, money and mute idols and icons for help, God will give us up to our futile plans that lead to destruction. On the other hand, if we return to Him, He will satisfy us with good things.

If you are trusting others and other things, it is time to return to God and make Him your strength. He is waiting to satisfy you with good things.

Reflect: What is keeping you from Him? Hand it over to Him and He will help you.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 21: 1 to 15

Leviticus 21: 1 to 5

God gave clear instructions to sons of Aaron about keeping themselves holy at all times and a few exceptions for burying dead members of their immediate family. Secondly, God was clear in who they can marry and who they must not. Serving God was not to be taken lightly. Priests were to maintain personal holiness and relational holiness in marriage.

Today, we are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9, 10). All of us are priests and are called to a holy life. Not to be isolated in a touch-me-not attitude but completely immersed in God’s redeeming work. We must give up sinful lives, hold our marriages sacred and showcase the glory of God in our families.

Reflect: What attitudes is God asking you to change in your private life and in your marriage? How can you become a channel of blessing to many?

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 20: 1 to 28

We have a tendency to find fault with God. It is an expression of our sinful nature. Through this parable of ‘Workers in the Vineyard’, we learn that our Lord and Master is perfect in His ways but we question His judgements and risk falling out of His grace.

We must humbly and faithfully do the work allotted to us. Also, we must gratefully receive the reward offered to us, knowing that, the opportunity to be part of His work and the ability to do that work comes from Him freely (Deuteronomy 8:17,18). Therefore, we can neither boast before the Lord nor claim anything by right but humbly declare that “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do (Luke 17:10).

Reflect: Are you upset that others are being blessed more than you?

Remember the Lord is no man’s debtor (Romans 11:35).

Have the right attitude and God will bless you beyond your imagination.

Verses for 3rd February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 84 and 85.

Psalm 84

Written by the sons of Korah.

It is a pilgrimage song, also known as song of Zion, sung by pilgrims, travelling up to Jerusalem for three annual religious feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

It also describes the joy of dwelling with God.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 21: 16 to 24 and Leviticus 22: 1 to 9

The Lord God giving ordinance to Moses regarding priests', cleanliness and uncleanness
Moses must speak to and instruct Aaron and his sons.

Any man with a defective body should not approach to offer the bread of his God.

A person who is unclean, or a leper or with any discharge, should be cut off from the Lord's presence. The Lord is very strict.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 20: 29 to 34 and Matthew 21: 1 to 11

Two blind men recognise Jesus as the son of David and as the Lord.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a Donkey, the people shouted 'Hosanna to the son of God'.

This day we celebrate as Palm Sunday.

The Lord God, who created the whole universe is king, good and graceful, but at the same time, He becomes angry when we disobey His commandments and ordinances. His punishments are very severe.

We must all obey Him. Trust and obey for there is no other way. If we obey Him. He will bless us.

Verses for 4th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 86, 87 & 88

Psalm 86

Of the 150 Psalms in the book of Psalms, nearly half were authored and compiled by King David, who had wide experience as shepherd, musician, warrior and king (1011 – 971 B.C.).

Psalm 86 is also authored by King David.

Though David was anointed as successor to King Saul, he had to wait for many years to become the King of Judea and integrated Israel.

He had many competitors, enemies and faced many difficulties and life – threatening situations before and during his reign as king.

Throughout his life, he trusted, feared and obeyed God, to the extent that, he was called “man after God’s own heart”.

Psalm 86 is a prayer of David, which may be read, keeping the above perspective in view.

King David begins the psalm with “I am poor and needy”. Even the richest should understand poverty and need to relate it more to the Spirit than to the purse. The help God provides, is not to be measured in the form of a “balance sheet”.

What God does for all the poor and needy is

- i. He will “preserve” our lives and “save” all those who trust in Him (verse 2)
- ii. He will be “merciful” and ready to “forgive” (verses 3 & 5)
- iii. He will “listen” to and “answer” prayer (verses 6 & 7)

This has to be reciprocated by us in the form of

- a. Learning God’s ways
- b. Walking in His truth
- c. Fearing His name
- d. Praising and glorifying Him (verses 11 & 12)

King David, out of his own experience wrote “When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. Among the gods there is none like you” (verses 7 & 8).

We must realize that, our God answers our prayers, guides us by His Spirit and saves us through the death and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ.

LET US BE LOYAL TO OUR REDEEMER LIFE LONG.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 22: 10 to 25

The book of Leviticus is one of the 5 books in the Old Testament that constitute “Pentateuch” (Law) with Moses as author of all the 5 books.

Leviticus incorporates the instructions that Moses received from God in the tabernacle and at Mount Sinai around 1400 BC.

The book deals with laws that define

- i. The way to the Lord through the sacrifices / offerings and the rules and regulations concerning them- (chapters 1 to 17).

ii. The walk with God that leads to sanctification – (chapters 18 to 27)

From the beginning of creation – Godliness, Holiness and cleanliness were sacrosanct and intimately related. The Lord God expected and insisted Israelites, His chosen people, to be holy (Leviticus 11: 44 & 45, Leviticus 19: 2 and Leviticus 20: 7).

In furtherance of this, the laws as in (ii) above were given.

Leviticus 22: 10 to 25 deals with rules (laws) for priests and unacceptable sacrifices. In essence, these rules permitted only priests and their immediate family members to eat the sacred offerings and demanded the Israelites to present only male cattle / sheep / goats without defect as burnt offering. Any unauthorised sacrifice / offering / eating will make the Lord's name profane.

We are no longer under the old covenant but under the new for which God sent His only begotten son, Jesus Christ who lived as a perfect human being and died making supreme sacrifice for the sins of one and all, and once for all. He paid the price for our sins with His death on the cross by shedding His precious blood. We are cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ who is not only our redeemer but our mediator and reconciliator with God the Father. So the Old Testament sacrifices are done away with. We must, however, understand the intimate and inseparable relation between the Old Testament (covenant) and the new.

As God's chosen people, He expects us to lead godly and holy lives. We are all called to be holy for 1 Peter 1: 16 says "you shall be holy for I am holy". I 1 Corinthians 3: 16 & 17 – we are reminded that we are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in us. Let us be mindful of this and let our ways, walk and talk reflect the same.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" – Psalm 51: 17.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 21: 12 to 32

The above scripture portion records the events that took place after Jesus had left the region of Galilee and entered into Judea with triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a few days before His betrayal and crucifixion.

Jesus Christ along with His disciples toured extensively in the above regions including Samaria and performed many miracles, healed the sick, drove out demons and also taught the scriptures with authority but the Jews refused to believe Him as the Son of God or as the Messiah they were looking for.

The scripture portion under reference narrates 4 events that deal with holiness, cleanliness and fruitfulness as briefly outlined below.

i. Jesus cleans the temple (verses 12 to 17):

On His entry into the temple premises, Jesus found that, the house of prayer was misused and converted into a market place. So he physically cleaned the temple premises and got rid of all business establishments.

He continued to preach and teach and heal the sick in the temple but the Jews remained unchanged. In contrast, some children cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David", in fulfilment of what was written in Psalm 8: 2.

Jesus tried to spiritually cleanse the minds of the Jews but not with much success.

While referring to the children (Matthew 18: 3a), Jesus tells that “The kingdom of God belongs to such as these (Mark 10: 14 & 15)”, because children have pure hearts and minds free of any guilt or sin. We need to be child-like and realise that we are the temple of God and remain holy at all times (refer 1 Corinthians 3 : 16 & 17).

ii. Jesus curses the fig tree (verses 18 to 22):

We do not know the reason for this. It is possible that the fig tree had the appearance of the one bearing fruit but was barren. Also it might have been the right season to bear fruit. The fig tree represents Israelites who are supposed to bear fruit. This symbolises the hypocrisy of those Jews who seem to be bearing fruit but in fact are not. This applies to all believers as well. We need to bear fruit- fruit that will last (John 15: 16).

When the disciples of Jesus were amazed at the instant withering of the fig tree, Jesus reminds them about the power of faith, and what it can achieve through prayer. All believers in Jesus will have testimonies to attest the same.

iii. The authority of Jesus challenged (verses 23 to 27):

The chief priests and elders of the temple who always looked for an opportunity to corner or belittle Jesus, asked Him, by what authority He was teaching, healing and disrupting the temple establishments. They knew the answer but never believed in Him and hence Jesus answered them with a question for which they had no answer.

iv. The parable of the two sons (verses 28 to 32):

In this parable two sons with contrasting attributes are seen, one agreed to do a particular job assigned by his father but did not do and the other did not agree to do the same job but yet did it. The latter did the will of his father and won appreciation. It is clear that, one will be judged by his actions and not by his words or hidden convictions.

Discipleship and faith without deeds is futile. (Read James 2: 14 to 26 and Ephesians 2: 8 to 10).

Verses for 5th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalm 89: 1 to 8 & 19 to 52; Psalm 90 and Psalm 91

Psalm 89: 1 to 8 & 19 to 52

Ethan was a singer at King David's court well known for his wisdom. He authored Psalms 89, a messianic psalm, a maskil (that teaches us something). Ethan is mentioned specifically in 1 Kings 4:31, as someone who was famous for his wisdom – yet surpassed by Solomon's greater wisdom. This means he was likely a contemporary of Solomon and was also alive during the reign of David.

Psalm 89 begins with words of praise for GOD's goodness and covenant faithfulness. This Psalm talks about the incomparable GOD and HIS covenant to David.

Charles Spurgeon called it a Covenant Psalm and described it as "the utterance of a believer". Verses 1 & 2- speak about GOD's mercy and faithfulness shown to us forever.

The great loving kindness of God lasts forever, so the praise of Him should also be sung forever. The Psalmist sang of GOD's mercies even during troubled times.

When we praise GOD in our troubles, we get joy and our complaints will turn into thanksgiving. We should let others as well know about the goodness of God.

Verses 3 & 4- speak about GOD's covenant with David. GOD's promise to build and establish the house of David. (Refer 2 Samuel 7: 12; Matthew 12: 23).

Verses 5 to 14- speak about the glory and perfection of God.

Verses 19 to 29 speak about all the blessings God had given to King David.

Verses 30 to 37 speak about the promises of the covenant, even if the laws and commandments are forsaken by King David and his descendants.

Verses 38 to 51- But in spite of the blessings granted to the King, they were facing some crises and the psalmist poured out his plea to God, as he felt that GOD was hiding and angry with Israel and her king and had forsaken the covenant with King David. The psalmist prayed on behalf of the weary king, or perhaps he longed to see the king and kingdom vindicated in his life, perhaps in his old age. The mention of shortness of time and the futility of life add a sense of urgency and even desperation to the request.

Finally the psalmist ends the psalm by praising God.

Psalm 90

A Prayer of Moses the man of GOD.

"A Prayer to the everlasting God to have compassion on his servants"

The powerful leader of Israel is explaining that we have an everlasting and eternal GOD who is our refuge and protector.

However, the psalmist speaks about the judgement of GOD- our secret sins and iniquities appears before the LIGHT of GOD....and how weak we are as humans, like dust and dry grass God can sweep us away to death. Our life span is 70 or 80 years, but (even if we have strength) our days pass under wrath and years with a moan. Especially during this pandemic we realise that life is very uncertain. No man can deliver his own life from the grave and its power, neither escape the wrath of God.

The psalmist Moses is pleading God- Teach us to number our days, so that, we may gain a heart of Wisdom... That is to Know GOD and obey HIS commands.

In order to escape the judgement of GOD, our GOD being a compassionate GOD, sent HIS son, Jesus, (Isaiah 53: 5, 6) who was pierced for our transgression, crushed for our iniquities.....By HIS wounds we are healed".

Before we return to dust... let us come to the LORD Almighty and seek the forgiveness of sins, be saved from the penalty and sin and wrath of GOD, gain an inheritance in heaven and experience "Joy and gladness"...

Let us pray that the work of the Holy Spirit may appear in converting our hearts, and that the beauty of holiness may be seen in our conduct.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 22:26 to 23:8

The Lord explaining to Moses about

1)When we sacrifice a thanks giving offering to the LORD, sacrifice in such a way that it will be acceptable. The LORD specifies the process and choosing of a calf, or a lamb or a goat. If the process is not followed properly or is incorrectly chosen then the offering becomes unacceptable.

As in New Testament, when we offer to the LORD, or when we fast and pray, let it not be obvious to people. Only your heavenly Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. The LORD makes us holy and not our offerings and gifts.

2)To keep GOD's commands and follow them.

a)Six days when we may work but the 7th day is a day of rest and day of sacred assembly as it is the Sabbath day.

b)The appointed festivals, which are to be proclaimed as sacred assemblies.

The Passover and unleavened Bread reminds us of JESUS sacrifice on the cross as "Holy lamb of GOD that takes away the sins of the world."

1 Corinthians 11: 27 & 28 – For whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup, proclaims the LORD's death until HE comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the LORD in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the LORD.

c)The LORD our GOD is holy and hence we need to be holy. We should be acceptable to the LORD, who makes us Holy not by our works but by HIS Grace and by our faith in JESUS we are saved.

Hudson reminded to the universal church that "GODs work which is done in a godly way, according to the will of GOD, will never lack GODs supply."- Hudson Taylor, Missionary (1832-1905)

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 21:33 to 22:14

This book has been authored by Matthew, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus.

The parable of wicked tenants clearly symbolises GODs plan for Israel and the world. Here we see a landowner who planted a vineyard and later at the time of harvest sent his servants to collect the fruit. However the tenants seized the servants and beat one, killed another and stoned the third. And last of all HE sent HIS son, thinking that they will respect him. But the tenants saw the son and instead of respecting him, intending to take his inheritance-killed him. The Almighty GOD sent HIS army and destroyed those murderers and burnt the city.

In this Parable

-The vineyard is the kingdom of GOD

- Tenants are the Chief Priests, Pharisees, the religious leaders, the worldly People (those not preparing for the kingdom of GOD) and gentiles (those rejecting the WORD of GOD and those not obeying the land owner).
 - The landowner is The Almighty GOD, The King. The SON represented JESUS CHRIST, who was condemned to death by religious leaders.
 - Servants represent the Old Testament and New Testament prophets many of whom were killed, insulted, rejected and stoned.

The parable of the wedding banquet – Stages in the story- The invitation refused (verses 1-3), the second invitation violently opposed (verses 4-8), and the wider invitation given to any who would come (verses 8-10) and the rejection of the guest who was not clothed in the proper attire (verses 11-13). The parable ends with a short maxim (verse 14).

In this parable the wedding banquet is the marriage supper of the lamb that is the wedding banquet of the son (refer John 3:29; Ephesians 5:25-32 and Revelation 21: 2 & 9)

-The king is GOD the father. The son is Jesus

-Response to the invitation means response to the call of God to accept Christ and HIS grace.

-The man without the wedding clothes being thrown out and cast into darkness depicts the judgement scene.

-Banquet represents the kingdom of heaven, the relationship between Christ and true believers.

The banquet is the celebration of those who enter the kingdom of GOD and the exclusion is the judgement of GOD for those who reject the invitation of grace.

-Wedding attire means true repentance for sin and faith in Christ, and then a commitment to love and obey the LORD as evidence of saving faith.

-Chosen People: The call is not for the wise and the learned, certainly not for the self-righteous, but for all who respond to the invitation of accepting His grace.

The gospel tells us that the kingdom of God is a gift from God. We have to prepare our garments and cleanse our lives with the blood of JESUS who gives eternal life by accepting Christ in our lives, so much so that our Heavenly Father could reserve a place for us in HIS Kingdom. Surrendering our life to God gains more blessings and an opportunity to participate and celebrate in the wedding banquet.

Verses for 7th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 92 to 94

Psalm 92

A PSALM OR A SONG FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

THEME- A psalm to contemplate the precious works of the hands of God. It is recorded that this psalm was appointed to be used in the temple service on the Sabbath.

By praising God we can feel the peace in our hearts and it makes us feel good. It is right morally and ethically to do so. It is appropriate that with the freshness of a new day we sing forth the loving kindness of God in the morning. This prayer ought to continue throughout the day and come to a close with praise of thy faithfulness every night. Both vocal and instrumental praises to God are fitting in the Jewish Sabbath service.

The mere contemplation of divine work, either creation or providence, floods the heart of the Psalmist with joy. He expresses the unity of God's work and he praises the variety of God's works. When he surveys all that God has done, he can't but exclaim, "O Lord, how great are thy works!"

The works of Jehovah are great in number, great in design, great in glory and great in consequence.

What a sharp contrast is drawn between the one who praises God's loving kindness every morning and His faithfulness every night and the brutish man who never contemplates the wonderful depths of God's love.

The psalmist is confident that He will be victorious over the enemies of God and that he will have his horn, exalted.

The psalmist beautifully contrasts the life of the righteous with that of the wicked. Whereas the workers of iniquity are likened unto grass which flourishes for a short time and then is destroyed for ever. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, the queen of all trees is antiquity. The palm was luxurious and lovely and would grow on those unlikely areas where others would not.

Aged believers are and have a sweet testimony to the constant presence and provision of God. They can truly say, "The longer I serve Him, the sweeter it grows." Even in the years of failing health, on the Sabbath day a Jew / we would come to the temple and give praise to God for being the rock of his/our Salvation.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 23: 9 to 21

LAWS FOR OBSERVING THE LORD'S FEASTS

The complete religious calendar of the Jewish year is summarized and regulated in this chapter regarding the seven FEASTS of the Lord. They were Holy Convocations.

OFFERING THE FIRST FRUITS

Offering the first fruits to God was a way of demonstrating the principle of placing GOD first in all things. It fulfilled the First commandment in practice.

(Matthew 22:37-38).

Such offerings were commanded and special blessings were promised to those who practiced the offerings and the feasts (Proverbs 3:9-10).

The offerings of first fruits typified the resurrection of Christ. (I Corinthians 15:2-23).

According to the traditional view of the crucifixion of Christ on a Friday, the 14th day, He rose on 16th day, a Sunday – on the day of the Feast of First Fruits, Christ rose as the first fruits of them that sleep.

Just as the first ripe grain was a promise of the rest of the harvest, so also Christ's resurrection assures us of our own as well.

FEAST OF PENTECOST

This would be the 16th of Abib or Nisan, corresponding somewhat with our April. This would be 49 days after the Feast of first fruits. The word Sabbath is used for a week. We have here a week of weeks and then the Feast of Pentecost. This would be the 50th day from the Feast of first fruits. The word Pentecost in Greek means fifty.

The new meat offering was that of 2 loaves of bread baked with leaven. All meat offerings were given to the priests. The loaves must have been very large for each contained 1/2 gallon or about 4 pounds of flour raised with leaven. The length of a loaf was about 28 inches, the width was about 16 inches and the depth equal to 6 or 7 inches.

No bread made with leaven could be burned upon the altar. So the object was not a burnt offering; this was a present to Jehovah from the best produce of the earth in the form most useful to sustain human life.

It was a thanksgiving offering for His blessings upon the crops of the year. Besides these there were hundreds, even thousands of other loaves brought to the Feast, not only as offerings but also to be used by the priests and the people attending on that day.

Referring to the first fruits of the wheat harvest, not the barley which was earlier. In warmer parts of Palestine, barley ripened about the middle of April, whereas the wheat crop did so the last of May or first part of June, being reaped by the time of the Feast of Pentecost.

Tradition says that when whole animals were waved before God they were led back and forth before death. If this was not the procedure then they were waved on the hands of several priests, after death.

Pentecost was an extra Sabbath added to the regular one. This made a 48 hour Sabbath at which time the weekly Sabbath was changed to a day later for the remainder of the year, and until the next Pentecost.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 22: 15 to 46

Three Groups in This Plot:

1. Herodians – a political party associated with the fortunes of the Herodian family who believed the doctrines of Herod the Great. They advocated submission to the Romans and freedom to conform to pagan religion as well as to Judaism if it was more convenient and if it helped further their political fortunes and secular gain.
2. The Sadducees – who questioned Jesus but were also defeated.
3. The Pharisees – who also took their turn in the plot but were quickly silenced. They then received the most scathing rebuke in all history.

Christ had put them to confusion by the three parables. They refused to humble themselves and went out to plot afresh the death of their Messiah. Their hatred was further proved by a choice to team up with the Herodians whom they despised. They had been defeated in Christ's answers on religion, so now they questioned Him on state affairs.

4 – FOLD DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST

You are true (Greek-alethes, without reserve, sincere, truthful, frank, honest, genuine and true)

You teach the way of God in truth – (Greek-aletheia, without pretence, falsehood, or deceit, with sincerity of mind and purpose, without hypocrisy for personal gain).

You are fearless – You are not afraid of men or devils and never act with dread, panic, fear or timidity as to the outcome of what you say or do.

You do not court human favour or look on the appearance of any man.

Their question in verse 17 was intended to place the Lord in a dilemma. But Christ had the gifts of the Spirit and could read the minds of men. He wanted them to answer to their own confusion.

Jesus had broken the Herodians dilemma by making light of the ultimate significance of Caesar's claim. Jesus' response exposed the spiritual failure of the Herodians. In essence, Jesus made light of Caesar's temporal claim in favour of God's greater claim over men's lives.

The Sadducees made the next attempt to discredit Jesus and were even more severely humiliated. As the liberal party within first century A.D, Judaism, they rejected belief in the supernatural, especially angels and the resurrection of the dead.

Deuteronomy 25:5 – this ancient practice was recognized by the Jews but rarely followed in those days. The absurd hypothetical case which follows represents another theological dilemma, this time attempting to discredit the legitimacy of the resurrection, which the Sadducees rejected.

Thus their question, whose wife shall she be? They must have snickered as they asked such a ridiculous question but the smile would soon be wiped off their faces by Jesus' reply. Jesus had extreme contempt for the Sadducees because they made light of the Bible and the power of God. This is His strongest recorded rebuke of this Jewish party.

Jesus further attacked the Sadducees major belief in no resurrection at all, by quoting Exodus 3:6, a statement from the only part of the Old Testament which the Sadducees unquestioningly accepted. Christ used them to prove His point. Sadducees believed in eternal annihilation at death, so Christ's answer not only refuted the annihilation doctrine but proved they did not know the Scriptures. Thus the crowd was astonished and the Sadducees were put to silence.

Each group came with their most difficult question representing their expertise and their point of departure from Jesus' doctrine. Remember, that each of these groups normally hated each other, but were united in their rejection of Christ.

The lawyer was trying to draw Jesus into an argument regarding the Pharisees extensive interpretations of over six hundred laws. Instead, Christ summarized the two tables of the law: I.e., 1. Responsibility to God and 2. Responsibility to man, by paraphrasing Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. As the greatest commandment it was of Supreme importance and priority. No Pharisee could fault such an answer.

Jesus then counter questioned the Pharisees: by asking them who is the Messiah, He gave them a clear opportunity to acknowledge Him, but with His answer Jesus totally stumped the Pharisees who wanted to believe in a human Messiah but not a divine Messiah.

Thus, no one was able to answer him, defeat Him by question or debate and therefore no one

dared to ask Him any more questions. In one day Jesus had annihilated and humiliated the wisdom and craft of the leaders of each of Israel's religious organizations. "Hallelujah, What a Saviour!"

Verses for 8th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 95 & 96

Psalm 95

God worthy of our humble and obedient worship

The psalm is a hymn psalm, one of the royal psalms, praising God as the king of His people.

Psalm 95 identifies no author but Hebrews 4:7 attributes it to David. But it is also possible that the author of Hebrews simply referred to the book of psalms as David's book.

The psalm is a regular part of Jewish, catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and other protestant liturgies.

The psalmist first mentions honouring God with song and doing so in community. Singing is not the only way to give honour and worship God, but it is chief and important way.

Psalm 95:1-7 an exhortation to praise God

Psalm 95:7-11 A warning not to tempt Him.

Whenever we come to God's presence we must come with thanksgiving. The Lord is to be praised and we don't lack reasons to praise Him, and it were well if we do not lack a heart. How great is that God, who's the whole earth is and the fullness thereof, who directs and disposes of all.

Humble prayer also characterises Godly worship. Kneeling (95: 6) is a common posture for prayer in bible because it is a physical expression of humility before someone great, especially one greater than demons (v3), creation (v4-5) and all people (6). The believer bows to God out of a heart overflowing with gratefulness, for who God is and what He has done. At the same time God will not be presumed upon by our adopting a practice that becomes superstitious or superficial.

The psalmist reminds the worshippers of "Test" at Massah, when the Israelites grumbled that they had no water (7-11) commenting on this passage the writer of Hebrews interprets "Today" to mean ,whenever someone hears the call to repentance and "rest" as referring to eternal salvation through Jesus Christ (Hebrew 3:7-15, 4: 3-7).

The opposite of repentance is going "astray" (95:10). Straying begins with discontentment and ends in direct disobedience. Straying sinners do the opposite of what they know, God commands in contrast. Joyful disobedience results from worshipping God as the Great King, Maker and Shepherd. And it will be remembrance of his abundant kindness that will melt ungrateful hearts (Romans 2:4).

Kindness finds, supreme expression in the sending of his own son in the fullness of time. Let us be aware of the evils of our hearts, which lead to wander from the Lord.

There is rest ordained for believer, the rest of everlasting refreshment, begin in life, and perfected in the life to come. This is the rest which God calls his rest.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 23:22 to 38

This chapter focuses on Lord's holy times. Each such occasion provided a reminder to the Israelites of who the Lord is or what He had done on their behalf. The weekly Sabbath reminded them he was their covenant King the Lord of creation. While the annual festivals reminded them of his redemption and provision. These reminders were meant to strengthen them in faithful obedience to the Lord and in their covenant love for one another.

The Lord's Supper is to function in the same way for believers today. It is done in remembrance of Jesus as a regular proclamation that he is our redeeming King. In this way it serves us as a meal that strengthens our faith in him with the good news of the gospel and propels us to love our covenant brothers and sisters for whom he died (1 Corinthians 10: 16-17).

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 23: 1 to 24

Why did Mathew include in his gospel this discourse of Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees?

He may have wanted to issue a warning to them about their hard heartedness, in the hope that some of them would repent. He probably also wanted Christians to benefit from Pharisees negative examples.

The scribes and Pharisees were positioned to do great damage to the Jewish people. They were learned in the scriptures and because of their learning occupied positions of authorities and influence (V2, 6-7). Yet they were blind to their own hard heartedness towards God (v16, 7-24). As a result, they were not only on the road to eternal destruction of themselves but were leading others down the same road, and leading astray those who were on the right road (V13-15). Their central problem was the disjunction between their inner condition and their outward appearance. To the other people they appeared devoted to God and worthy of respect (V3-7) but they were motivated in their outward act of piety by love for praise of others, pride in their technical cleverness, greed and self-intelligence.

Throughout the gospel of Matthew, Jesus provides several diagnostic tests to ensure that his disciples' hearts are not hardened towards God.

1. He urges them to be careful that their acts of devotion to God such as giving to the needy. Praying and fasting flow from the heart and not from a desire to win the approval of others.
2. He urges his disciples not to allow money and the temporary sense of security, it can provide to replace God as the ultimate source of security.
3. He encourages them to focus not on cleverly deduced methods and schemes for obeying God but on service to others which He defines as "Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness".

Verses for 9th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 97 – 99

Psalm 97

The Story of Psalm 97

Bible students think that whoever wrote Psalm 96 also wrote Psalm 97. But Psalm 96 remembers what God has done. Psalm 97 looks to the future. It says (or prophesies) what God will do. Psalm 96 remembers that God brought his people home from a foreign country. He did this because he was a powerful king.

Psalm 96:2 says “God has made us safe”.

Psalm 97 is another royal psalm. “Royal” means “as a king”. Psalm 97 tells us what will happen when everybody sees that God is king. That is why some Bible students say that this is a psalm about the end of the world.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 23:39 – 24:9

Leviticus 23:34 to 43

Feast of tabernacles.

The feast of Tabernacles was so called because during this feast the people left their houses and lived in temporary booths or tents made from tree branches, this act reminded the people of God’s goodness to them during their 40 years in the wilderness when they had no permanent dwelling place. The feast of tabernacles was also called the Feast of ingathering, for it celebrated the conclusion of the harvest of summer fruits and nuts.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 23: 25 – 24:14

Matthew 23:28

Outwardly appear righteous.

Jesus continues His speech about religious leaders and ministers of His day whose public conduct appeared righteous but whose hearts were full of hypocrisy, pride, lust and wickedness. They were like painted tombs, Beautiful and attractive on the outside, yet with fullness and corruption hidden inside.

Verses for 10th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 100 to 102

Psalm 100

What Psalm 100 means

Verse 1:

Here “everyone” does not only mean the *Jews.

Jews are people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children.

Bible students believe that it means everybody in the whole world.

The word “shout” here means “make a loud noise”.

The *Hebrew word in this verse does not mean “sing”.

The *Jews wrote the psalms in the Hebrew language, which they spoke.

Maybe the shout is as at a football game, when you shout for your group to win!

The LORD is a special name for God. It is a name that his people use.

His people are the people that love him and obey him.

Verse 2:

The *Hebrew word that we translate “do something for” means “work for” or “become the servant of”.

In the psalm, it means that we praise God (tell God that he is great) because he makes us so happy.

There is no *temple now so we praise him in our churches or our homes. Jesus taught us that the church is now God’s *temple.

We can praise God anywhere!

“Joy” is when you feel very happy deep down inside you.

Verse 3:

Some Bibles translate “we are his people” as “we did not make ourselves”. This is because they sound the same in *Hebrew! It does not matter because both translations tell us what is true.

Sheep are animals that live in fields. God’s people are often said to be as sheep. This means that God takes care of them just as a farmer takes care of his sheep. “Takes care of” here means “feed and give help to”.

In the New Testament (the second part of the Bible) Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11). A shepherd is a sheep farmer.

Verse 4:

The psalm tells everyone to come to the *temple and *praise God. The *temple was small, so most people stood outside it. Only the priests and Levites went inside. The priests and Levites were special servants of God. They worked in and round the *temple.

“Thank-you” is a polite way to say “thanks”.

The *Hebrew of “say good things about him” is “bless his name”. “Bless” is a special *Jewish and Christian word.

Verse 5:

Another way to say “he will do what he has promised” is “he is faithful”. When we do what

we promise then we are faithful. God will always be faithful to us. We must also be faithful to him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 24: 10 to 23

This offender was the son of an Egyptian father, and an Israelite mother. The mentioning of his parents origin shows the common ill effect of mixed marriages.

A standing law for the stoning of blasphemers was made upon this occasion. Great stress is laid upon this law. It extends to the strangers among them, as well as to those born in the land. Strangers, as well as native Israelites, should be entitled to the benefit of the law, so as not to suffer wrong; and should be liable to the penalty of this law, in case they did wrong. If those who profane the name of God escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgments.

What enmity against God must be in the heart of man, when blasphemies against God proceed out of his mouth? If he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, of what punishment will they be worthy, who despise and abuse the gospel of the Son of God! Let us watch against anger, do no evil, avoid all connexions with wicked people, and reverence that holy name which sinners blaspheme.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 24: 15 to 51

Matthew 24:15 to 28

Great tribulation.

The entire deals with the great tribulation. Jesus speaks about special signs that will occur during the great tribulation (Revelation 7:14) signs to indicate that the end of the age is very near. These signs will lead up to and signal Christ's return to earth after the tribulation.

The major sign is the abomination of desolation, a specific observation event that tells the faithful who are alive during the tribulation that Christ's coming to earth at the end of the age will occur very shortly.

Verses for 11th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 103 and Psalms 104: 1 to 23

Psalm 103

Author: This Psalm was written by King David.

Context: In this Psalm, along with Psalm 104, David was encouraging us to bless and exalt God. He also encourages the angels and the works of God's creation to join him in praising God.

Explanation:

Verses 1 to 19- you find personal and corporal praise of God.

Verses 20 to 22b – the creation was invoked to praise God.

Verse 2- tells us not to forget God's blessings.

Verse 5- the imagery of an eagle was used to give us hope of a renewal of strength.

Verse 9- '*not always*' reminds that there will be a final day of judgment at death (Luke 16:19-31), and also the Great White Throne at the culmination of the present creation (Revelation 20:11-15)

Verse 10- reminds us of God's redemption, provided in the death of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9).

Verses 15 & 16- is about the temporal nature of human life.

Verse 19- as God is enthroned in eternity, we are blessed with great hope amid life's challenges.

Verses 20 to 22-the angels and all creation are called to bless God.

To learn and apply:

1. God is enthroned in heaven
2. As we live here on earth, by praising God we acknowledge that we belong to him and have our existence in Him.
3. He redeemed us through His Son's death on the cross and invites us to receive His gift of salvation.
4. As this reminds us that God is the Judge, we are cautioned that we are accountable to God at the end of the day. You can't do whatever you like or what the world around

you expect from you. Your final vindication is in God's hands; therefore, as verse 17 reminds, learn to fear God and be blessed, you and your children and their children.

5. For many unanswered questions, one probable answer is that you might have failed in praising God; because you forget the benefits God added thus far (verse 2) and have been grumbling of what others have, God sees no reason to bless you any further.
6. Let praise renew your strength to see new blessings, renewed blessings, stored in secret, but ready to disburse.

Verse 5:

Another way to say "he will do what he has promised" is "he is faithful". When we do what we promise then we are faithful. God will always be faithful to us. We must also be faithful to him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 25: 1 to 12

Author: Leviticus 27: 34 tells us that this was written by Moses, and these are commandments given by God to Moses.

Context: As the journey in the wilderness was concluded, the Israelites camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. Now God gives a structured and regulated set of sacrifices and feasts to be practiced, and also the order of a High-Priest, a formal priesthood, and also a cadre of tabernacle workers.

Explanation:

- It is about taking care of the Lord's property for the sabbatical year and the observance of the Day of Sabbath (25:1-7), and the Jubilee Year (25:8-55).
- Verses 1 to 7: is about the revitalization of the land. In the seventh year when the land is given rest, it would revitalize and replenish the nutrient in the soil.
- Verse 10: not only the land but the labourers were also need to be given a break of one year.
- Verses 8 to 55: the Year of Jubilee involves the release from all indebtedness (verses.23 to 38) and all kinds of bondage (verses.39 to 55). All prisoners and captives were set free, slaves were released, debtors pardoned. This was planned to curb inflation.

To learn and apply:

- The Day of Sabbath for us, who are under the new covenant, is the Lord's Day or Sunday. When you observe the Lord's Day you not only honour God but also imitate God. When you give rest from your daily routine once a week, you reenergize yourself for the work for the week ahead of you.
- Your stewardship of the land is necessary for the preservation of nature and its resources. It preserves the natural resources for the next generation.
- In our context, we may not be able to take these laws as it is; because it may not be possible to implement them in our context. However, within our limitations, we need

to uphold the principles of rest, liberty, and proper consumption of natural resources. God is against oppression and exploitation, even at home.

Try to explore the possibility of applying the principles behind the Sabbath and the Jubilee year at your work place and your home.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 25: 1 to 30

Author: The tax collector Mathew, also named Levi (9:9), who left everything to follow Christ (Luke 5:27, 28), was the author of this Gospel.

Context: It was prepared for the converts of Judaism (many of whom were Hellenistic Jews living outside of Palestine) to establish that Christ is the King and Messiah of Israel. Therefore, as many as 60 quotations from the Old Testament of prophetic messages were used by the author to emphasize how Christ is the fulfilment of all those promises.

Explanation:

Verses 1 to 13: The parable of 10 virgins, underscores the importance of being ready for the return of Jesus Christ, even if he delays longer than expected.

Verses 11 & 12 tell that there will be no second chance for the unprepared.

To learn and apply:

- Mathew makes sure that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.
- Be on guard, for we never know when the 2nd coming would be!
- Is your lamp of hope and testimony burning?
- Maintain the sanctity of being a child of God, unadulterated by the follies of the world.
- Our God is a promise fulfiller; hence, trust His Word. Claim it until its fulfilment.

Questions to ponder:

1. What are the things that cause us to sleep and slumber (verse 5), that make us sluggish?
2. Why does the 2nd Coming delay? Look for some cross-references to find out the possible reasons. Does the delay remind us of any responsibility?

Verses for 12th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 104:24 to 105:45

Psalms that is to pull the string instrumental music.

Psalm 105

God is faithful.

Verse 1: Give thanks to the LORD, offer prayers to HIM and share your testimonies with other people.

Verse 2: Sing and thank GOD for all HIS wondrous works

Verse 3: Seek the LORD and rejoice

Verse 4 & 7:

We are HIS chosen people and HE is our LORD

Verse 5: Remember the eternal faithfulness of the Lord

Verse 6 and verses 8 to 44:

LORDS covenant with Abraham that he will bless thousands of generations forever. HE remembered HIS covenant and his oath to Isaac and he chose children of Jacob and anointed them.

LORD said touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm. The oath which he confirmed to Israel that he will give the land of Canaan for their inheritance. Remembering HIS oath with Abraham and his descendants, the LORD kept HIS covenant guiding and protecting HIS people and gave the land of Canaan as their inheritance.

The people of Israel experienced the LORD's abundant mercies towards them right from

- Joseph being taken to Egypt, his hardships and later he became governor over entire Egypt and the abundant blessings he received.
- God protecting entire Jacob's family during the famine and moving them to Egypt and providing food through Joseph.
- Moses and Aaron being chosen to lead the people out of bondage
- Pharaoh refusing to obey GOD's commandments, the different plagues sent by God to destroy the Egyptians and at the same time protecting his people forcing Pharaoh to send the Israelites away.

- Initially the people of Israel were only 70 when they reached Egypt but later when leaving Egypt they had loads of cattle and gold and their families increased to huge numbers.
- They started the journey to the Promised Land with the presence of God as light in the night and cloud during the day.
- HE provided food (Manna and Quails) for them and water to drink. When they asked the LORD opened the rock and water gushed out.
- The LORD was with them throughout the journey to the Canaan.

Hence give thanks to GOD and all glory to HIS name.

To learn and apply:

- Delay is a blessing in disguise
- Our LORD is a merciful and loving GOD and always fulfils HIS promises to His people.
- The LORD will bless his chosen people with joy and gladness
- The LORD wants us to keep HIS laws and commandments.
- Faithfully believe in the LORD
- Obey the LORD
- Praise and worship him
- Meditate on all the good deeds the LORD has done for us.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 25: 13 to 28

Rules and regulations implemented for jubilee year that is 50th year neither people should sow nor reap. Based on the number of years of the crops, the price is either increased or decreased to be sold or bought after the Jubilee year.

Fear the Lord because he is the Lord our God. Observe HIS statues, keep HIS commandments, follow HIS rules and obey HIM, in order to dwell in the land safely.

Give rest to the land every seventh year neither sow nor gather. The LORD will command HIS blessing on the people in the sixth year so that the land will bring forth produce sufficient enough for the next three years.

The land can be redeemed. However if any poor man cannot redeem, his relatives can redeem on his behalf. If no one to redeem on the behalf of the poor man, then, it shall be the property of who ever bought it until the year of Jubilee and it shall be released in the Jubilee year to the poor man.

No land can be sold for permanently, because the earth belongs to the LORD Almighty and the land is the LORD's and we are all strangers on this earth.

To learn and apply:

- This above WORD is symbolic that if we obey the WORD of GOD we are safe and blessed.
- We can be redeemed through the precious Blood of Jesus and this redemption is freely given to all the people.
- Also the WORD reminds us that our life on earth is very short as we all are strangers on this land.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 25: 31 to 26: 16

Matthew 25: 31 to 46

Jesus will judge the nations.

Jesus will come along with HIS angels. He will sit on HIS throne and judge all the nations.

The LORD (shepherd) separates all good and righteous people – sheep and goats- unrighteous and bad people. Then the shepherd sets the sheep to his right side and goats to the left side. The sheep, (who represent the good people), inherit the father's kingdom which he prepared from the beginning of the foundation of the world.

The LORD explains all the good deeds and who have faithfully followed and practiced all Lords Commandments, we studied in psalms 105 and also is Leviticus 25, 26 chapters.

The good deeds are helping the needy by providing

- food to the hungry
- drink to the thirsty
- providing clothes for the naked
- visiting the prisoners
- visiting the sick
- Inviting the homeless.

All the people who did the above good deeds were considered as righteous people by GOD and were granted an entry to the LORD's kingdom. When they have done all these good things the LORD appreciated them saying when they did all these good deeds to other people in need, they symbolically served the LORD.

The Goats who were on His left side, symbolising those people who didn't help those in need or did the above good deeds, they were cursed and thrown into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the angels of the devil. Of course they didn't even know they had bad behaviour. Finally everlasting punishment for bad people, eternal life for righteous people.

Matthew 26: 1 to 16

Jesus revealed to His disciples that the Son of Man will be betrayed and will be crucified after the feast of the Passover that is after two days.

The chief priests, scribes and elders and chief priest Caiaphas was assembled and were plotting to kill Jesus, however not during the feast fearing an uproar among the people.

In Bethany, when Jesus was in the house of Simon the leper, a woman brought a costly oil and poured it on the Lord's head but the disciples expressed their displeasure for wasting such an expensive oil, instead of selling the money and giving to the poor. Jesus told the disciples that poor people will be with you all the time but HE would not be with them always. Jesus further said that the woman had prepared HIM for the burial by pouring the oil on HIM and that wherever Gospel shall be preached in the whole world there what this woman has done will also be told as a Memorial.

Later with greed in his heart, Judas Iscariot sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, to betray our Lord.

To learn and apply:

- **Serve the needy with gladness.**
- **Obedience leads to inheritance of GOD's kingdom and eternal life but disobedience leads to eternal fire.**
- **We cannot serve both GOD and money**
- **GOD will note everything we do unto HIM and bless us.**

The protector, provider and the saviour will be coming back as the Judge.

Verses for 14th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 106:19 to 107:22

Psalm 107: 1 to 22

This Psalm is not credited to David. Author is unknown. This Psalm is first of the 5th Book of Psalms.

This Psalm reminds Israelites who have been delivered by God to have thanks and praise on their lips and to constantly and continually praise God.

There are 3 kinds of people in the Scriptures:

- 1) Wanderers (verses 4 to 9)
- 2) Prisoners (verses 10 to 16)
- 3) Sick (verses 16 to 20)

The reason for their predicament:

- 1) Rebellion against the word of God (verse 11)
- 2) Despising the counsel of the Most High God (verse 11)
- 3) Iniquities (verse 17)

In spite of their rebellious nature they cried out to God for help (verses 6, 13, &19)

In response to their request:

- 1) God led them by a straight way to a city to settle them.
- 2) God saved them from distress
- 3) God brought them out of darkness and broke their chains. 4) God sent His word (JESUS) and healed them.

APPLICATION:

- We should always PRAISE & WORSHIP GOD both in times of happiness and distress.
- Thanks, Praise and Worship should be in our hearts and on our lips constantly and continuously.

- We should never hesitate (because of guilt) to turn to God. God will deliver us from sickness, chains and darkness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 25: 29 to 46

Leviticus was written by Moses (All 5 books are written by Moses starting from Genesis to Deuteronomy)

God brought Israelites out of Egypt and gave them LAWS to rule by. These scriptures deal with how the Properties once sold can be redeemed.

If an Israelite sells a house in a protected or walled city, he can redeem and reclaim the possession in a year. If he does not redeem it in a year, the house remains with the purchaser permanently and it cannot be redeemed in the Jubilee year also.

But the houses situated in unprotected areas or villages, can be redeemed in the year of Jubilee because these are considered as land only and not houses. But in the case of Levites the properties can be redeemed at any time even properties in the walled cities.

If a brother Israelites has become poor other Israelites should help and not lend money on interest.

If an Israelite sells himself, the Israelite who purchases him should not treat him as a slave.

The children of strangers and their families can be bought and can be their permanent property.

APPLICATION:

God has a special place in His heart for Israelites and wants them to be treated fairly by other Israelites, as Israelites are His own people and we the believers also must treat fellow believers equally and treat them fairly and help them in their need.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 26: 17 to 46

In these Scriptures we find that Pass Over is prepared, celebrated and instituted as a new covenant.

Jesus gave thanks and blesses Bread and Cup (wine) and says:

Bread: Take, eat – this is my Body

Cup: Drink from it. For this is my BLOOD of the new COVENANT which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

In the new Covenant the Bread and Wine – becomes the BODY & BLOOD of LORD JESUS CHRIST- once Bread and Wine are blessed.

Jesus predicts that He is going to be handed over by His own disciples and says that “It would have been good for that man if he had not been born”.

Jesus also predicts that Peter is going to deny him 3 times and Peter again denies that he would not deny even if he had to die with Christ.

Jesus is deeply troubled as He is going to be crucified the next day. Jesus prays to God three times saying “O My Father if this cup cannot pass away from me unless I drink it, your will be done”.

Some interpret that the cup contains the wrath of God and some say it contains the sin of the world and that this is the reason why Jesus wanted this cup to pass.

APPLICATION

Many times we also deny Jesus in our day to day life. But we have the blood of Jesus that washes every sin. Only those who eat the Body and drink the Blood of Jesus Christ have eternal life and Jesus will raise them on the last day.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 15th February 2022

Contributor: Mrs Sheeba Mridula Sagar

Acts 6:1-8, 7:54 to 8:2

Across the world, the gospel has most often taken root in places prepared by the blood of martyrs. In Acts, after the early church begins to convert thousands of people to the Christian faith in a matter of days.

Acts 6:5 introduces a faithful man of God named Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” Stephen, in Greek Stephanos, meaning “wreath, crown, reward, honour, renown, fame”.

It is noteworthy that there have always been those faithful believers whose love for and commitment to the Lord seem to shine through so greatly that others around them notice, and Stephen was such a man. Nothing is known about the personal life of Stephen—his parents, his siblings, or whether he had a wife or children; however, what is known about him is what is truly important. He was faithful, even when faced with certain death.

Chapter 6 of Acts of the Apostles indicates that he was a Hellenist (a foreign-born Jew who spoke Greek). He lived in Jerusalem and had become a Christian.

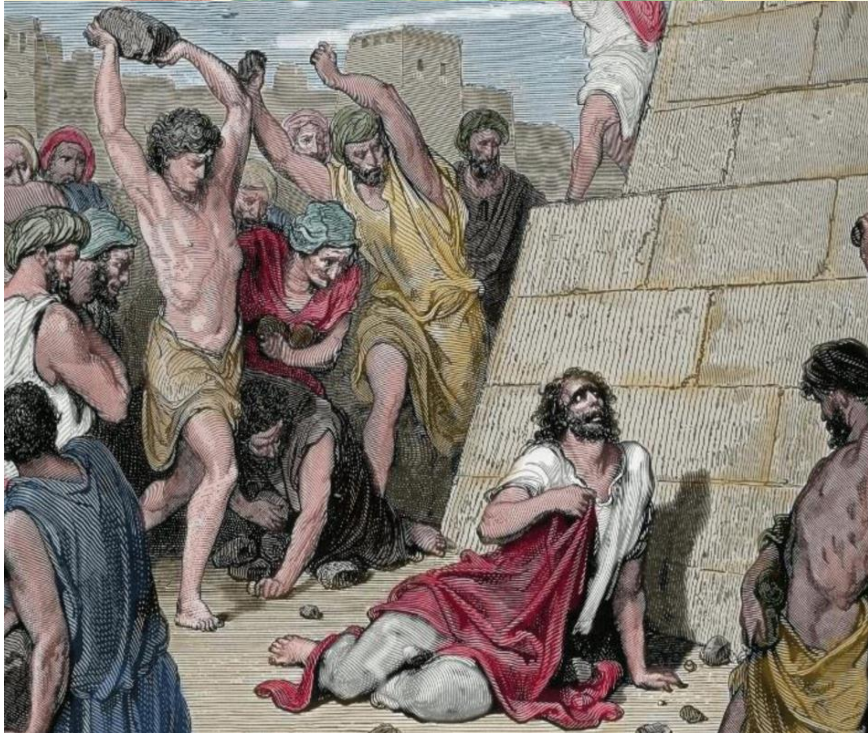
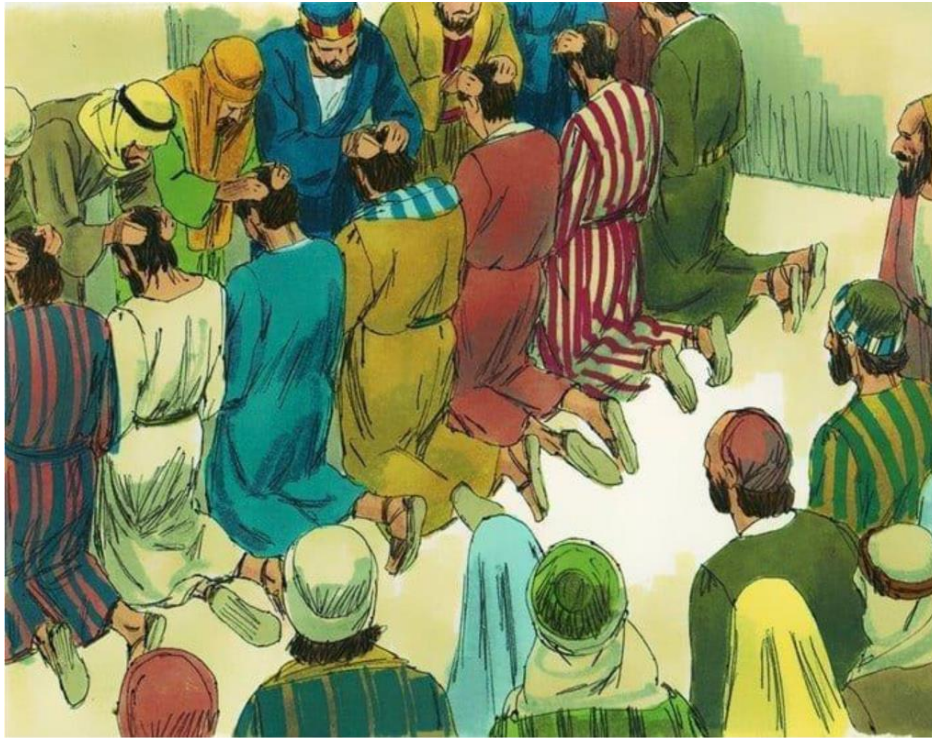
Acts 6:1-7: As the Apostles’ numbers grew, because of the size, certain people became overlooked, such as the Gentile widows (opposed to the Hebraic widows). Seeing a need to delegate roles, the disciples elected the first seven deacons known to the Christian faith. These deacons had to “be full of wisdom and the Spirit.” These deacons would take charge of the distribution of food to the widows, among other duties. The disciples chose Stephen, and six others, and prayed over them as they began their ministry.

Acts 6:8: Throughout the history of the early church, various charismatic gifts such as healing, belonged to several followers of Christ. Probably, Stephen performed various wonders and signs.

He was likely Jewish: Jews, from an early age, memorized portions of the Old Testament. They had a strong knowledge of the Scriptures, as seen in Stephen’s speech featured in Acts 7.

He also had Hellenistic roots: Probably he was a Hellenistic Jew (a foreign-born Jew), which would make sense why the apostles would place him in charge of the distribution of food to the Hellenistic widows. The article above also shows how his Hellenistic and Hebrew upbringing influenced the Apology-like speech he gives to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council. Many Jews grew up outside of Jerusalem due to an event known as the Diaspora. Among those who were chosen and ordained, Stephen, became the best known of the seven, was recognized as a man with special gifts as an evangelist. Their desire to serve Christ is translated into the reality of serving others.

Stephen was an effective administrator and messenger before becoming a martyr.



He was the first deacon and the first Christian martyr.

I. Stephen, besides being a good administrator, was also a powerful speaker. Stephen was an inspired man when he stood before his opponents and declared to them the words of God. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, as were the apostles on the day of Pentecost. When confronted in the temple by various opposing groups, Stephen's logic in responding was convincing. This is clear from the defence he made before the council. He presented a summary of the Jews' own history and made powerful applications that stung his listeners.

Of the numerous speeches in Acts of the Apostles, Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin is the longest.

- If we go out in Christ's name to speak for Him, the Holy Spirit will always be with us whom no man can withstand. If only we remembered this, it would make us brave and resistless in speaking the truth.

II. Stephen's fiery eloquence touched many hearts—but it also aroused the members of the Jewish synagogues, who set themselves against him.

We must not be surprised if our efforts to do good, awaken opposition.

- The more we try to honour Christ and build up His kingdom, the more opposition we shall encounter.

When we assault the evil we see in them and openly condemn it—we shall certainly stir up enmity and bring upon ourselves opposition and possibly persecution.

III. False witnesses were brought to testify against Stephen, to try to convict him, as the rulers had tried to convict Jesus.

IV. The record says, "All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel." We know that those who live in God's presence, in the light of God's love, will have shining faces. No doubt Stephen's face shone. The secret of the shine was in his heart. The peace of God was there even amid the enraged enemies glowering upon him, he had no fear—but was kept in perfect peace.

Stephen's

heart was full of love. Stephen was strong. Even with all the people against him, he had no fear. He was strong in God.

- When God is in a man, filling him—there is no room in him for fear or anger, or for any earthly passion.

V. But **he, being full of the Holy Spirit**, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Acts 7:55- 56

Stephen "looked up steadfastly into heaven." That was well. If he had not looked up—he would not have seen the vision of glory, which he now beheld. If he had looked down, probably he would have seen danger and would have been afraid. He looked up and saw not the human rage and fury—but the sweet peace of heaven above him.

- We should train our eyes to look up-ward, heaven-ward, God-ward, for, there are our blessings, our goal, our home, God Himself, and all fair and beautiful things.

VI. The members of the Sanhedrin lost all self-control, all dignity, and in their rage became an ungoverned mob. They cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and, rushing upon Stephen, dragged him out of the courtroom, through the gate, out of the city, and stoned him!

"And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:59, 60

Thus the eloquent voice was hushed, so that no more could it be heard on the earth. His life, cut off so suddenly, so violently, when only beginning its usefulness, seems a failure. But it

was not a failure. Someone says that Stephen's mission in this world was to deliver only one speech of half an hour. But if his words had reached or impressed no other life, they fell upon the ears of Saul, the persecutor, and he never forgot them. Stephen died, and Saul was converted- a violent persecutor of Christians to being one of the greatest champions of the gospel the church has known. Stephen's preaching was stopped- but Saul was called to take up his unfinished work.

VII. They stoned him to death while he prayed for their forgiveness. Stephen's dying prayers were like Jesus. He prayed first, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

To Stephen, dying was only breathing out his soul into the hands of Jesus Christ! He knew it was not death-but life, that was before him. His physical body was being mangled and broken-but his spirit could not be harmed. Beyond the strange mystery of death-Jesus waits to receive the departing spirit.

- Death is only a gateway through which the soul passes, and then life and glory burst upon the vision of the emancipated spirit. The beautiful Scriptural designation of death tells us of life beyond, of resurrection, of immortality. We shall awake from this sleep of death- -and our life shall go on again. We shall awake refreshed, lying down weary-and rising strong; lying down sick, or old, or deformed, or worn-out-and rising well, young and radiant in heavenly beauty!
- Through Stephen's example, we can learn to speak boldly for our faith, and know that our lives here on earth cannot compare with the joys we'll experience in heaven. **Man can only kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul.**

VIII. Through Stephen's example, we can learn to speak boldly for our faith, and know that our lives here on earth cannot compare with the joys we'll experience in heaven.

Man can only kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul.

The words of Colossians 3:2-3 could have been written about the life of Stephen, even though they are applicable to all believers: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

Stephen's life—and even more so his death—should be an example of how every believer should strive to live: committed to the Lord even in the face of death; faithful to preach the gospel boldly; knowledgeable of God's truth; and willing to be used by God for His plan and purpose.

THE EFFECTS OF STEPHEN'S DEATH

Stephen's death was not in vain. Following are some of the events that were by-products (either directly or indirectly) of the persecution that began with Stephen's martyrdom.

1. Philip's evangelistic tour (Acts 8:4-40)
2. Paul's (Saul's) conversion (Acts 9:1-30)
3. Peter's missionary tour (Acts 9:32 –11:18)
4. The Church in Antioch in Syria founded(Acts 11:19)

STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- One of the seven leaders chosen to supervise food distribution to the needy in the early church.
- Known for his spiritual qualities of faith, wisdom, grace, and power, and for the spirit's presence in his life.
- Outstanding leader, teacher, and debater
- First to give his life for the gospel.

LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE

- Striving for excellence in small assignments prepares one for greater responsibilities.
- Real understanding of God always leads to practical and compassionate actions toward people.

VITAL STATISTICS

- Church responsibilities: Deacon – distributing food to the needy.
- Contemporaries: Paul, Caiaphas, Gamaliel, the apostles

Stephen's life is a continual challenge to all Christians. Because he was the first to die for the faith, his sacrifice raises questions: how many risks do we take in being Jesus' followers? Would we be willing to die for him? Are we really willing to live for him?

Verses for 16th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 109:1-5 & 21-31 and Psalms 110

Psalms 109:1-5 & 21-31

The Psalm is written by King David Praising Him and seeking protection against liars, wicked and deceitful people, haters. They do evil by attacking without cause, accusing and repaying evil for good. Yet the Psalmist is friendly and praying for his enemies.

King David has a Heart of God and gives a shining example of dealing with wicked people in this world. We all come across such people in our family, relatives, acquaintances, neighbours, work place and secular society. As King David, we need to pray for them while seeking God's protection

Questions to ponder

- 1) King David praises God in this Psalm. In what ways can you show Praises to God in your daily life?
- 2) How will you respond to your critics and adversaries?

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 26: 14 to 26

The Lord set decrees through Moses for the people of Israel against idol worship and be true followers of God through their behaviour in Society. At the same he warned them against disobedience, pride and the punishments thereof, which included sudden terror, diseases, attack from enemies, wild animals, plagues, famines, crop failures.

God decrees his children to be holy and set apart for his kingdom. By disobedience and sin we lose our fellowship with God and hence a grim reminder to obey all His laws. The Pandemic is a grim reminder to seek God's mercy and introspect.

Questions to ponder

- 1) Why are Old Testament laws important for our daily living?
- 2) What laws have you transgressed recently which needs cleansing?

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 26:69 to 27:10

Matthew 26: 69 to 75

The Gospel writer Mathew gives a vivid description of how Peter denied Christ thrice and later repented. We too get many opportunities to stand up for Christ and show integrity in our daily lives at home, work place, church and society. For our own convenience do we deny like Peter or stand up and face people's hate, rejection, anger for our principles and Christian values. Let us repent for all our denials like Peter and seek forgiveness

Matthew 27:1 to 10

This passage written by Mathew is the tragic fate of Judas who betrayed Jesus. Though he repented he ended his life in worldly sorrow. The passage teaches us to repent truly, seek

forgiveness and get right with God. Because our Saviour has given a great hope of eternal life if we seek forgiveness.

Questions to ponder

1) How will you respond to testifying for the Lord when faced with a situation like Peter?

Will you stand up or compromise?

2) We do betray Christ at times. How will we react? Repent in worldly sorrow by ending life or repent and seek forgiveness?

Verses for 17th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 111 to 114

Psalm 111

What Psalm 111 means

Verse 1- "Hallelujah"

Hallelujah is a Hebrew word. It means "say that the *LORD is very great". Many people do not translate it, but use the Hebrew word. The *LORD is the *covenant name of God. When two people (or groups of people) agree we call it a *covenant (or an agreement).

In this *covenant:

-God agrees to love his people and give them help; if

-God's people are his servants and love and obey him.

The *psalmist writes about the *covenant in verses 5 and 9.

There are few interesting words in this psalm:

•Verse 1- "With all my *heart".

This is a special way that the *Jews (and many English people) say "as well as I can".

Note that the *psalmist says he will do it "where his people meet together". For him, that was the *temple (or God's house) in Jerusalem. For Christians it is in Church, or where they meet other Christians.

•Verse 3- "understand that he is a king".

When we understand that God is the greatest king in *heaven or earth, we honour him. This means that we are very polite to him. We are even a bit afraid of him. This is a special "being afraid" that Christians call "awe". It means that we know that God is much more powerful than we are.

•Verse 4- "miracles".

These are things that only God can do. As part of the *covenant, the *psalmist writes about three miracles.

•Verse 5- God gave the people food when they travelled from Egypt to their new home in Canaan. Today we call Canaan "Israel" and "Palestine". You can read about this miracle in Exodus 16. God sent his people bread from *heaven. The Bible calls this bread "manna".

*Heaven is either the sky or the home of God.

•Verse 6- The other miracle is in verse 6, "he gave them lands". These lands were where the people of Canaan lived. God sent these people away and put the *Jews there instead. You can read about this miracle in the Book of Joshua.* •Verse 9- The third miracle is in verse 9. God made his people free. They were slaves in Egypt, but God made them free. The story of this is in Exodus chapters 1 to 15. •Verse 7- "trust".

Here it means "We believe that God's rules are the best things that we can do". He will not tell us to do anything that is bad for us. Sometimes it may seem silly. But we must still *trust that God is right! We often hear God speaking to us when we read the Bible.* •Verse 9 This is a word like "righteous". God is *holy and *righteous.

"Holy" means that he never does anything wrong. "Righteous" means that he always does what is right.

•Verse 10

A *wise choice is when we decide to do the right thing. We think about a problem. Then we choose (make a choice) what to do.

If we are afraid of God (better, "in awe of God") then we will usually make the best choice.

"Awe" is a special "being afraid" ... not because we think that God will hurt us. Rather,

because we love God, we do not want to hurt him! We can hurt God by making the wrong choice!

*Wise people have “wisdom”. An old translation of this verse says “The fear of the *LORD is the beginning of wisdom”. This kind of fear (or being afraid) is the same as “awe”. You will also find this verse in Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10.

Something to do

1. Read verses 4 to 9. Look for:

⊖ what God does to keep the *covenant;

⊖ What his people do to keep the *covenant.

2. One of God’s gifts is “wisdom”. Ask God for this gift.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 26: 27 to 46

Among the Israelites, persons were not always prosperous or afflicted according to their obedience or disobedience. But national prosperity was the effect of national obedience, and national judgments were brought on by national wickedness. Israel was under a peculiar covenant. National wickedness will end in the ruin of any people, especially where the word of God and the light of the gospel are enjoyed. Sooner or later, sin will be the ruin, as well as the reproach, of every people. Oh that, being humbled for our sins, we might avert the rising storm before it bursts upon us! God grant that we may, in this our day, consider the things which belong to our eternal peace.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 27: 11 to 44

Matthew 27:24

Pilate

Pilate’s greatest sin was compromising what he knew to be true and right for the sake of position, status and personal gain. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and declared Him so on several occasions.

Matthew 27:39

Reviled him.

The sufferings of Christ, stage eight. Jesus was now a pathetic spectacle, blood streaked, covered with wounds and exposed to the view of the people. He experienced hours of pain in his entire body, fatigue in his arms, great waves of cramps in the muscles and skin torn from his back. Then another agony began a crushing pain deep in the chest as fluid began to compress the heart. He felt an intense thirst and was aware of the abuse and ridicule of those who passed by the cross.

Verses for 18th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 114- 117

Psalm 114

What Psalm 114 means

What happened when the people of Israel left Egypt?

Several things happened:

- God led them to the Promised Land, (verse 2).
- God led them through the Red Sea, which became dry for them, (verse 3).
- God led them over the River Jordan. It also became dry for them, (verse 3).
- Mountains and hills like Sinai seemed to jump like animals, (verse 4).
- God gave them water from the rocks in dry places, (verse 8).

Verse 1: The “strange language” was Egyptian. The *Jews spoke Hebrew and wrote their psalms in Hebrew.

Here “Israel” means the people, not the place.

Verse 2: “*LORD” is a special name for God. It is the *covenant name.

A covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here God agrees to love and send help to his people; the people agree to love and obey God. The covenant started when God led his people from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Some Bible students translate verse 2 in a different way:

The people of Judah worshipped (the LORD). The people of Israel made him their king. This makes the verse about the covenant, not about the land. The people worshipped (or loved and were the servants of) the *LORD.

The *LORD was their king. He gave them help and he was their leader. Both translations teach us something about God.

Verse 3: The Sea was the Red Sea. It is between Egypt and the Promised Land. Exodus 14:10-22 tells us what happened. A dry path appeared in the sea! The *psalmist says that the waters ran away (or fled) from God. This is poetry, or a special way to use words. The same thing happened to the River Jordan. The story is in Joshua 3:7-17. “Turned back” means that the water “stopped going”.

Verse 4: Here rams are male sheep, and lambs are young sheep. The hills and mountains jumped like animals when the LORD was near. Again, this is poetry. Maybe the psalmist means the earthquake in Exodus 19:18-20. An earthquake is when the ground moves.

Verses 5 and 6 ask, “Why did the sea become dry? Why did the River Jordan stop? Why was there an *earthquake?” The answer is in verses 7 and 8.

Verses 7 and 8: God is near. So, the earth is like a man who is afraid. Here God is “the Lord”. This is not the same Hebrew word as LORD. *Lord is a word that means “master”, (someone that you must obey). He is so powerful that he can make water come from a dry rock! The story is in Exodus 17:1-7.

In verse 7, Jacob means either:

- all God's people, or
- Jacob himself, who *worshipped God.

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 27:1 – 15

Leviticus 27:2

Vow.

Chapter 27 deals with things vowed or promised to the Lord, such as persons, animals, houses and land.

A value was placed on them in case the one who made the promise wanted to buy back the gift.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 27:45-66

Matthew 27:51

The tearing of the Vail

The tearing of the Vail of the temple signified that a way was now open into the presence of God. The curtain separating the holy place from the most holy place barred the way into the presence of God. Through the death of Christ, the curtain was removed and the way into the most holy place was opened for all who believe in Christ and His saving message.

Verses for 19th January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 118 to 119:24

Psalm 118

Something to do”

1. Ask God to save you. This means he will give you help in this life. And he will keep you safe when you die. But remember this: When he saves you, you make a *covenant with him. You agree to love him and obey him. You agree to be his servant. He agrees to love you and make you safe.
2. If you have a *New Testament, study what it says about Psalm 118. Read Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7.
3. Study also verses from the *Old Testament. Read Nehemiah 8:14-18; Jeremiah 51:26 and Zechariah 4:7.
4. Psalm 118 was the psalm that some great Christians loved best of all the psalms. Examples are Saint Augustine and Martin Luther. Like them, learn to say some of the verses by *heart.
“By *heart” means “without looking at the words”. Then you will remember the words when God wants to speak to you through them!

OLD TESTAMENT

Leviticus 27: 16 to 34

Leviticus 27:30

The tenth of both produce of the land and livestock that was given to the Lord. The tithe of Israel was given to support the Levites and priests, to assist in sacred meals and to aid the poor, the fatherless and the widows.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 28:1 to 20

Matthew 28:9

Jesus met them.

The resurrection is well verified historically. After His resurrection, Christ remained on earth for 40 days, appearing and talking to the apostles and many of his followers.

Matthew 28:10

Be not afraid.

Why were these women not to be afraid? The angel’s response gives us the answer, for I know you seek Jesus.

At Christ’s return, His faithful will have no reason to fear if they also have remained loyal to Him.

Verses for 21st January 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119:73 to 120

The Story of Psalm 119

Solomon was king of Israel nearly 1000 years before Christ came to the earth (B.C.).

Solomon built the house of God that was in Jerusalem. We call it “the temple”. About 600 B.C. a nation called Babylon fought the Jews. A nation is a country with a government.

Babylon was 800 kilometres east of Jerusalem. The Babylonians won the fight and they took many Jews to Babylon. We call this “the exile”. The Babylonians also destroyed the *temple.

After the exile many Jews went back to their own country. About 500 B.C. they built the temple again. Then they made the Book of Psalms to sing in the new temple. Some were old psalms by David, Moses and Isaiah. Other psalms were new like Psalm 1.

Psalm 119 was probably one of these new psalms. It is a very special psalm. There are 176 verses (or parts) in it. Some people think that 176 different people wrote one verse each.

Other people think that Ezra wrote all Psalm 119. Ezra was a *Jewish leader about 450 B.C.

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The *Jews spoke Hebrew, so they wrote Psalm 119 in the Hebrew language.

The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is aleph. Verses 1 to 8 all begin with aleph.

Beth is the second letter. Verses 9 to 16 all begin with Beth.

Verses 17 to 24 all begin with the 3rd letter and so on. So, there are 22 times 8, or 176 verses in this psalm. We think that they did this to make it easier for them to remember the psalm. It was probably a psalm that *Jewish leaders had to remember. We have not made the verses start with the right letter in this translation. We have put the psalm into 22 groups with 8 verses in each group.

There are also 8 special words in the psalm. To the *Jews these 8 words were important. They described what God told them to do. They are also important for Christians, because they tell them the ways that God speaks to them. The most important way is through the Bible. Christians call the Bible ‘The Word of God’. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. You will probably find that you can study it more easily in groups of 8 verses.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 43: 1 to 27

Ezekiel43:5

The glory of the Lord filled the house.

The book of Ezekiel began with an awe inspiring vision of God’s glory, chapters 8 to 11 described how God’s glory progressively departed from the temple and the city because of the sins of the people. Ezekiel concludes with another awe – inspiring vision. God’s glory, power and love filling the temple again. Whereas the Holy Spirit came from heaven on the day of Pentecost like the sound of rushing mighty wind here Ezekiel witnesses the return of God’s glory like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 6: 15 to 25

Every man is the servant of the master to whose commands he yields himself; whether it be the sinful dispositions of his heart, in actions which lead to death, or the new and spiritual obedience implanted by regeneration.

The apostle rejoiced now they obeyed from the heart the gospel, into which they were delivered as into a mould.

As the same metal becomes a new vessel, when melted and recast in another mould, so the believer has become a new creature. And there is great difference in the liberty of mind and spirit, so opposite to the state of slavery, which the true Christian has in the service of his rightful Lord, whom he is enabled to consider as his Father, and himself as his son and heir, by the adoption of grace.

The dominion of sin consists in being willingly slaves thereto, not in being harassed by it as a hated power, struggling for victory. Those who now are the servants of God, once were the slaves of sin.

Verses for 22nd February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119:121 – 160

Psalm 119: 145 – 160

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm with 176 verses written by an anonymous author, though Ezra the priest is often suggested to be the author of this Psalm. Overall, this Psalm focuses on the truth and wonders of God's word and His promises. It also emphasizes on obedience to God's word and laws. The selected portion elucidates the importance to pray to God earnestly each morning. In the mornings our minds are relatively free from our problems and it is the best time to commit the whole day into God's hand. Regular communication is certainly necessary for a strong relationship with God. We often wish we can escape troubles that constantly wear us down. We can look to God as a source of power, courage, & wisdom, taking us through our difficulties and troubles. When trouble strikes, don't get frustrated, instead admit that you need God's help and thank Him for being on your side.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 44:1 – 31

Book of Ezekiel contains the prophecies of prophet Ezekiel. In Ezekiel's writings about the restoration of the worship of God, he talks about the new temple and the altar, and then in chapter 44 he gives a vivid picture of the unchangeable holiness of God. The east gate of the temple is shut because God entered the temple through this gate so no one else could walk through that gate. Ezekiel's vision was for a purified worship where only those who prepared themselves physically and spiritually could participate. Ezekiel reminds the laws given to God's people (in Exodus and Leviticus). These laws reveal the importance of approaching God respectfully and they give guidelines for the priests to live above reproach so they could carry their responsibility to teach and guide the people. Are we careful enough in how we approach God in worship, being mindful of His unchangeable holiness?

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 7:1 – 12

In this passage Paul describes how we are free from the law given by Moses. Paul explains that the law helps us to identify what is sin. We know 'to covet' is sin because of the Ten Commandments. It is only through the law of God that we realize that we are sinners. However, keeping the rules, laws and customs of Christianity does not save us. Even if we could be pure in our actions and thoughts we cannot be saved. Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. We cannot earn our way to God by keeping a set of commandments, going to Church regularly or doing good work. We serve God not by following a set of rules but we serve Him out of love and gratitude. This is the new way of living. Only Jesus can set us free.

Verses for 23rd February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 120 to 125

Psalms 120

Psalms 120 is the first of a series of 15 psalms (Psalm 120 to 134) each with the title, A Song of Ascents. The reason for this collection and arrangement is not precisely stated. Many different explanations have been given for these as:

The Stairs of the Temple Songs.

The Step Songs.

The Gradual Songs.

The Progression Songs.

The Procession from Babylon Songs.

The Pilgrim Festival Songs.

Probably the best explanation is the last one listed, that these were songs for the people of God as they made the pilgrim journey to Jerusalem (on top of Mount Zion) and the Temple (on top of Mount Moriah) at the three appointed feasts : Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Jews sang these psalms for climbing as they went up the hills to Jerusalem.

The author of these fifteen Psalms is not known; and most probably they were not the work of one person. They have been attributed to David, to Solomon, to Ezra, to Haggai, to Zechariah, and to Malachi, without any positive evidence.

Psalms 120 is the psalm that starts us on our journey in the Psalms of Ascent. We learn three important applications from it:

Call on the Lord in times of trouble.

Know that God will punish the wicked.

Know that you do not belong to the world.

Psalms 120 means that as followers of Christ we are in the world but not of the world. The world is opposed to God and his ways. The world is opposed to God's truth and to God's people. The world hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their evil deeds will be exposed. God will judge the wicked but save his people.

We also learn that we are pilgrims on a journey. God has changed our hearts in Christ, and so we no longer desire the things of the world. We desire first and foremost to be with God and to meet with him. This is a journey that begins with our conversion, which ends with heaven, and in between we follow every day and every week of our lives. It is also a journey that begins and ends with prayer. Talk to God and cry out to him. "I call on the Lord in my

distress, and he answers me.” (Psalm 120:1)

In summary we have three responsibilities to fulfil if our burdens are to become blessings and we are to become a peacemaker:

We must pray (verses 1 &2). When King Saul was trying to track David down and kill him, he had to live among pagan people in a foreign land. We can sense the ache in his voice as he laments his situation and cries out to the Lord.

We must trust God (verses 3 & 4). David was confident that God would punish the enemy with their own weapons. When we are slandered and lied about, we must leave the matter with the Lord and trust Him to work.

We must patiently endure (verses 5 to 7). The psalmist was a peacemaker (verse 7) and tried to encourage his godless Jewish neighbours (Meshech and Kedar (verse5)) to be in peace regardless of their war like ways.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 45:1 to 25

EZEKIEL means STRENGTHENED BY GOD

Background/Historical information for Ezekiel 45

Fourteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, around BC 572, Ezekiel had this vision (Ezekiel 40:1) and chapter 45 is part of this vision. This vision of Ezekiel is the restitution of the kingdom of God. In this vision (chapters 40 to 48) the temple is rebuilt, priesthood reformed, services reorganized, restored monarchy, reapportioned territory, and a renewed people of God is seen.

But this never had its accomplishment in the Jewish state after the return out of captivity.

Impartial distribution of the Land verses 1 to 8:

The form of a square for the land apportioned to the priests, the prince, and the people indicated the perfect harmony and satisfaction existing among these classes. There was no ground for envy, no temptation or disposition to invade and appropriate the territory of another. The priests and Levites that were to come near to minister were to have their dwellings in this portion of the land that was round about the sanctuary, that they might be near their work, whereas by the distribution of the land in Joshua’s time the cities of the priests and Levites were dispersed all over the nation. The city was separate from the temple and was a dwelling for some people from all the tribes of Israel, as we find they did, Nehemiah 11:1, 2. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, temple was within the city and the dwellers of the city were confined to one or two tribes (Judah and Benjamin).

The prince as head of the holy community stands in closest connection with the Sanctuary, his possession, therefore, on both sides must adjoin that which was peculiarly the Lord’s. The definition of the prince’s territory was to prevent the oppressions foretold in 1 Samuel 8:11-18, described in 2 Kings 23:35 and reprovved in Jeremiah 22:3, 4. We find that after the return of the Jews to their own land the princes were closer to the previous kings of Judah and Israel except Nehemiah who governed the people after their return from captivity.

“Application for Israel” – The Land belonged to God, the people were given the privilege to live in it, multiply and prosper.

“Application for Today” – The Land still belongs to God, and we are the stewards of its resources. Principles of equality and equal laws still apply to us today.

Accurate adjustment and use of weights and measures verses 9 to 13

The moral degeneracy of the Jews was apparent in their business transactions. They tampered with weights and measures, and they were frequently charged with falsifying balances (Amos 8:5; Hosea 12:7; Micah 6:11). There was ample ground for the severe reproof of the prophet that their ways were no equal (Ezekiel 33:17).

The law of the land, however carefully framed and wisely administered, does not always secure perfect justice as between man and man, even when that law is interpreted in the light of equality. All princes, especially the princes of Israel were to “rule for God as the people belonged to God”. God expects his people to be just and honest in all their dealings, very punctual and exact in rendering to all their due, and very cautious to do wrong to none, because otherwise they spoil the acceptableness of their profession with God and the reputation of it before men.

“Application for Israel” – The princes were stewards of God, ruling the people for God. They were to be just and righteous and not oppress the people.

“Application for Today” – Princes-People in authority need to execute their duties justly and righteously, because they are answerable to God. Honesty and Integrity at all levels of society and especially among the people of God is an absolute requisite.

Regulating the ordinances of worship verses 14 to 25

The exact directions given in these verses regarding the sacrifices indicate that everything connected with Temple service must be regulated according to the strictest laws of equality. Of all places, the Sanctuary must not be polluted, or its worship marred with mutilated offerings and half-hearted devotion. The cleansing of the sanctuary at the beginning of the New Year is not instituted in the Law of Moses. Even sanctuaries on earth need cleansing. Those who worship God together should often join in renewing their repentance for their manifold defects and applying the blood of Christ for the pardon of them, and in renewing their covenants to be more careful of the future. The atonement was made for everyone who “sins unintentionally or through ignorance” in preparation for the Passover Feast, a perpetual memory of their redemption from slavery. But for presumptuous sins, committed with a high hand, there is no sacrifice (Numbers 15:30).

“Application for Israel” – People were being reminded of the holiness of God and the gracious provision that was made for them through the sacrifices to draw near to God in worship and praise.

“Application for Today” – Christ our Passover sacrifice has enabled us to come into the presence of God. However, we need to daily offer sacrifices of praise and thanks and fulfil the calling that each of us are given. Our worship should be with all our heart, all our strength, and with all that we have been given by God.

Ezekiel’s vision was not fulfilled by Jews who returned to the land from exile. However, Jesus picked up his theme of the kingdom of God and its principles of equality and taught it to his disciples and hearers as he preached and taught on mountaintops, synagogues and along the road.

Ezekiel’s vision is a bridge from the Old Testament Law to New Testament indwelling of the Spirit of God among and in the people to fulfil the Law.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 7:13 to 25

Paul was a Christian apostle who spread the teachings of Jesus in the first-century world. He founded several Christian communities in Asia Minor and Europe from the mid-30s to the

mid-50s AD. He made four long missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire, planting churches, preaching the gospel, and giving strength and encouragement to early Christians. He preached the death, resurrection, and lordship of Jesus Christ. He explains how faith in Jesus justifies all people and creates a unified, multi ethnic family and a path to righteousness.

Romans, the sixth book of the New Testament is the longest and doctrinally most significant of St. Paul the Apostle's writings.

Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth in 56 AD.

This portion of Romans can be divided as:

The purpose of the law (verses 13, 14)

Paul is talking about the Law of God given through Moses.

It is excellent, holy and just as its giver, the Lord.

The law is also spiritual just as the one who gave it is Spirit.

The law exposes the spiritual nature of humans and points to the sinfulness of humans. The law helps humans realize that they are in bondage to sin.

Thus, the purpose of the law is to lead us into a deeper understanding of our sinfulness and the heinousness of our sinful nature.

Like the Psalmist says, "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" (Ps 119:18), we should see the law given by God as precious light to lead us in life.

Sinful nature in man described (verses 15 to 20)

These verses describe the struggle that every Christian goes through in life. Paul is not talking about his life before he turned to Christ.

The struggle between our sinful nature which is in control of us and the new life in the spirit that we receive when we are born again is described here by Paul.

It is as though there are two persons living in Paul – one who delights in the law of God and the other who is in bondage to sin which drags Paul into doing what he does not want to do.

We do a disservice to new Christians when we tell them everything will be fine. The battle begins when they turn to Christ because they have just stepped out of Satan's reach and into the Kingdom of God. We need to acknowledge and address this intense spiritual struggle that each one goes through if we are to live a sanctified life with Christ.

Inability of the law to help sinful nature (verses 21 to 23)

Paul tells the readers how difficult it is to live a sanctified life because excellent as the law is, it is unable to give him the ability to live according to its righteous requirements.

Paul tells his readers that knowing and delighting in the law of God is not sufficient to overcome the sinful nature. To describe how pathetic is our condition, Paul uses the phrase "prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." These and the preceding verses give us a sense of despair that not only Paul but every Christian needs to come to the Lord in order to live a life of righteousness.

If Paul could despair of his inability to live a righteous life and face constant struggle to do so, then we too need to take a deeper look at our Christian life and see if we are allowing some of our sinful habits and behaviours to continue in us clothed in Christian terms.

The only way to overcome sinful nature (verses 24 & 25)

Paul is at the depths of despair over his inability to keep the law / obey the law of God although he knows its spiritual nature and its importance. He and his readers are given the solution to this problem: – it is possible only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His exultant expression "Thanks be to God" turns the attention of his readers from

despair to victory.

We can see from Paul's struggle that none of us can live the Christian life in our own strength, depending on our own ability. Paul explains 7:25 in chapter 8, that the law of sin and death is overcome through the death and resurrection of Jesus. In 8:11 he tells his readers that the power of the spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead is available and working in us to live a victorious life.

Until we come to a knowledge and acceptance of this kind of dependence on the spirit of God, we cannot live a victorious Christian life and that needs to be on a daily basis, and sometimes even moment by moment.

Verses for 24th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 126 to 131

Introductory note:

The almanac provides passages from the Old Testament and New Testament. The idea is to cover reading the whole Bible in two to three years.

These two or three texts may not directly related to.

On Sundays four texts (Old Testament, Psalm, Epistle and Gospel) are provided and they are connected by a theme.

Today's three passages stand on their own.

I would like to concentrate on the Psalm 126.

Psalms 126

Psalm 126 is one of the often read psalms in the Old Testament.

It is from a collection of psalms called the Psalms of Ascent. They are Psalms 120 to 136.

It is commonly believed that as the people of Israel went to Jerusalem to worship at the time of festivals; they would go in groups for reasons of security and fellowship. As they go they sing so that their walking becomes easy.

These songs of joy and Thanksgiving are called psalms of ascent because going to Jerusalem meant climbing a high Plateau.

Jerusalem is on the Judean mountain range. It consists of mountains of Olives, Zion, Mariah and Scopus. Therefore people would have to climb. Thus, these are the psalms of ascent.

This particular psalm is probably written after the return of the Jewish people from exile in Babylon. The author is not known. It speaks of restoration the fortunes of Zion.

Zion is used referring to Jerusalem as well as the people of Judah. They dreamt of returning to their homeland and now it became a reality under the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, who defeated Babylonia.

Since they are free, they are happy and therefore they sing songs of joy.

Even their neighbours see it and say that the Lord has done great things for them.

The people themselves acknowledge that it was the Lord who has done great things by their release from exile.

But now rebuilding their nation is the need of the hour. Therefore they pray for restoration of their fortunes again.

Negeb is the desert in the South and there are springs of water. Like that of these springs, they hope and pray for blessings even when there is nothing.

But they have the hope that they who sow in tears will reap in joy and they who weep will rejoice.

This is a psalm of hope in desperate times.

We are passing through desperate times in the midst of the pandemic. There is anxiety and fear all around.

The only hope is the hope in God's goodness and grace.

Amen

Bishop Surya.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 46: 1 to 24

This chapter deals with Sabbath offerings and worship, the day of new moon, the appointed feasts, and the daily offerings.

The ordinances of worship for the prince and for the people, are here described, and the gifts the prince may bestow on his sons and servants. Our Lord has directed us to do many duties, but he has also left many things to our choice, that those who delight in his commandments may abound therein to his glory, without entangling their own consciences, or prescribing rules unfit for others; but we must never omit our daily worship, nor neglect to apply the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to our souls, for pardon, peace, and salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8: 1 to 11

Romans 8:1

Paul tells us that spiritual life freedom from condemnation, victory over sin and fellowship with God come through union with Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit. By receiving and following the Spirit, we are delivered from sin's power and are led onward to final glorification in Christ. This experience is the normal Christian life under the full provision of the gospel of Christ.

Romans 8:4

The law might be fulfilled in us.

The Holy Spirit working within believers allows them to live lives of righteousness, which is seen as the fulfilment of God's moral law. Thus the operation of grace and obedience to the law are not in conflict. They both point to righteousness and holiness.

Verses for 25th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 132 to 135

Psalms 132

What Psalm 132 means

Verses 1 to 5

These verses tell us that David wanted to bring the ark of God into Jerusalem. The ark was a special box that was very important to the *Jews. After a war with the Philistines, who lived near the *Jews, they left the ark in a place called “Kiriath-Jearim”. David had a lot of trouble when he brought it into Jerusalem. He also wanted to build a house to put it in. But God would not let him.

“The *Mighty One of Jacob*” is another name for God. “LORD” is a special name for God that his people use. It is his *covenant name.

A *covenant is when people agree to do something. God agrees to give his people help; his people agree to love and obey him.

Verses 6 to 10

Tell us that the *Jews found “it” (the ark) in the country round Kiriath-Jearim (or Jaar). It was in a place called Ephratah. The ark was a special box that Moses made from wood. After they brought the ark into Jerusalem, they said the words in verses 7 to 10.

“The place where you can rest” is the house of God.

“Rest” means “not work” and “*priests and *saints” are servants of God.

Christians believe that the *Messiah is Jesus. But here it means the King of Israel.

“Worship God” means “tell God that you love him”.

Verses 11 to 18

Tell us about God’s promises.

Many Christians believe that it happened when Jesus came to the earth.

“*Messiah” is the *Hebrew word for “Christ”. The *Jews spoke the *Hebrew language and wrote the psalms in *Hebrew*. “Messiah” means “*anointed*”, or “*oil poured on*”. In verse 11, “*the fruit of your body*” means “*your children*”. The “throne” in verse 12 is a special chair that a king sits on.

His “crown” in verse 18 is the “special hat that he wears”.

The light of the *messiah will never go out because Jesus will always be the Light of the World.

Something to do

1. Count God’s promises in Psalm 132:11 to 18.
2. What was in the ark of God? Look for the answer is in Hebrews 9:4.
3. Read about how the ark came to Jaar (see Psalm 132:6) in 1 Samuel chapters 6 and 7.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 47: 1 to 23

Ezekiel 47:1 to 12

Waters issued out from ...the house.

In his vision, Ezekiel sees a life- giving river coming from the temple. As it flows, it grows in depth and width, giving life and fruitfulness to everything it touches. The river flows from the Dead Sea area and rids it of death.

The purpose of this supernatural river is to bring God's flourishing life, abundance of fish, enduring fruitfulness and healing, wherever the river flows. This river is similar to the river flowing from the Garden of Eden, and the river of life in the New Jerusalem that flows from the throne of God.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8: 12 to 27

Romans 8:14

Led by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit lives within the child of God in order to lead him or her to think, speak and act according to God's Word.

He leads primarily by prompting that

a) We are inward urging to do God's will and to put to death the misdeeds of the body.

The Spirit's prompting comes by reading God's Word, praying and fasting, listening to godly preaching and teaching.

Verses for 26th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 136; 137: 1 to 6 & 138

Psalm 136

This psalm magnifies the mercies of God. It was called the Great Hallel or song of praise. It was probably composed by David and given to the Levites to sing during the Passover. The priest would sing the first part and the people would join in the refrain, to remind them at least 26 times in this psalm to reiterate His mercy that endures forever. It is also mentioned 4 times in Psalm 118 as Mercy and Grace go together. His Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve and God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve.

This psalm was sung at Solomon's Temple and by King Jehoshaphat as a Song weapon to defeat his enemies and even by Ezra and the priests when they laid the foundation for the Temple etc.

We are thankful to God our benefactor.

a) We can praise the Lord for HIS WONDERS.

Isaiah 9:6 says His Name shall be called Wonderful. The disciples saw His miracles and we too can testify to that.

Verse 2- We should worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords as He is above all.

He alone has done wonders with no help from anyone. Psalm 8 says O Lord our God, How excellent is Thy Name in all the earth.

b) Praise God for His Wisdom.

Verse 5- God created with the blueprint of His Wisdom all creation and our lives, to show His handiwork and declare His Glory on all His Creation. James 1 says if anyone lacks wisdom, we have to ask Him who gives it freely.

c) Praise God for His Works.

His outstretched hand and arm gives victory over Pharaoh and the enemies and also by parting the Red Sea of our problems.

He goes before us to fight the giant Og and Sihon the King of the Amorites and our enemies too will be defeated in like manner.

Verse 23- In our low estate when we are low in our faith, love and every area of our lives, in His mercy He remembers us.

Verse 24- Sin is our enemy and He has redeemed us from death and brought us too, to the Promised Land.

Gratitude is the memory of a glad and thankful heart.

To multiply our joy we need to count our blessings and Praise Him as often as we can.

Conclusion

The psalmist looks at the Mercy of God, who performed three mighty things for the Israelites. "He brought them out. He brought them through and He brought them in."

He bought and brought us too out of sin's slavery, brought us through the Red Sea and wilderness experiences of our life and finally brings us to the Promised Land of our inheritance.

Every new day gives us new reasons to praise Him.

To sing God's praise, we have to keep our hearts in tune with Him, as we make melody in our hearts to the Lord.

"Mercy is not something that God has, but something that God is".

A. W. Tozer

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 48: 1 to 35

This chapter is a vision of Ezekiel which telescopes to the end times and gives us a picture of the New Jerusalem – Revelation 21 and 22.

The purpose of these chapters in Ezekiel is to give hope to Israel, in exile in Babylon. The Lord spoke to them about the future of Israel. They would live in the land that God promised Abraham. The Lamb shall reign in New Jerusalem.

There were 12 literal gates, with the names of the 12 tribes, 3 in each direction for those who inherit the Shekinah glory of God to enter in. The 12 gates belong to New Jerusalem which came down from heaven to earth. Hebrew 11:10 -The city of New Jerusalem had 12 foundations with the names of 12 apostles. The gates were symmetrically arranged three facing each direction with each gate bearing the name of a tribe and made of a single pearl. The 12 stones on the breastplate of the ancient Hebrew priest, can be identified with the corresponding 12 tribes of Israel.

Jerusalem will have a restoration and it happened. “Behold I make all things new” Revelation 21:5

The New Jerusalem contains a tribute to Old Testament Tribes from the Patriarch’s and New Testament apostles. It is for all.

Through faith in Christ, We can all enter the eternal kingdom and enjoy His presence forever, as we too have been grafted in according to Romans 11.

He will be there as Jehovah Shammah and will be with us, as we with Him.

The Name of that city will be the Lord is there.

In the Old Testament Moses says I will not go if your presence does not go with me. The Lord says my presence will go with you.

When Jesus was born He, was called Immanuel meaning God with us.

Before going to heaven in Matthew 28:20 Jesus tells the disciples “Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

This God as Jehovah Shammah, promises to be there in every situation of our life here now and for evermore, when we place our faith and trust in Him.

Are we ready? Can we tell others about Him?

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8: 28 to 39

Romans was written by Paul the apostle, when he was in Corinth. He talks about Living by the Spirit when we become children of God and living by the flesh.

We look at our troubles and take it at face value. God has better plans and a purpose behind it. For instance Joseph was sent to prison, so that all Israel could be saved from the famine. Joseph did not murmur but even in prison lived an exemplary life. There are no accidents in the life of a believer. Job says ‘ Must we accept good and not evil. In the end we see that Job was rewarded double for his trouble.

Verse 34. Every time we slip Satan the accuser is ready to point out our faults. But the love of God intervenes, as we are justified by His death on the Cross. The grip of Jesus is so strong that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, when we believe and trust in Him.

Verse 37 – We are more than conquerors, as Christ has fought the battle and redeemed us with His Blood. We are freely enjoying this victory which Christ has wrought for us.

Verse 39 – In all three levels Height – Heaven or Depth– Hell or things on earth or anything else, nothing can separate us from the Love of Christ, as we are bought with a price.

The chapter begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation.
Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus.

Verses for 28th February 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 142 to 144

Psalms 142

Psalm 142 was a contemplation of David.

It was a prayer when he was in trouble hiding himself in the cave crying out to God in his distress. He was seeking his creator's help rather than running to people.

Here David teaches us to cast our burdens upon God because HE cares for us. When our spirits are overwhelmed by distress, and filled with discouragement, when we see snares laid for us everywhere, we must trust and rely on God for HE is our refuge and strength.

Psalm 9:9-10 tells that HE is the refuge for the oppressed and a strong hold in times of trouble.

Whatever the trouble may be whether it is health, finances, rejection or failure cry out to the Lord because HE delivers us and gives us peace and solace in our distress.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 1: 1 to 22

The Book of Job begins by introducing its central character and the man who perhaps wrote the book by recording his own experiences.

Job was blameless and upright in character, blessed in family and possession. God himself testified that "Job is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless- a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil" (1: 8). Surely he had an impeccable reputation with all these qualities yet he suffered as God allowed Satan to test him. This often raises a pertinent question- 'why should the righteous suffer'?

The main thrust of the book of Job is not the suffering of a righteous person but the endurance of a God fearing person.

Secondly, the book of Job clarifies that suffering is not necessarily God's retribution for sin.

Job's life reminds us that when we endure the testing times, we shall reap manifolds.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 1: 1 to 15

Mark 1: 1-15, Mark introduces Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

John the Baptist too announced that Jesus, who will come soon is greater than he was not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals (Mark 1:7). Yet, Jesus too faced temptations! He was tempted by Satan for forty days (verse 12).

It is hence evident that as human beings we cannot avoid sufferings for many things such as disease, failure, loss, temptations, deception, death of our loved ones, our attitude and so on can cause suffering.

Jesus' experience in the wilderness teaches us to be rooted in the word of God so that we may walk closer with God resisting temptations and enduring trials.

"The kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News" (verse 15) is the key to our Christian living.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
MARCH

Verses for 1st March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 1 & Psalms 3 to 5

Psalms 1

A Psalm of wisdom

In the Talmud, (Berakhot 10a), it is stated as Psalm 1 & 2 are counted as one composition and David's favourite as he used the word 'Ashrei' meaning "blessed" in the opening phrase of Psalm 1 and closing phrase of Psalm 2.

It is the first Psalm that stands as a kind of introduction to the rest of the Psalms. It declares blessedness of the righteous and the misery and future of the wicked.

It presents 2 ways of life.

The key subject matter is, having God's WORD as centre of life and the fruitfulness of righteous who truly love HIS WORD.

I. The holiness and happiness of a godly man (way of righteous) verses 1 to 3 (narrow way)

The way of righteous- (narrow way) – means- blessedness, happiness & fruitfulness.

Blessedness is a choice, but to be blessed, we must by faith obey the conditions laid down.

- Do not stand in the path of sinners
- Do not sit in the seat of the scoffers
- Do not walk in the counsel of wicked

II. The sinfulness and the misery of the wicked man (way of wicked) verses 4 & 5 (broad way)

The way of wicked (broad way) – means- cursedness, unhappiness, judgement and suffering. A person can be happy if he does not take the advice from ungodly people. Any advice from such people, will take them far from God.

This is a Psalm of instruction, concerning good and evil.

Conclusion:

One can avoid judgement

1) By having love affair with GOD's WORD

2) By studying GOD's WORD (Torah)

3) Occupied by GOD's WORD (meditate)

When all above are followed, GOD's promise is fulfilled. There is no lack in one's life and they will be overflowing in abundance, always fruitful.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 2: 1 to 13

Book of Job is one of the first documents in the history.

It is the first poetic book in the Old Testament.

Scholars believe it was written between 7th and 4th centuries B.C.

Traditional Jewish claim Moses to be the author of this book.

Holding on to faith in the midst of suffering

This chapter is about Job's affliction by Satan, who obtains permission from the LORD who attacks Job physically. Job is struck with boils. Satan is cruel and hates everyone who trusts GOD. Satan wanted Job to insult GOD. Job's wife also wanted Job to insult GOD. She was like Eve, who influenced and convinced Adam, not to obey GOD. Job's friends who came from 3 nations, very intelligent men, who cared about Job, also supported his wife.

Many a times in our lives, we may face such situations. Our own family and friends may encourage us to do or say things not pleasing to GOD. Temptations will sprout up from all sides. GOD himself may permit Satan to hurt His people as a test.

But, GOD values the lives of His people who are righteous and walk in HIS ways (verses 1 to 8).

God declares that Job maintained his integrity. He remained blameless and did not curse GOD, as Satan declared he would do if calamities come upon him.

- Diseases that harm the body are not as severe as diseases that destroy life.
- God didn't want to lose Job's influence in the world (spares his life)
- God's blessings on His royal priesthood is immeasurable and abundant.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 1:16 to 28

Jesus calls ordinary people to follow HIM.

John Mark is the writer of Gospel of Mark. He served as a companion to the Apostle Paul in his missionary work and later assisted Apostle Peter in Rome.

This Gospel has the earliest account of Jesus life. It is believed that John Mark is the founder of Coptic Church in Egypt. This is the shortest of all New Testament Gospels and is the first to have been written.

Jesus is portrayed as immensely popular with the people in Galilee. Jesus called Andrew and Simon (Peter) to discipleship. They responded immediately to HIS call and left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus welcomes all kinds of people. HE wants

- To lead us- meaning- forsaking something. Give up and renounce everything like sin, way of life (like Job), relationships etc.
- Jesus changes us- meaning -making us bold and not cowards. We cannot do anything that has spiritual significance without Christ.
- Jesus gives our lives a meaning- a new direction with perfect goals are set. Our lives will be more significant and meaningful than before. This chapter focuses on Jesus catching men (a call to follow Jesus).

There is a calling for each one of us

- To cast aside this temporal world, and seek kingdom of heaven.
- Reject the short term fleeting pleasures of this life and seek eternal joy and happiness that comes from knowing GOD.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 2nd March 2022

Cross- A call to Vicarious Suffering

Old Testament- 1 Kings 17: 12 to 24

Psalms- 102

Epistle- Philippians 2: 1 to 11

Gospel- Mark 8: 31to 38

Collect: GOD of Mercy, YOU have called us to be disciples of YOUR SON, JESUS CHRIST, who voluntarily chose the path of cross;
Help us to envision the joy of eternal life in bearing our cross everyday. Encourage us to actively participate in the redeeming work of YOUR SON so that in our suffering many may receive the joy of salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD who lives and reigns with YOU and THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD now and for ever more.
AMEN

Verses for 3rd March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 10 to 14

Psalms 11

Written by King David.

This Psalm tells us that the LORD is righteous. He loves righteous people. So we should be righteous in our life.

The Story of Psalm 11:

After David killed Goliath he lived with King Saul. When Saul was sad, David made music for Saul. This made Saul happy again. Later, Saul thought that David wanted to become king. This was not true. But Saul wanted David dead. The friends of David said, "Runaway". David said, "No!" Later David did go, because God told him to.

Meaning of Psalm 11:

Verses 1 – 3: David asks his friends why they tell him to run away. His friends say, "The godless want to kill the righteous". Sometimes we feel like this. We want to run away. We say, "Everything is going wrong". We must be like David. We must stay where God put us! Verse 3 means this. If you take away the foundations of a house it will fall down. The same is true of our lives and our countries. If we do not build them on something good they will not continue for long.

Verses 4 – 6: This tells us what David believes. He says:

- The LORD is in HIS temple. David means that GOD is in heaven. From heaven GOD can see everybody on the earth.
- The LORD can see the bad people and the good people. David calls the good people righteous. Only GOD is really righteous. But HE calls HIS servants righteous. When they do wrong things they must ask GOD to forgive them.
- The LORD will not forgive some people because they do not ask him to forgive them. Their inheritance is what happens to them. David also calls it their cup. GOD will punish them. (Punish means hurt them because they did wrong things.) David gives 3 pictures of this: coal that burns, sulphur that smells bad and winds that stop people from breathing.

Verse 7: The psalm ends with a wonderful promise. Righteous people will one day see the face of GOD!

GOD's love extends everywhere. Nothing can separate us from GOD's love, and HE loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). But we can deny ourselves the benefits of GOD's love. People who don't keep themselves in the love of GOD end up living as if they are on the dark side of the moon. The sun is always out there, always shining, but they are never in a position to receive the light or warmth of the sun. They are like the Prodigal Son of Luke 15, who was always loved by the father, but for a time he did not benefit from that love.

→ We must always be careful with the advice we give to others as we might be too confident in our own perception of a situation.

→ Manipulation is never right, even if it is for a good cause.

→ When the advice of fear comes upon us, we can only arrive at the answer of faith by spending time with the LORD. When we think about our problems, the advice of fear often overwhelms us. When we pray about our problems, the answer of faith assures our hearts.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 4

The author of the book of Job is unknown, but there are some who suggest that Moses wrote this book of Job.

The land of Uz is adjacent to Midian, where Moses lived for 40 years and it is conceivable that Moses obtained a record of dialogues left by Job or Elihu.

The chapters that follow are made up of the discussion between Job and his three friends. Job and his friends share the same basic theology, and most of what the friends say is true, but it just doesn't fit Job's case.

Eliphaz, the oldest, wisest and most experienced is convinced that Job is guilty of some secret unconfessed sin.

(!) He rebukes Job (verses 1- 6).

(2) He gives reasons why he thinks Job is suffering (verses 7-11).

(3) He gives support to his theological viewpoint by relating a dream (verses 12-21).

In his discussion he touches on four basic doctrinal truths.

1. The righteous are never destroyed, but the wicked are sure to be punished (verses 7-11).
2. All men are imperfect in the eyes of GOD; therefore, even the suffering of the righteous has its justification (verses 17-21).
3. GOD can never be charged with the creation of sin and suffering, because evil is the direct result of the free will of man (verse 5:6).
4. Suffering serves at times to instruct the righteous and protect them from evil doing. Eliphaz closes his discussion by asking Job to recognize and accept these four basic truths (verse 21).

He tells Job that he needs to practice what he has preached. Since nothing in Job's circumstances points to innocence, the comforting words of Eliphaz soon turn to accusation, and the friendly discussion to a heated scene. Job is not impressed, so Eliphaz shares a personal testimony. What Eliphaz is stating is mostly truth but it is not helpful to Job.

Part of what Eliphaz said was true, and part was false. It is true that those who promote sin and trouble will be punished eventually but it is false that anyone who is good and innocent will never suffer. There is no guarantee that we will not have to suffer in this life.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 1:40 to 2:12

Author- Mark

The message of Mark is the SON OF MAN did not come to be served but to serve. In the above references JESUS healed a leper and a paralytic. This made the scribes to reason in their hearts.

Mark 1: 40-45 JESUS heals a Leper

Leprosy in the Bible covered a range of skin diseases. More importantly, it was considered as making a person unclean. The law required that a leper stay away from others – a social and religious exclusion. The leper breaches this code by approaching JESUS, and JESUS breaches it by touching the leper.

Sometimes there is a belief that make us think that we are insignificant like the leper. However JESUS showed HIS concern to heal the leper.

The leper knew his need and trusted that JESUS could help him. He approaches in confident trust and JESUS touches his sore. The leper becomes a disciple – he spreads the word. He witnesses to Jesus' goodness.

Can we let JESUS take us by the hand so that we too may become a witness to what GOD is doing in our lives?

What we can learn from the Leper:

- We can come to JESUS just as we are, even though we are sinners.
- Just like the leper who approached JESUS knowing that JESUS was his last hope, we can come to JESUS in desperation, knowing HE is our only hope.
- Just like the leper who knelt before JESUS in humility, we need to kneel our lives before JESUS acknowledging that HE is LORD.
- Just like the leper who said, "If you are willing..." indicating that he knew JESUS was in charge and believing JESUS could do something for him, we should come to JESUS with respect knowing that HE is in charge. Like the leper we don't demand, we ask.
- Just like the leper who knew JESUS could heal him and cleanse him, we can come to JESUS in confidence, knowing HE can forgive us and cleanse us of our sin.

What we can learn from JESUS:

- JESUS is a compassionate LORD. As followers of JESUS we must follow the path of compassion. We are to love our neighbours. Have compassion on those who are hurting, who are afraid, or worried. Instead of putting on anger, impatience, rudeness, unkindness be a person who cares, is compassionate, kind, understanding, and patient with others. (Colossians 3:12)
- JESUS is willing to touch those who have been rejected, abandoned, and forgotten.
- JESUS cleanses people from sin every day. HE heals their fears, their worries, their anxieties, and their doubts. HE gives them a new heart, new hope, new mind, and new direction and purpose in life. JESUS heals both physically and spiritually.
- When JESUS saves us and does wonderful things in our lives HE is going to send you on a mission. HE has a task for you. There are people who need to hear what HE has done in your life.
- We ought to pray for spiritual discernment when it comes to what we say and do for the LORD. The right words at the right time can be used of the LORD in wonderful ways.

Mark 2: 1-12 JESUS heals a paralytic man.

This is a story of friendship and faith, about a lame man whose friends believed that Jesus could heal him. Four men arrived carrying their paralytic friend. They were anxious to get to JESUS. Undeterred by the obstacles they faced, they at last found a way to get their friend before JESUS by opening the roof and letting him down by ropes attached to his bed at the feet of JESUS.

JESUS is impressed by the faith of the paralytic man's friends. Their faith is active, showing care, compassion, and friendship to someone who was excluded from both the financial and relational rewards of work. In their faith, there is no separation between being and doing. JESUS sees their effort as an act of collective faith.

But JESUS didn't heal the man's lameness — he forgave his sins. The lame man in this story could not see his forgiveness; he could only decide whether to believe that what JESUS said was true. To believe it would lift a great burden of guilt and fear from his shoulders. It would bring joy, peace and comfort. To not believe it would leave him feeling the same old

estrangement, alienation from GOD and fearful expectation of judgment.

The man's joy in being forgiven was experienced through faith, not through sight. The healing of his legs, on the other hand, was experienced through sight — he didn't need faith to walk; he simply had to get up.

Salvation is by grace through faith. We receive it by grace — we don't do anything to get it; it's GOD's gift to us, free and clear.

Verses for 4th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 15 to 17

Psalms 15

What Psalm 15 means

The doing-words (called verbs) in Psalm 15:2 are different from those in Psalm 15:3 to 5. This is in the Hebrew Bible. David spoke Hebrew. He wrote Psalm 15 in Hebrew. The words in verse 2 tell us what believers are like on the inside. A believer is a person that believes in the LORD. We call them Christians today. Only GOD sees inside us. Verses 3 to 5 tell us what believers are like on the outside. This is what everyone sees. There is no temple today. Soldiers destroyed it about 2000 years ago. JESUS told his friends that he would make them another house. It will be in heaven. Christians believe that Psalm 15 is about that house in heaven.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 5: 1 to 27

Job 5: 17 to 27

The man whom GOD correcteth. To Eliphaz, if GOD reproves a person and he or she responds rightly, then GOD will deliver that individual from all adversity and trouble. The Bible nowhere teaches that GOD will eliminate from our lives all trouble and suffering. Godly people are not always rescued in this life.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 2: 13 to 22

Mark 2:20

It is clear that JESUS expected believers to fast after HE was gone. This age is the time of the bridegroom's absence, from the time of HIS ascension until HIS return, the church awaits the return of the Bridegroom. Therefore fasting in this age is a sign of believer's longing for the LORD's return, away to increase spiritual intimacy with CHRIST. A placing of HIS kingdom interest above our own, a heart preparation for the end of the age and CHRIST's coming, a mourning of CHRIST's absence, a sign of sorrow for the sin of the world, and a time of intercession for the unsaved.

Verses for 5th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18

Psalms 18: 1 to 24

Psalms are poems. Many of them are listed as King David songs of worship. Many of the Bible's main ideas are echoed in the book: of Psalms. Praise, thankfulness, faith hope, sorrow for sin, GOD's loyalty and help. There is a deep trust in GOD.

Psalms 18 deals with praise and thanksgiving.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 6: 1 to 30

Author: Author of the book of Job is uncertain. According to our information technology, there is a speculation that, it could have been written by Moses.

Context: The pain that Job went through is described in a poetic wording, is so marvellously moving. Job was suffering deeply and he questioned GOD why he was suffering. These are the deep questions of life. His friends ran away tells the truth that, the wisdom of human beings cannot answer these questions. Only GOD's wisdom can answer. Finally he ends his lamentation by admitting that, he is innocent and that he did not do anything wrong.

The truth is painful but your arguments prove nothing.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 2:23 to 3:6

Here the greatest lesson is people were not made for the good of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for the good of the people. Traditions should not be frozen ideas. Encountering the limitations of tradition is always a herculean task. From then on plans and conspiracies to kill JESUS began.

Verses for 7th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 22 to 24

Psalms 24

In this psalm King David calls out to us, both to warn as well as to encourage us that JESUS, the King of Glory, is our Creator and Saviour, deserving our purposeful worship. HE created everything in the world and everything inside us too! So, as HiS creation, GOD demands us to be with clean hands and a pure heart and not misuse or experiment with the body HE has blessed us with. HE is also very possessive about us wanting us to be HIS exclusive property, as King David knew.

So how can we hope to stand in GOD's presence? We can, because David also calls the King of Glory as our Saviour and King of Salvation. And David calls us not once but twice to lift up our heads to allow the King of Glory to come in. Though he might have been referring to the gates of Jerusalem, in our case, it is the gates of our heart that ought to be lifted up in praise to the King of Glory, the King of Creation, the King of our Salvation and the LORD Almighty, the LORD JESUS CHRIST!!!

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 7: 1 to 21

Do we ever want to labour and not enjoy the result of our efforts? Job speaks of his anguish and bitterness that his days are full of work and his nights full of sleeplessness. He talks about the shortness of life, though in the face of suffering it seems to be very long. He reminds us that our life is short and goes away in a blink.

When he needed comfort, he speaks of getting just the opposite. But he also asks GOD – what is man that you set your heart upon him and visit him but also test him every moment? We must remember that the Job's suffering was caused by Satan though allowed by GOD for a limited time.

In a powerful declaration followed by a plea, Job declares GOD to be “the watcher of men” and pleads with GOD to show him his sin and pardon him.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 3: 7 to 19

In these verses, we learn how to connect to JESUS CHRIST and have HIS power flow through us.

In this incident, JESUS was followed by a crowd who were only interested in being healed of their diseases but not really in getting to know HIM. JESUS wasn't interested in popularity and even rebuked demons from announcing HIS name. And by HIS actions HE proved that HE came to serve and not be served. So even though HE could see through the selfish crowd, HE still cared so much for them that HE healed and cast out demons from among them. Even today, most people come to JESUS only for miracles and healing our hurts and diseases. Today, JESUS “calls” us into a special relationship with Himself, to represent HIM in this world by HIS words and power. Are we willing to answer HIS “call”? When JESUS called

Simon, he was no “rock” but JESUS saw Simon’s potential as a Rock for the Kingdom of God. James and John were no better with anger issues and fighting for top positions but later on, John was known to be the “apostle of love”. Matthew was a tax collector, generally despised by people, Simon was a zealot and extremist and Judas was the one who betrayed JESUS! The first 12 disciples were even less qualified than most of us today which just proves that it is JESUS who “qualifies” us when HE calls us to be HIS special representatives. When we answer HIS call to be with HIM, HE gives us the power to become who HE wants us to be.

Verses for 8th March 2022

PSALMS

The book of Psalms is a collection of hymns and prayers used by Israelites in their worship. It has 150 Psalms, of which nearly half, were written (compiled) by King David (1011-971 BC).

Psalms 25 to 28

Psalms 27

Psalm 27 is also a Psalm of David.

David had very humble beginnings as a shepherd boy and as an insignificant eighth and youngest son of Jesse. He had immense faith in GOD and protected his sheep from Lions and Bears. He became famous when he defeated Goliath and from then onwards he was known as a valiant and fearless warrior.

GOD ordained him as successor to King Saul, who was jealous of his popularity and planned to kill David on many occasions. Even as King of Judah and Israel, King David had many enemies within and outside his kingdom and even among his own kith and kin. But throughout his life he endeared himself to GOD by fearing, trusting and obeying him. From the content of Psalm 27, it is evident that King David authored it in a moment of despair, distress and doubt. Let us look into the Psalm in detail.

Psalm 27 expresses trust confidence and guidance that GOD's people have in HIM in challenging times. King David wrote many of his Psalms including this, out of his rich and varied personal experiences in several fields.

He commences this Psalms by referring to the well-known attributes of GOD and HIS promises:

- My light and my salvation, my stronghold (verse 1)
- My adversaries and foes stumble and fall (verse 2)
- My heart shall not fear, I will be confident (verse 3)
- I may dwell in the house of the LORD and to seek HIM in HIS temple (verse 4)
- Verses 5 & 6 – promise of protection and thanksgiving.

There is, however, a radical change from verse 7 onwards, which clearly point to the following DOUBTS and FEARS that King David faced despite his steadfast faith.

- “Be merciful to me and answer me” (verse 7)
- “Do not hide your face from me” (verse 9)
- “Do not reject me and forsake me” (verse 9)

We must note that King David did not allow the above fears to paralyse him.

He declared “I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (verse 13).

The last verse 14 is for all believers. We won't find fast, simple and ready answers to our huge problems. But we will find when we wait for HIM – a GOD who can be trusted. Life is a journey with many uncertain and unpredictable elements, and many of us even passed through them, sometime or other in our lives with varying degrees of success.

Let us remember that, in the midst of our changing situations and circumstances, we have an unchanging GOD who will never leave us or forsake us. We must know that HE would help us in HIS own ways and at HIS own time. Till that time wait patiently with hope.

“In our darkest times He is our light”.

“GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”- Psalms 46:1.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 8: 1 to 22

Job is an excellent example of how an upright, God-fearing person, has to conduct himself in the face of deep personal tragedies, mental and physical hardships.

The book of Job may perhaps be the oldest book in the Bible with Job, probably a contemporary of the patriarchs, as central figure.

He was wealthy and considered “upright and blameless” in the sight of GOD.

Satan wanted GOD to test the faithfulness of Job by withdrawing all his possessions and prosperity and inflicting him with an incurable skin disease. This brought in untold misery and suffering to Job overnight. His wife urged him to curse GOD and die, while his friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar apparently empathised with him and considered that Job was only paying the price for his sins.

Even in his deep affliction and agony, Job never questioned GOD’s sovereignty or supremacy but wanted to know the reason from GOD for “singling him out” for unmerited punishment.

The book of Job mostly deals with narrations of Job on his plight and his well-reasoned replies to his friends- assertions/ dialogues / narratives.

Chapter 8 contains Bildad’s speech advising Job to repent.

Bildad said to Job that all his sufferings was due to his sins or his sons’ sins and GOD willed it that way. He further advised Job:

- i. “To seek GOD and plead for mercy”
- ii. “If you are pure and upright he will restore you”
- iii. “The hope of godless will perish”
- iv. “GOD will not reject a blameless man nor take the hand of evil doers”

In all the above statements and some more Bildad opined that Job deserved punishment and was cast away by GOD. The assertive narrations of Bildad (and also Eliphaz and Zophar) seemed to suggest that those who are spared from punishment and suffering (like themselves) are qualified to be righteous. This attitude of self-righteousness is in itself a sin. The words of Job’s friends did not comfort or console Job but only increased his agony and anguish.

In such situations kind words of support and sympathy would do the aggrieved a world of good than pontifical platitudes. Expression of love, compassion, consolation and a word of prayer in good faith may befit the occasion. We need to keep this in mind as a guideline for dealing with such cases.

In our suffering we too may find ourselves vacillating between despair and hope, doubt and faith. GOD does not want us to be dauntless in the face of adversity but instead invites us to come to HIM with our questions. Though our faith may fail at times, we can trust GOD to always be faithful.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 3:20 to 4:9

Mark 3: 20 to 35

After choosing his disciples, JESUS commenced HIS ministry in Galilean region. Large crowds from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea and neighbouring regions, attended his meetings, wherein HE healed many from different ailments and drove away demons apart from teaching and preaching.

In the scripture portion Mark 3: 20 to 35, we read that when JESUS entered into the house

where HE was staying, the crowds gathered again so much, so that HE could not even eat. At that time some scribes also came from Jerusalem, probably as representatives of religious authorities to scuttle the ministry of JESUS and dent HIS popularity with their knowledge of law.

In the narrative we see three categories (or groups) of people leaving aside JESUS and HIS disciples. The three groups are

- i. The sick and the suffering, their helpers, those interested in the teaching of JESUS, ardent followers and admirers.
- ii. The scribes who came from Jerusalem, (the seat of Jewish authority, holy and sacred city) acclaimed as experts in scriptures and their interpretation and
- iii. The family of JESUS consisting of His earthly parents and brothers, who seem to support the religious authorities and not fully convinced about the ministry of JESUS at that time.

These three groups made the following statements, which we will examine in some detail:

Verse 22- “He (JESUS) is possessed by Beelzabul” and “by the prince of demons, He casts out demons” – statement by the scribes.

Verse 21- “He (JESUS) is out of His mind”- statement by the family of JESUS.

Verse 32- “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you (JESUS)”- statement by the people in the crowd.

JESUS reacts and replies to the above statements in HIS own inimitable way as briefly mentioned below

JESUS and Beelzebul:

The scribes were witnessing many miraculous healings and driving out of demons by JESUS but yet they did not believe HIM or HIS preachings. The statement of the scribes (verse 22) is arrogant and insensitive to how much blind they were to what they saw and how impervious they were to the teachings of JESUS. HE brushed aside the allegation of “using satan to drive out Satan” by the absurdity of its reasoning (verses 23 & 24).

Satan is indeed powerful in its earthly kingdom, but the SON OF GOD (JESUS) is more powerful at all times and at all places. In a short parable (verse 23 to 27), HE characterizes himself as, the one able to overcome Satan’s reign “tying up the strong man” and plundering the things the “man” has taken his own (verses 25 to 27). JESUS performed all miracles and healings through the “HOLY SPIRIT”. The scribes equated this with Satan’s power, His sworn enemy unaware of the consequences. JESUS declared “but whoever blasphemes against the HOLY SPIRIT will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of eternal sin (verse 29).

Jesus mother and brothers:

The family of JESUS were fully aware of His dangerous criticisms against religious authorities and their hostile attitudes towards Him. They desired to control Him but JESUS resisted their intervention. It is very clear that they remain as “outsiders” while HIS disciples and followers around HIM were “insiders”. Pointing to the people seated around HIM, HE said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of GOD is my brother and sister and mother (verse 35).

We need to examine and evaluate our status? If we want to become members of the household of GOD, we should do “HIS will”. What is HIS will for you and me will be known to us if we submit ourselves to HIM (Romans 12: 1-2).

Mark 4: 1 to 9

JESUS continued HIS ministry in the region of Galilee. The crowd was so large that JESUS got into a boat and sat in it while all the people were on the shore. JESUS always taught in parables. HE commenced HIS teaching with this famous parable the **parable of the Sower** (Refer Matthew 13: 1 to 23 and Luke 8: 1 to 15).

A farmer went out to sow his seed. Some seed fell along the path, some on rocky ground,

some among thorny bushes and some in good soil with varying degree of produce (result). In this parable the sower is “GOD” and the seed is the “gospel”. Each of the 4 soils represent our HEARTS which will ultimately yield the crop. The sower and the seed remain the same and the only variable is the FERTILITY OF HEART.

GOD expects us to have **fertile minds and hearts!** However, HE gives HIS extended grace even to those with rocky and thorny hearts!!

We need to remember that we reap what we sow and this applies to all aspects of our life.

The more one sows, the bigger he reaps! It is time we examine the fertility of our hearts and minds!! (Galatians 6: 7-8 and 2 Corinthians 9:6).

Verses for 9th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 29 to 31

Psalms 30

The Book of Psalms emphasises on prayer, praise and worship amongst many other themes. Compiled by many authors, seventy three psalms are attributed to David.

The title of Psalm 30 says that it's David's song preparing for the dedication of the house of the LORD, which Solomon built.

David had grown self-confident, interpreting all that GOD had done for him. He became proud and arrogant and he looked to the power of man instead of the LORD. This may have been a Psalm written when David decided to dedicate the Temple Mount, the threshing floor that he had bought from Araunah (2 Samuel 24:18-25). And it was decided that that is where the temple is going to be built.

It is a psalm of David's praise and thanksgiving to GOD for HIS repeated care and deliverance from severe illness, how GOD brought him out from the grave and spared him from going down into the pit. It could be the plague caused by his disobedience when he numbered the Levites which he should not have done or it could be something that we don't know of and the LORD delivered him from that.

He exalts GOD for answered prayer when he called for mercy. This shows us his relationship with GOD and teaches us to fix our eyes on JESUS because He is the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before HIM endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of GOD (Hebrews 12:2). And that is how we need to get our focus off ourselves and focus on GOD.

David continues to urge all believers to praise GOD with him and give thanks. Though there is indeed weeping in the lives of the faithful, it comes to an end and GOD satisfies us in the morning with HIS unflinching love that we may sing for joy and be glad all our lives. We can endure this life's trials because GOD is with us. Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 4:17 that our "light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory." And because of this eternal security, we can stand firm in the LORD no matter what. What a comfort from the LORD!

As GOD's children, let our hearts be glad and rejoice as we tell of GOD's faithfulness in our lives.

We can liken ourselves to David's experiences. It gives us a sense of hope that our mourning will turn into dancing, and our sorrows into joy.

As we are all going through this pandemic situation, nations fighting nations, persecution, hatred everywhere and so much uncertainty in this world, this psalm is perfect because it guides us to see a horizon where our wailing will turn into dancing, where we will be clothed with joy, where we will sing and not be silent, where we will give thanks to the Lord forever. Let us take time to express our praise and thanks to GOD who allows us to rest in the blessings of GOD. HE is our pathway to joy.

Are we able to praise the Lord? If so, how are we praising HIM? How often do we praise Him? Do we find it hard to praise the LORD during challenging times?

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 9: 1 to 23

This is a unique book in the Bible. The author is unknown, however presumed as Moses. The author has taken a true story and created an extensive poem that asks deep questions arising out of sorrow and suffering.

Bildad mentions that maybe all this trouble had come because Job's children had sinned. He too was certain that suffering was a sign that GOD had been offended. "Surely GOD does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers" (Job 8:20). It never occurred to Bildad, or to any of the other friends, that this suffering might be a test of Job's faith, or that Satan, not GOD, was the cause of all the evil that had come to him.

We see Job's reply in chapter 9.

Job describes the difficulty of anyone arguing a case before GOD, given HIS power and strength. He mentions twice that though he is in the right, he cannot answer Him and that his own mouth would condemn Him. Job agrees that GOD is just, but he does not have room to make the case for his innocence. Job thinks no matter what he says, GOD will find his words unpersuasive and when Job says, "I am blameless", he echoes GOD's description of him in 1:8; 2:3. Do we see ourselves as those who stand in the courtroom of GOD, the glorious Judge?

I regard not myself, Job says in Verse 21. He seems to be saying that he does not care whether he lives or dies. He is prepared to risk his life.

Not only are godly people afflicted with suffering just as others are, but they experience some kinds of suffering due specifically to their godliness (Matthew 10:24-33; Acts 14:22).

Faithfulness to CHRIST will bring insult and at times persecution and suffering.

Job is in deep sorrow and his emotions are all over the place. At times he's hopeful that GOD will tell him why he's had to suffer. Other times he's lost and in despair and even says GOD is unjust as HE has chosen to make him suffer for no fault.

But GOD is "wise in heart, and mighty in strength" and HE is beyond man's comprehension. The world in its wisdom cannot know GOD. Despite all our technological achievements, we cannot discover GOD. We must especially remember that we cannot comprehend GOD when God's ways with us are hard.

We can pray, cry, beg, plead, sulk, do whatever we want to do to get our way with GOD, but as HE knew us before the world began, HE knows how we need to be moulded as Christlike as possible.

GOD and only HE knows what we need and when we need something. HE guides into all truth by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT that HE sent to dwell in our hearts. So we are called to choose and discern well and die to ourselves and live in CHRIST JESUS, and that means 'be led by the HOLY SPIRIT'. There is no other way, or rather the other way is even harder and makes us unhappier. Yes, dying to self is painful!! But, GOD has chosen us and HE will see us through.

Job listened to many people and he had a lot of wisdom. He knew GOD had all the power and had created all things and is happy to share them with us but HE wants us to love Him for Himself, not for what we can get from HIM. HE knows what we need and HE has given us all things on earth and in heaven in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 4: 10 to 29

The Gospel of Mark is written by John Mark and is said to be a cousin of Barnabas.

Mark 4:10-20

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

JESUS starts HIS ministry and spent majority of HIS time in Galilee, teaching and healing. JESUS often spoke to the crowds in parables that were very easy to understand. HE used the 'simple things' like salt, light, farming, etc. to illustrate the values and principles of GOD's Kingdom.

Today's Parable of the Sower, also called the Parable of the Soils is taken from Mark 4:10-20 is also found in Matthew 13:1-23 and Luke 8:4-15.

JESUS used 'farming', a common daily activity, to illustrate this Parable.

The Sower/Farmer signifies GOD the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST preacher of GOD's WORD. The Seed is the WORD of GOD, people's hearts are like the different kinds of soil the seeds fall upon.

The seeds thrown by the farmer fell on four types of soils/ground:

1. The seeds which fell along the path or hard ground were eaten up by birds
2. The seeds which fell on rocky places did not have much soil and so when the plants grew, it withered in the scorching heat because they had no root.
3. The seeds which fell among thorns, grew up and choked the plants, so they did not bear grain.
4. Other seeds fell on good soil, so the plant grew and produced a crop.

These four different "soils" reflect four different responses to GOD's WORD.

-Those who hear the WORD of GOD, Satan comes and takes away the WORD sown in them and they walk away.

-Those who hear the WORD and enthusiastically receive it with joy, but they give up when trouble or persecution comes because of the WORD and they quickly fall away.

-Those who hear the WORD, but the worries of this life, their careers and wealth choke the WORD, making it unfruitful.

-Those who hear the WORD, accept it, trust JESUS and live a life of joyful obedience that blesses many.

In all four examples, the Sower and the seed are the same. The WORD of GOD is preached to all and all hear it. But the condition of the soil is different: rocky, thorny and good soil. People's hearts and their responses to the WORD of GOD is different, like the different kinds of soil the seeds fell upon.

There is a subtle warning against hardening our hearts. The secret of the kingdom of GOD has been given to us. JESUS never forces God's Kingdom upon anyone. We must RECEIVE the WORD, RETAIN it in our hearts and RESPOND to it in obedience because GOD's WORD highly matters. The seeds thrown in different soils shows the growth of the Kingdom of the LIVING GOD.

At the moment, HE is patiently waiting for the FATHER's time to effectively establish the Sovereign Kingdom.

Have you genuinely responded to the Good News and live the life which JESUS wants you to live?

Which soil are you? How has the Gospel changed you? How is it changing you now?

Mark 4:21-25

A LAMP ON A STAND

The parable of the lamp on a stand is also found in Matthew 5:14-15 and Luke 8:16-18. In Matthew, the parable is a continuation of the discourse on salt and light in JESUS' Sermon on the Mount.

This is a follow up to the 'Parable of the Sower. The proclamation of the kingdom of GOD is like bringing an oil lamp into a room, put it on a stand (and not under a bowl or a bed), so it gives light to everyone in the house. It reveals hidden things such as hard hearts and giving

up our pride and submitting to GOD. The day is drawing near when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that CHRIST alone is LORD! As Matthew 5:15-16 says, we need to let our light shine before men that they may see our good deeds with pure intentions and glorify our FATHER in heaven.

If a hearer accepts JESUS' message of the kingdom, then GOD will give an increased measure of understanding and blessing. The emphasis of this parable is that the LORD will reward everyone according to what they have done. Nothing is hidden before our Creator. Charles Spurgeon said, "The hearer of the gospel will get measure for measure, and the measure shall be his own measure." And it works out just this way. To the one with no interest in the gospel, the preaching of the gospel seems uninteresting. To the one who wants to find fault with the church or the preacher, they find plenty of faults. On the other hand – the more blessed hand – those who hunger find food, and those who want the solid truth receive something from any faithful ministry. (Enduring Word.com)

JESUS taught that our responsibility is to use what has been received. We are responsible to use what GOD has given us.

How are you specifically using the knowledge and understanding given to you through GOD's WORD, Bible studies to show CHRIST to others?

Mark 4:26-29

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

The Parable of the Growing Seed (also called the Seed Growing Secretly) is a parable about growth in the Kingdom of GOD. It follows the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp on a stand. JESUS likens the kingdom of GOD to scattered seed that sprouts and grows- though he does not know how. The soil spontaneously produces corn, first the stalk, the ear, then the grain and when the grain is ripe, it's harvest time.

GOD's Word will sprout, grow and produce a harvest in due time. We plant the seeds, GOD gives the harvest.

Our King JESUS is not inactive, but working. HE is waiting for HIS Bride, us, believers to be prepared and ready for HIS grand arrival and to bring GOD's judgment upon the world.

How are you fulfilling CHRIST's command to sow the seed of GOD's WORD?

Where are you relying on – yourself more than the inherent power of GOD's Word to change lives?

Verses for 10th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 32 & 33

Although the book of Psalms has many contributors, David is attributed to have written at least 80 or more of them.

Psalms 1 to 4 is usually known as the Genesis book which deals with man.

Psalms 33

Psalms 33 can be divided into sections:

The psalm begins with an exuberant call to praise GOD in song and with musical instruments because of His WORD and HIS work and 5 commandments to praise (verses 1-3). Then, the psalmist gives the 8 reasons to praise GOD (verses 4-7), and 2 commandments to fear GOD (verse 8). Then verses 6-12 develop the theme of GOD's WORD as seen in HIS creation (verses 6-9), 5 reasons to fear GOD (verses 9-11) and HIS counsel (verses 10-12) and also what makes a blessed nation (verse 12).

Blessings on the nation (verses 13-17), verses 13-22 then develop the other theme of how GOD works. He does not work through man's strength or schemes (verses 13-17), but rather through those who fear and trust in HIM (verses 18-19) and the blessings to those who fear the LORD (verses 18-19). The psalm ends with a final affirmation of trust in the LORD, the prayer of a righteous (verses 20-22).

Happy is the nation who praises GOD. The Psalmist also states that no king, mighty man or soldier is saved by multitudes, strength or horses and that the **LORD alone is the one who can save us from death**. David declares that his whole trust is in GOD.

Believing that GOD created the world also leads us to the truth of HIS providence in ruling the world. This relates directly to our believing that HE controls the circumstances of our lives, working everything together for good for us according to HIS purpose (Rom. 8:28).

So to develop a thankful, worshiping heart, we must bow in awe before the LORD as we realize HIS immense power in speaking the universe into existence (Ps. 33:8-9). We should fall on our faces before such a powerful Creator.

If you have believed in CHRIST as SAVIOUR and LORD, it is because GOD first opened our blind eyes to see. That is the only doctrine of salvation that causes us to humble ourselves in awe before the Creator.

We will learn to rely completely on the LORD when we see the power of HIS WORD as seen in HIS creation and in HIS counsel or HIS sovereign plan. Because His WORD stands against all opposition, we can confidently rely on HIM.

GOD looks with favour on those who fear HIM and trust in HIM to deliver them from overwhelming situations.

Let's lean hard on HIM to work through us for HIS glory. When we see HIM deliver us, our response will be to sing and praise HIM exuberantly with thankful hearts. Praise and glory should be given to GOD for all the good things HE has given us in this life.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 9:24 to 10:12

Job describes the world as how it looks to him.

Job 9: 21 to 24 Job knows he has not committed great sins, but he also knows that if he tried to argue his case before GOD he would still lose. He would surely say something wrong and so be proved guilty. Although he is blameless, Job sees no purpose in living, since GOD destroys the innocent and the guilty alike. There seems to be no justice.

Job 9: 25 to 28 Life may be short, but it is full of pain and suffering. He can see no purpose in trying to bear suffering gladly or act uprightly, because GOD still condemns him as a sinner.

Job 9: 32 to 33 Job feels that because GOD is GOD and he is only a man, the battle is unequal. He wants a mediator, someone to bridge the gap by bringing the two parties together and settling the case.

Job 9: 34 & 35 by himself Job cannot plead his case satisfactorily, because he is overwhelmed by the suffering GOD has sent him.

Job 10: 1 to 3 in bitterness Job asks GOD why he makes the innocent suffer, yet at the same time blesses the wicked.

Job 10: 4 to 7 “is he like an unjust judge who punishes a person even though he knows the person is innocent?”

Job 10: 8 & 9 Did GOD create Job simply to destroy him?

Job 10: 10 to 13 Has GOD kept him alive merely to torment him? It seems to Job that it makes no difference whether he is good or bad.

Basically this portion is a picture of human sufferings and the effect it has on the sufferer as well as his friends and to reason about why these things should happen to the godly of the earth. It also make it clear what part Satan and GOD have to do in the suffering.

How often we're trying to pull GOD down to our level. How often we fall in the category of those in Romans, chapter 1, of which Paul wrote, “For the wrath of GOD shall be revealed from heaven against the ungodly and the unrighteous, who hold the truth of GOD in unrighteousness. For when they knew GOD, they glorified HIM not as GOD, neither were they thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts was darkened. And professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and they began to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever and ever” (Romans 1:18 , Romans 1:21 , Romans 1:22 , Romans 1:25).

It means that that GOD blinds the eyes of wicked rulers who are partial and unjust in their decisions. Other interpretation is that GOD covers the faces of the judges of the earth with shame and confusion, that though HE admits them to prosperity and honour for a time, yet that HE overwhelms them at length with calamities and sorrows.

Job requested for a mediator. Paul the apostle tells us, “There is one GOD, and there is one mediator” (1 Timothy 2:5), JESUS CHRIST.

Our LORD Jesus is the blessed days-man, who has mediated between heaven and earth, has laid HIS hand upon us both; to HIM the FATHER has committed all judgment.

→ GOD is not a man as we are. HIS thoughts and ways are infinitely above ours, and we must not measure HIM by ourselves. Man is foolish and weak, frail and fickle, but GOD is not. We are depending dying creatures; HE is the independent an immortal Creator.

→ The consideration of this should keep us very humble and very silent before GOD. Let us not make ourselves equal with GOD, but always eye him as infinitely above us.

→ To stand in awe of GOD, and to fear the power of HIS wrath. If good men have been put into such consternation by it, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Think about it.

→ To pity those that are wounded in spirit and pray earnestly for them, because in that

condition they know not how to pray for themselves.

→ Carefully to keep up good thoughts of GOD in our minds, for hard thoughts of HIM are the inlets of much mischief.

→ To bless GOD that we are not in such a disconsolate condition as poor Job was here in, but that we walk in the light of the LORD, let us rejoice therein, but rejoice with trembling.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 4: 30 to 41

This passage deals with the parable of the mustard seed and JESUS calming the storm. A parable isn't exactly an illustration. A good teacher can illustrate by stating a truth and then illustrating the truth through a story or an analogy. But when JESUS used parables, HE didn't start by stating a truth. Instead, the parable was like a doorway. JESUS' listeners stood at the doorway and heard HIM. If they were not interested, they stayed on the outside. But if they were interested, they could walk through the doorway and think about the truth behind the parable and what it meant to their lives.

Mark 4: 30 to 34

In the parable of the Mustard seed, just like when the tiny little mustard seed is planted in the ground, it becomes a tree over twelve feet in height. **Things that seem very small and insignificant, to us at the moment, have the potential of becoming large. This is true of both good and evil.**

The Mustard seed grows up, and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. Similarly the **mustard seed which represents the Kingdom of GOD, shows the growth of the Kingdom of GOD** from just a few people to many around the world.

Also just as the mystery of the growth of the mustard seed is not visible, similarly nothing will be visible in anyone's life until we are saved and the fruits of the HOLY SPIRIT are seen in us.

Mark 4: 35 to 41

Jesus stills the storm.

After teaching the large crowd JESUS was exhausted and got into a boat where HE stretched out and was soon asleep. A great storm came up and the boat was filling with water, but JESUS continued to sleep. The disciples awakened HIM in fear and as soon as HE saw the problem HE quieted the storm.

In this story JESUS demonstrates **HIS power over nature**. HE also demonstrates HIS care for the people. The question of faith in GOD is before us here. **To have fear is to lack faith in GOD and HIS providence.**

This life is full of the storms of sorrow, problems and anxiety but JESUS understands and wants to replace our fear when we place our faith in HIM and realize HE is in the storm with us.

Verses for 11th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 34 & 35

Psalms 34

David, being forced to flee from his country because of the rage of King Saul, sought shelter as near it as he could, in the land of the Philistines. There it was soon discovered who he was, and he was brought before the king, who, in the narrative, is called Achish (his proper name), here Abimelech (his title); and lest he should be treated as a spy, or one that came thither upon design, he feigned himself to be a madman, that Achish might dismiss him as a contemptible man, rather than take cognizance of him as a dangerous man.

This psalm was penned upon a particular occasion, as appears by the title, and yet there is little in it peculiar to that occasion, but that which is general, both by way of thanksgiving to GOD, an instruction to us.

- I. David praises GOD for the experience which he and others had of HIS goodness, [Psalms 34:1-6](#).
- II. He encourages all good people to trust in GOD and to seek HIM, [Psalms 34:7-10](#).
- III. HE gives good counsel to us all, as unto HIS children, to take heed of sin, and to make conscience of our duty both to GOD and man, [Psalms 34:11-14](#).
- IV. To enforce this good counsel he shows GOD's favour to the righteous and HIS displeasure against the wicked, in which HE sets before us good and evil, the blessing and the curse, [Psalms 34:15-22](#).

So that, in singing this psalm, we are both to give glory to GOD and to teach and admonish ourselves and one another.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 10:13 to 11:10

Job 10: 13 to 22

Here we have:

1. Job's passionate complaints. On this harsh and unpleasant string he harps much, in which, though he cannot be justified, he may be excused. He complained not for nothing, as the murmuring Israelites, but had cause to complain. He complains of the strictness of GOD's judgment and the rigour of HIS proceedings against him, and is

ready to call it (sum mum jus)—justice bordering on severity. That HE took all advantages against him.

2. That he prosecuted those advantages to the utmost: THOU wilt not acquit me from my iniquity. While his troubles he could not take the comfort of his pardon, nor hear that voice of joy and gladness; so hard is it to see love in GOD's heart when we see frowns in HIS face and a rod in HIS hand.
3. Whatever was his character, his case at present was very uncomfortable
4. He complains of the severity of the execution. GOD (he thought) did not only punish him for every failure, but punish him in a high degree, [Job 10:16](#); [Job 10:17](#). His affliction was, grievous, very grievous, marvellous, and exceedingly marvellous.
5. He complains of his life, and that ever he was born to all this trouble and misery ([Job 10:18](#); [Job 10:19](#)): "If this was designed for my lot, why was I brought out of the womb, and not smothered there, or stifled in the birth?" This was the language of his passion, and it was a relapse into the same sin he fell into before.

Job's Humble Requests— He prays, that GOD would see his affliction ([Job 10:15](#); [Job 10:15](#)), take cognizance of his case, and take it into HIS compassionate consideration. That GOD would grant him some ease. If he could not prevail for the removal of his trouble, yet might He not have some intermission?

Job 11: 1 to 10

Poor Job's wounds were yet bleeding, his sore still runs and ceases not, but none of his friends bring him any oil, any balm; Zophar, the third, pours into them as much vinegar as the two former had done. He exhibits a very high charge against Job, as proud and false in justifying himself.

Zophar appeals to GOD for his conviction, and begs that GOD would take him to task and that Job might be made sensible, of GOD's unerring wisdom and HIS inviolable justice, of HIS unsearchable perfections, of HIS incontestable sovereignty and uncontrollable power, of the cognizance HE takes of the children of men.

Zophar assures Job that, upon his repentance and reformation GOD would restore him to his former prosperity and safety but that, if he were wicked it was in vain to expect it.

Application:

It may be that GOD is contending with you:

- to show you HIS power to uphold you
- to humble you
- in order to test your earnestness
- because you have been harbouring some secret sin that you will not turn over to HIM and its doing you great damage
- because you are not yet thoroughly awakened to your lost condition
- because HE wants you to enter the fellowship of HIS sufferings
- because you do not yet thoroughly understand the plan of salvation

All things are in accordance with the purposes of GOD. For each cry that comes out from the heart, through JESUS CHRIST, there's an answer. So hang on.

NEW TESTAMENT

□

Mark 5: 1 to 34

Verses 1-8: Description of the demon possessed man.

(Read Luke 8:26-39). The man had been demon possessed for a long time, lived like a wild animal and dwelt among the tombs, though tied up in chains pulled them apart, crying out and cutting himself and none could control him.

Here the man's physical- supernatural power of pulling the tied up chains, spiritual –dwelling in tombs and psychological- tormented, self-destructive and uncontrollable behaviour can be seen.

Demons attack men because they hate the image of GOD in man. But their tactics are restricted toward Christians because demonic spirits were “disarmed” by JESUS’ work on the cross ([Colossians 2:15](#)). Yet demonic spirits certainly can both deceive and intimidate Christians, binding them with fear and unbelief.

Verses 9-13 Jesus demonstrates HIS authority over the evil spirits.

When it comes to demons and spiritual warfare, we must never be caught up in foolish and counter-productive superstitions. JESUS’ power is greater than them.

Satan is so fond of evil that he would work it upon animals if he cannot work it upon men.” (Spurgeon).

The demons inhabiting him had a kind of “faith” in JESUS. They knew the true identity of JESUS better than the religious leaders did. [Colossians 2:15](#) tells us that at the cross JESUS disarmed demons in their attacks on believers, HE made a public spectacle of their defeat, and HE triumphed over them in HIS work on the cross.

Verses 14-17 The reaction of the bystanders to the deliverance of the demon-possessed man.

Part of their fear was found in the fact that their (bystanders) superstitions were shattered, and they didn't know what to make of it all. According to their superstitions, the demons should have had the upper hand over JESUS – but they didn't. They had a hard time accepting this. Hence they asked JESUS to leave.

Verses 18-20 The reaction of the man who had been delivered from demons.

The man who had been set free by JESUS just wanted to be with JESUS. The true change in his heart was shown by his desire to be with JESUS. However, JESUS did not permit him because JESUS knew that the man had a more important ministry with his own family and other people.

Sometimes we have a hard time understanding the ways of GOD. JESUS knew this man could be a light among the people of these Gentile cities.

The man set free departed and began to proclaim, all that Jesus had done for him. His story showed the value of one's life owed to JESUS after deliverance. His story also showed that if this man could be changed by JESUS then anyone could be changed.

We all too owe our life to JESUS because of the only and greatest reason that JESUS died on the cross for all of us and has redeemed us.

The Decapolis was Ten Greek Cities on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, including Damascus. It was to this gentile community that this man went and witnessed.”

Verses 21-24 Jairus requests JESUS to heal his daughter

Jairus came in desperation to JESUS (fell at HIS feet and begged HIM earnestly) because his daughter was at the point of death. This man had great confidence in JESUS and he believed that JESUS had all power to heal his daughter. JESUS responded to the faith Jairus had.

JESUS asks us to give to Him the faith that we have.

- We must place ourselves in the presence of JESUS
- We must humble ourselves sincerely before JESUS.
- We must lay open our request with a holy earnestness
- We must have total confidence in the power and the goodness of JESUS

Verses 25-34 A woman is healed of a haemorrhage

This woman was in a desperate condition. Her condition made her ceremonially and socially unclean, and this was a significant burden to live under for 12 years as she must have been excommunicated from the services of the synagogue and was not allowed to take part in any aspect of worship. She had spent all her livelihood on physicians and found no cure.

Because this woman's condition was embarrassing and because she was ceremonially unclean and would be condemned for touching JESUS or even being in a pressing crowd, she wanted to do this secretly. She would not openly ask JESUS to be healed, but she thought, “If only I may touch HIS clothes, I shall be made well.”

Her goal wasn't to touch the clothes of JESUS, but to touch JESUS. The clothes just happened to be the part of JESUS she could touch. She did believe in the healing power of JESUS, and the border of HIS garment served as a point of contact for that faith.

According to the thinking of the day, when this unclean woman touched JESUS it would make HIM unclean. But because of the nature of JESUS and the power of GOD, that wasn't how it worked. When she touched HIS garment, JESUS wasn't made unclean; the woman was made whole. When we come to JESUS with our sin and lay it upon HIM, it doesn't make HIM a sinner, but it makes us clean.

JESUS called her out so that she would absolutely know that she was healed. JESUS called her out so that others would absolutely know that she was healed.

When JESUS said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well,” it showed the woman that it really wasn’t touching the clothing of JESUS that healed her. Instead, it was her faith in JESUS and what HE could do for her.

- We must tell JESUS the whole truth about all our sin, all our suffering and all our hopes, don’t leave anything out.
- When JESUS calls us forward, it is because He has something special to give us.

There is a huge difference between bumping into JESUS and reaching out to touch HIM in faith. You can come to church week after week and “bump into” JESUS. That isn’t the same as reaching out to touch HIM in faith.

What I want us to do is consider together the blessing of peace that JESUS gave to a woman after she was miraculously healed of a condition that had plagued and afflicted her for twelve years.

A woman whose name is not even mentioned in the Bible but the miracle that occurred in her life is recorded as an example to us of the miracles that can happen by placing our faith and trust in JESUS for Healing and Wholeness.

Verses for 12th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 36 & 37

Psalms 36

Author: A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD.

Context: David complains about the evil of his enemies against him, and also about the victory in the goodness of GOD towards him

Explanation:

Psalm 36 highlights 3 points.

I. The sinfulness of sin- The transgression of the wicked in their hearts (verses 1-4).

The qualities of the wicked include

- Flattering himself in his own eyes
- The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit
- He deviseth mischief upon his bed.

II. The goodness of GOD, and HIS graciousness (verses 5-9).

The Psalmist explains about GODs goodness as

- HE preserves man and beast.
- HIS loving kindness, will provide the children of men put their trust under the shadow of HIS wings. HE satisfieth with the fatness of HIS house
- HE shall make them drink of the river of HIS pleasures.
- In HIS light we shall see light.

III. The psalm ends with a prayer particularly for the saints, David's preservation and to triumph in the fall of his enemies' (verses 10-12).

- GOD will cast down the wicked and they shall not be able to rise up against the upright

Reflection:

The psalmist takes satisfaction in GOD's goodness and he finds safety in the LORD. The psalm concludes with a plea to GOD to bless all those who honour HIM with HIS justice, and to protect them from the snares of the wicked.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 11:11 to 12:12

Author: The author is uncertain. Jewish views even claim Moses was the author.

Context: Zophar's advice to Job; Job replies to Zophar and his other friends and his confidence in GOD.

Explanation: Zophar labelled Job "a witless, empty-headed man with as much chance to become wise as a wild donkey has to be born tame." Zophar was wrong in understanding and wanted Job to simply repent, seek for mercy and goodness of GOD. He encouraged Job to confess and repent of his sin by telling him how GOD would bless and honour him, restore him to a bright, confident, admired life once again.(Job11:11-20)

In reply to Zophar, and in defence of himself is what has been recorded in this (Job 12:1-12). Job has heard his three friends. But he finds their wisdom lacking. They are not proving themselves to be able to help him in his distress. They are not helping him to trust in GOD's

wisdom. Instead, they are trying to help him understand GOD's ways, which isn't working. So, Job is trying to tell his friends that their advice is of no help to him and started to explain about GOD's wisdom in the world.

Reflection:

Much can be learned from the example of Job and his friends. When we are aware of a friend who is hurting, we can consider it as a positive example of these friends by visiting the person, mourning with him, and spending time. Sometimes, physical presence with a hurting friend can be of great comfort.

We should not assume that troubles are the signs of GOD's judgment. Instead of advising a hurting person to admit his wrong and repent, not knowing the exact reason of his trouble, we can join together and encourage a friend to endure faithfully, knowing GOD sees our pain and has a purpose for it. We can gain wisdom from what Job's friends did wrong. It also reflects on Job's trust in GOD rather than getting depressed by listening to his friends' advice.

When we turn our focus to GOD, we can offer great encouragement and hope to those in need, helping those who suffer to see GOD at work. Our help to those in need is ultimately a way we serve CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 5:35 to 6:6

Author: John Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark, also served as a companion to the Apostle Paul in his missionary work and later assisted the Apostle Peter in Rome.

Context: JESUS raises Jairus daughter and heals a sick woman; A Prophet without Honour (Mark 5:21-35); (Mark 6:1-6).

Explanation: Mark describes JESUS healing two daughters of Israel. Mark tells us in verse 22 about Jairus who was "one of the rulers of the synagogue." Everyone knew him and he was well-off. When his daughter got sick and as time went on, she grew worse and worse until she was at the point of death. Jairus sees a crowd and knows that JESUS has come to town. He decides to ask JESUS for help. He falls at his feet and says, "My little daughter is at the point of death." It was an urgent plea. He needed the help of JESUS desperately.

Then there was a suffering woman. For twelve years, she suffered a constant flow of blood. It's made her unclean, preventing her from worshiping in the temple. She was considered a social outcast. She tried all medicine which did not cure her from the problem and vain.

When she heard about JESUS she knew that JESUS only could heal her.

In both these cases, the circumstances were beyond human control. Both reached a breaking point. Both were desperate for help beyond what this world could offer. Circumstances builds faith, but GOD determines the circumstances. GOD brings us to that breaking point and HE directs our way.

Mark Chapter 6:1-6, we see an absence of faith and the miracles JESUS was doing. JESUS was amazed to see at the unbelief of people of Nazareth.

Reflection: Faith is the only remedy against grief and fear when there is no other solution for a problem. JESUS raised the dead child to life by a word of power. Such is the gospel call to those who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. We still can find hope and comfort under our trials through JESUS. We need to believe in the resurrection of CHRIST.

To help us understand “unbelief” we need to understand doubt. Unbelief makes us blind and not see CHRIST as GOD incarnate who came to forgive our sins and provide us the only way to get to heaven.

Verses for 14th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41

Psalms 41

Psalms 41:1

Blessed is he that considered the poor.

GOD has a special concern for the weak and helpless, and HE blesses those who show loving kindness to the needy. If we have shared GOD's pity for those in need, we can pray with confidence that GOD will deliver us when we are in trouble, protect us from harm, bless our lives, destroy the power of Satan and our enemies, and give us His presence and healing when we are sick.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 12:13 to 13:14

Job 12: 13

With GOD is wisdom and strength.

We must believe that GOD is wise and powerful and that HIS ways with us are the best and surest means of attaining our highest good. GOD directs events in a committed believer's life for the purpose of personal satisfaction and the fulfilling of his or her service in the kingdom of GOD. In this life believers can never completely discern the ultimate purpose of everything that happens to them, nor will it always be perfectly clear how GOD is causing all to work together for good.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 6: 7 to 20

Mark 6: 7

Unclean Spirit.

In coming to earth JESUS purpose was to destroy the works of the devil and release those oppressed by Satan and sin. JESUS gave HIS followers power and authority to continue HIS battle against the forces of darkness.

Mark 6:13

Anointed with oil.

Anointing the sick with oil for healing is mentioned only here and in James 5:14. The oil likely represents a tangible token of the presence and power of the HOLY SPIRIT and a point of contact to encourage faith.

Verses for 15th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 42 to 44

Psalms 42

Psalms 42: 2

My soul thirsteth for God.

As water is essential for physical life, so GOD and HIS presence are essential for satisfaction and wholeness of life. True believers will hunger and thirst for GOD and HIS grace, blessing and supernatural activity in their lives. To stop thirsting for GOD is to die spiritually, thus we must not allow anything to diminish our intense desire for the things of GOD. Beware of the cares of this world, the pursuit of earthly things, and the pleasures that choke out hunger and thirst for GOD and the desire to seek HIS face in prayer.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 13:15 to 14:12

Job 13: 15

Though HE slay me, yet will I trust in HIM.

Here is one of the most astounding declarations of faith in GOD's goodness ever uttered. Whatever GOD allowed to Job, whatever burden HE laid upon Job, even though GOD should slay him, Job believed ultimately that GOD would not fail him. Paul expressed this same confidence in GOD's love for HIS faithful people.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 6: 21 to 44

Mark 6: 41

Thanksgiving at Mealtimes.

Before eating, CHRIST gave thanks to HIS HEAVENLY FATHER for the food. Believers ought to follow HIS example and give thanks at every meal. To eat with thanksgiving is to recognize GOD's care and provision for us. Every meal should be an act of worship, done to the glory of GOD.

Verses for 16th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 45 & 46

Psalms 46

Many of us love reading Psalms, including myself, I have few favourite chapters that I read daily 54, 62, 91 and 121 these are like my bed time stories, without reading these I cannot sleep, now I'm going to add Psalms 46 to my list. Psalm, book of the Old Testament is mostly composed of sacred songs or poems which form as an expression of faith from joyous celebration to solemn hymn and they have a profound effect on the development of Christian faith and worship.

Psalms 46 was written to the chief musician for the sons of Korah. This song is very pertinent to most of us as we are still grappling with this pandemic situation which day-in and day-out is changing its colours in various forms of variants. As children of GOD, we all have to believe and trust that our hope lies in HIM alone. HE is our helper and strength and through his WORD we find solace. HE is always waiting to help us in times of our needs and HE waits for our call. Many a times we look for worldly help rather than depending on HIM. As written in Psalm 46, that is, though the waters roar or mountains shake, our faith should not be shaken as HE is in our midst. We all have troubles and at times are broken, but rest assured GOD has not left us alone – HIS promise to us is clear – Be Still and know that I am GOD (verse 11).

One thing is sure, we should not be afraid; instead stand strong in the LORD and keep praising HIS name always. Similar pattern of praises, help and finding solace is detailed in other books of Old Testament like Job and in the New Testament, Mark praising GOD for being a source of dominance and redemption in times of distress.

According to Charles Spurgeon, Psalm 46 is called a “song of holy confidence”; it is also known as “Luther’s Psalm”, as Martin Luther wrote his popular hymn “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott” (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”) using Psalm 46 as a starting point. Source Wikipedia.

Never complain like Job, when GOD is dealing with us. HE knows what is right and wrong and provides us with HIS enduring mercies at the right time. Do not restrain your faith before GOD and try not to condemn your own mouth. (Job 15)

May our good LORD use us as we draw closer to HIM just not in times of trouble and bewilderment, instead invest in him to expect glorious and marvellous returns. Glory to HIM alone!

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 14:13 to 15:11

Job’s faith and hope spoke, and grace appeared to revive; but depravity again prevailed. He represents GOD as carrying matters to extremity against him. The LORD must prevail against all who contend with HIM. GOD may send disease and pain, we may lose all comfort in those near and dear to us, every hope of earthly happiness may be destroyed, but GOD will receive the believer into realms of eternal happiness. But what a change awaits the prosperous unbeliever! How will he answer when GOD shall call him to his tribunal? The LORD is yet upon a mercy-seat, ready to be gracious. Oh that sinners would be wise, that they would consider their latter end! While man’s flesh is upon him, that is, the body he is so

loth to lay down, it shall have pain; and while his soul is within him, that is, the spirit he is so loth to resign, it shall mourn. Dying work is hard work; dying pangs often are sore pangs. It is folly for men to defer repentance to a death-bed, and to have that to do which is the one thing needful, when unfit to do anything.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 6:45 to 7:8

Mark 7: 6

Their heart is far from me.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were guilty of the sin of legalise. A legalist substitutes outward Acts, rules or words for proper inner attitudes that come from being born of GOD and the Spirit. Such people honour GOD with their lips, while their hearts are far from HIM, they appear righteous outwardly, but inwardly have no real love for GOD.

Verses for 17th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 47 to 49

Psalms 48

What Psalm 48 means

Verses 1 & 2:

The *holy mountain is Mount Zion, where they built the *temple. But, in this psalm, the *holy mountain is all the city of Jerusalem. They had built it on the edge of high land, so when you came to it, it looked beautiful. The High Place of Zaphar was where all old religions thought that their god came to the earth. The *psalmist is saying that there is only one Zaphar, and only one GOD: Jerusalem is the real Zaphar, and the *LORD is the real GOD.

Verses 3 to 8:

The kings in verse 4 were the leaders of the Assyrian army. (Look at The Story of Psalms 46, 47 and 48 again.) They attacked Jerusalem, but GOD kept his city safe, and the people that were in it. The kings saw something that frightened them away. We do not know what it was. Perhaps it was the 185 000 dead bodies! GOD did this just as easily as HE could send a wind to destroy a ship! Tarshish was a place in Spain that had the biggest ships in the world at that time. The people living in Jerusalem saw that what they had heard was true: GOD will keep his people safe! But they must believe in HIM, obey HIM and love HIM. Later, when the Jews did not do these things, GOD did not keep their city safe.

Verses 9 to 13:

After the *war was over, the *psalmist tells the people to remember what happened. They were to look at all the places that GOD had made safe. Then they could tell their children what had happened, and the places where it had happened. This would help their children to believe, obey and love GOD also. The Bible teaches us that it is important to tell our children what GOD has done for us.

Verse 14:

“GOD will be our guide until we die” means that HE will lead if we will follow HIM.

“*for ever and ever” means “always”.

After we die, we will be with GOD if we believe, obey and love HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 15:12 to 35

Eliphaz maintains that the wicked are certainly miserable: whence he would infer, that the miserable are certainly wicked, and therefore Job was so. But because many of GOD’s people have prospered in this world, it does not therefore follow that those who are crossed and made poor, as Job, are not GOD’s people. Eliphaz shows also that wicked people, particularly oppressors, are subject to continual terror, live very uncomfortably, and perish very miserably. Will the prosperity of presumptuous sinners end miserably as here described? Then let the mischiefs which befall others, be our warnings. Though no chastening for the

present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. No calamity, no trouble, however heavy, however severe, can rob a follower of the LORD of his favour. What shall separate him from the love of CHRIST?

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 7: 9 to 23

Mark 7: 20 to 23

The heart of men

In this passage death means being defiled spiritually because of the sins that come from the heart. The heart in the Scripture is the totality of intellect, emotional desire and volition. An impure heart will corrupt ones thoughts, feelings, words and actions. What is needed is a new transformed heart, refashioned after the image of CHRIST.

Verses for 18th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 50 & 51

Psalms 50

The Psalm is written by Asaph, one of King David's music leaders. It is a Psalm of instruction, which tells us about judgement day. GOD doesn't want material offerings or sacrifices as everything in the world already belongs to HIM. GOD wants us to give HIM true thanks and glory. GOD wants us to trust HIM in our times of trouble so HE can rescue us and we can give HIM glory. Those who walk in GOD's path will receive salvation from the LORD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 16:1 to 22

It is believed that Moses has written the book of Job. Job in his suffering says to his friends that they are miserable comforters and their words are like words of wind. Job feels that GOD's wrath is upon him though he is innocent. He asks GOD for answers for his pain and suffering seeking for an advocate in heaven for his relief. We can seek GOD's help in our suffering through prayer.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 7: 24 to 37

In his Gospel Mark narrates the story of a gentile woman whose child was possessed by a demon. JESUS made the woman reason with HIM to heal her child as HE wanted those present there to know that HIS grace was for everyone who believed in the power of GOD. JESUS also healed a deaf man who had a speech impediment. HE sighed and commanded "open" displaying both compassion and authority in healing the man. When we ask GOD in faith HE fulfils our prayers according to HIS perfect will.

Verses for 19th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 52 to 54

Psalms 53

This Psalm of David talks about the Salvation for Israel which would come out of Zion. David had strong faith in GOD that HE would restore the Israelites and they would all be glad.

Psalms 53 verses (1-3) the scripture tells us – The fool says in his heart, “There is no GOD”. They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. GOD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there is anyone who understand, anyone who seek GOD. Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

David looked at those who denied the existence of GOD and came to the conclusion that they are fools. Echoing the message of Psalm 14, this Psalm proclaims the foolishness of atheism (Romans: 3: 10-12). The Hebrew word for translated as “fool” in this verse is na’bal. This doesn’t imply someone who is stupid or incapable. It means someone senseless, irrational, or lacking in wisdom. Even intelligent people can act like fools, and there is nothing more foolish than denying the very existence of GOD.

The name used for “GOD” in this psalm is Elohim, the GOD of Creation. Those who deny the existence of their own creator are not only foolish but also corrupt. Immorality is not something reserved for atheists, of course, GOD observes the entire human race as wayward, corrupt and void of meritorious good deeds.

People may say there is no GOD in order to cover their sins and define their own morality. They want to have an excuse to continue in sin and to ignore the Judge with no fear of HIS judgement. GOD is ever faithful and looks on all mankind and searches the hearts of the people to see if there is anyone who can understand HIM or seek HIM. Even though the world is corrupt, GOD waits patiently to see if people will change from their sinful ways, repent and look back at HIM to restore them and forgive them so they walk the path of righteousness.

Psalms 53 verses (4-6) the scripture tell us – Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on GOD. But there they are, overwhelmed and dread, where there was nothing to dread. GOD scattered the bones of those who attacked you; you put them to shame, for GOD despised them. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When GOD restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

David notes that there are wicked ones who persecute GOD’s people, but he realizes that GOD will cause those evildoers to be destroyed. This psalm makes a strong point that GOD puts those who attack HIM and HIS people to shame.

As David considers the rampant evil because of the war, he longs for GOD to deliver Israel and establish HIS kingdom on earth. When GOD fulfils David’s desire for the kingdom, Israel will experience great joy. According to prophecies in books such as Zechariah, this plea will be granted, someday.

If we look at the world now, with all the pandemics and wars around us, we still see people questioning GOD, “why is HE letting this happen, why is HE not showing mercy”.

While GOD is not affected by what we think of HIM, but we are definitely and eternally affected by what GOD thinks of us and ultimately does for us. GOD loves every human being and HE longs to have a relationship with everyone. HE is merciful and patient giving us

opportunities to turn from our sinful lifestyles and live for HIM. As David waited for deliverance of Israelites, in the same way the world is now waiting for salvation of GOD's people and to restore GOD's kingdom on earth.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 17:1 to 18:21

Job 17: 1 to 16

Job began his monologue showing his absolute frustration with life. He claims his spirit is broken, his friends have turned on him and folks have lost respect for him. Job is calling them mockers and saying that they are provoking him and he is saying this to their faces. This is the result of their failed attempt to comfort this man with their worldly man-made wisdom – that just doesn't apply to Job in this situation in his life. Job however, told his friends that they were starting with a wrong idea because earthly success and prosperity are not proof of faith in GOD.

Job's only hope was GOD. The truly wise person knows that wisdom comes from GOD alone and not from human success or failure. Job directly addresses GOD and asks HIM to defend him before these accusing friends. Job says my so-called friends will certainly not undertake for me since they have blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts against me. GOD will not exalt those who are without understanding. Job means to accuse his "comforters" of so acting. By their persistent belief in his grievous wickedness, they give him up, as it were, for a prey to calamity, which they pronounce him to have deserved on account of his secret sins. Whoever so acts shall be punished, not only in his own person but also in the persons of his descendants.

Job, by the manner in which he bore his afflictions, made himself a byword for patience and endurance among GOD's people throughout all ages. Job is not thinking particularly of himself but bent on testifying that righteous men generally act as they do, not from any hope of reward but from principle and the bent of their characters. Not only will the just man maintain his integrity but as time goes on his goodness will be more and more firmly established.

Job's three friends had reputation for being wise but Job could not find wisdom in any of them. Obviously, these men had a faulty view of wisdom. They assumed that because they were prosperous and successful, GOD must be pleased with the way they were living and thinking. Job was giving up hope of any future restoration of wealth and family and wrapping himself in thoughts of death and rest from grief and pain it promised. The rewards that Job's friends described were all related to this present life. They were silent about the possibility of life after death.

From this chapter we understand that as Christians we must not evaluate life only in the terms of this present world, because GOD promises are never ending, wonderful future to those who are faithful to HIM. Salvation through JESUS, with acceptance into GOD's family and hope of eternal life with HIM.

Job 18: 1 to 21

Bildad the Shuhite's message to Job.

Bildad the Shuhite is first mentioned in Job 2:11 as one of three friends who come to comfort Job. Bildad, along with Eliphaz and Zophar, visit Job after they heard of the calamity that had befallen him. When Bildad first arrives, he cannot believe the horrific nature of Job's condition.

Bildad's second speech was really no different from his first except that it was harsher. When we face difficulties, pain and suffering, we can expect well-meaning "Bildad's" to come along, quoting proverbs and giving advice and not really listening to us or identifying with our pain. Rather than seeking to understand they give unhelpful trite answers. When receiving this useless advice, listen politely. Then, in order to sort out the helpful advice from the empty words, talk to GOD about what was said. When giving advice, avoid empty words. It is more important to convey care and support than to worry about saying the right thing. Bildad thought he knew how the universe should be run, and he saw Job as an illustration of the consequence of sin. His logic is that, since Job is being punished, he must have done something wrong. Bildad rejected Job's side of the story because it did not fit in with his outlook on life. It is easy to condemn Bildad because his errors are obvious, unfortunately, however, we often act the same way when our ideas are threatened. The "king of terrors" is a figure of speech referring to death. Bildad viewed death as a great devourer, but the Bible teaches that GOD has the power to devour even death. If the prospect of dying scares you, remember your faith and the promises of CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 8: 1 to 21

This is a different miracle from the feeding of the 5,000 described in Mark 6. At that time, those fed were mostly Jews. This time JESUS was ministering to a non-Jewish crowd in the Gentile region of the Decapolis. JESUS' actions and message were beginning to have an impact on large numbers of Gentiles. That JESUS would compassionately minister to non-Jews was very reassuring to Mark's primarily Roman audience.

Do you ever feel as though GOD is so busy with important concerns that HE can't possibly be aware of your needs? Just as JESUS was concerned about these people's need for food, HE is concerned about our daily needs. At another time JESUS said "Your Heavenly Father knows that you need "[all these things]". Do you have concerns that you think would not interest GOD? Nothing is too large for HIM to handle and no need too small to escape HIS interest.

How could the disciples experience so many of JESUS' miracles and yet be so slow to comprehend who HE was? They had already seen Jesus feed over 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, yet here they doubted whether HE could feed another large group. Sometimes we are also slow to catch on. Although JESUS has brought us through trials and temptations in the past, we often don't believe that HE will do so in the future. In your heart too closed to take in all that GOD can do for you? Don't be like the disciples. Remember what JESUS has done, and have faith that HE will do it again.

JESUS gave thanks for the food, and HE serves as a model for us. Life is a gift, and the nourishment life requires, while it comes from the work of many hands, conveys GOD's material blessing. Mealtime provides an opportunity to thank GOD for daily needs met, for taste and beauty, and for human company and divine companionship. Giving thanks keeps us from regarding a plate of food as a trough, our stomachs are bottomless pits, and our gathering to eat as bothersome interruption. Keep up the good tradition of praying and thanking GOD before your meals. Let your gratefulness to GOD be genuine.

The Pharisees had tried to explain away JESUS' previous miracles by claiming they could be attributed to luck, coincidence, or evil power. Here they demanded a sign from heaven – something only GOD could give. JESUS refused their demand because HE knew that even this kind of miracle would not convince them. They had already decided not to believe in HIM. Hearts can become so hard that even the most convincing facts and demonstrations will

not change them.

Mark mentions the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod, while Mathew talks about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Mark's audience, mostly non-Jews, would have known about Herod but not necessarily about the Jewish religious sect of the Sadducees. Thus, Mark quoted the part of JESUS' statement that his readers would understand. This reference to Herod may be to the Herodians, a group of Jews who supported the kind. Many Herodians were also Sadducees. Yeast is needed to make a batch of bread rise, so the hard-heartedness of the religious and political leaders could permeate and contaminate the entire society and make it rise up against JESUS.

JESUS rebuked the disciples for their hard hearts, which hindered their faith in GOD and HIS power. Today, those with hard hearts have a difficult time believing in those same things. This causes them to come to conclusions like these. Poverty is always caused by laziness, helping people who are poor only enables them. The best way to avoid becoming hard-hearted is to listen to JESUS' questions. Don't allow your heart to become hardened. Be open to GOD's truth, which is full of grace, mercy and understanding, and it will soften your heart.

Verses for 21st March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 55: 1-4 & 9-17 and Psalms 57

Psalms 55: 1-4 & 9-17

This Psalm is written by King David who is crying out to GOD in time of betrayal by his close associate. He feels GOD is hiding from him and is therefore restless and complaining. He is in a state of mental agony and feels he is in danger of death. He now wishes that his friend who has turned into a foe faces death or will ask for help. His confidence is in GOD and in the time of trouble he trusts that only GOD can deliver him out of trouble and GOD will deal with his enemy.

Questions to ponder:

- 1) Are you trusting GOD to deliver you in times of trouble?
- 2) Do you feel that GOD is hiding from you?
- 3) Are you troubled at the circumstances which you are facing?

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19: 1 to 20

It is presumed that Moses is the author of the book of Job. Job's friends have grieved him with his words. Though they have rebuked him more than 10 times on his suffering, yet Job continued to trust GOD. Even while undergoing suffering both physically and mentally his faith in GOD did not waver. His wife, servants and friends deserted him, yet he was firm and trusted GOD. Despite the agony and torment he is facing he is confident that the LORD will deliver him. He was hopeful that though his physical body would deteriorate one day, he will see GOD personally in a new body.

Questions to ponder:

- 1) Do you believe that your Redeemer lives?
- 2) Are you looking prepared to meet the LORD?
- 3) Are you willing to undergo difficulties and stand as a witness for the LORD?

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 8: 22 to 33

The Gospel is written by John Mark. This miracle is recorded only in the gospel of Mark. This is the only miracle which was not performed at the site where JESUS sees the blind man. JESUS takes the blind man and performs the miracle in an isolated place. This miracle was not performed instantly as was the other miracles. This miracle was performed in two stages.

JESUS wanted to know from HIS disciples as to what the crowd was supposing HIM to be. Later on, HE wanted to know what the disciples thought of who HE was. Peter replies that He is CHRIST SON of the LIVING GOD and JESUS commands HIS disciples not to reveal this, but Peter rebuked Him, who was rebuked by JESUS.

Questions to ponder:

- 1) Do you continue to trust GOD when you do not receive an instant answer to your prayer?

- 2) Do you believe that JESUS is able to perform miracles today?
- 3) Do you perceive JESUS 'identity personally?

Verses for 22nd March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 60 & 61 and Psalm 119: 161 to 176

Psalms 61

A Promise or an Assurance of GOD's Eternal Protection

Psalm 61 is a prayer for security and assurance. Wherever we are, we can trust that GOD will be there to answer our cries for help.

This psalm was written by David. David was often in trouble. We don't know on what conditions David was prompted this psalm. He may have written when he was forced to escape during the days of Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15-18), or after he had narrowly escaped one of Saul's efforts to kill him while hiding in the desert.

David must have been far from home when he wrote this psalm. Fortunately God is not limited to any geographic location. Even when we are among unknown people and surroundings GOD never abandons us. A "higher" rock would be a plain of refuge and safety. GOD's all-surpassing strength is always with us

In the verse 8 we see David made a vow to praise GOD each day. David continuously praised GOD through both the good and difficult times of his life.

Do we find something to praise GOD for each day? As we do we will find our heart elevated from daily distractions to lasting confidence.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19: 21 to 20: 11

I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"-Job 19:25-27

In the face of all his friends' condemnation, Job held on to one truth: "I cannot answer all your questions, nor can I defend myself against all your accusations and arguments, but this I do know for a certainty: GOD is my Redeemer."

When Job said "my Redeemer" he was referring to a significant aspect of Jewish law. The redeemer had the responsibility of buying back or redeeming the lost inheritance of a deceased relative. He also had the responsibility of avenging the blood of a slain relative, not just to seek revenge but to see that justice was upheld. Job saw himself as a victim and was asking for his Redeemer to testify and set the record straight. He knew and trusted that if it didn't happen during his lifetime, then certainly in the final judgment GOD would be his Redeemer. Though Job struggled with the idea that GOD was presently against him, he firmly believed that in the end GOD would be on his side.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 8: 34 to 9: 8

When HE had called the people to HIMSELF, with HIS disciples also, HE said to them, "Whoever desires to come after ME, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow ME. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for MY sake and the gospel's will save it. Mark 8:34, 35

Mark's initial audience were Romans. They knew what taking up the cross meant. Death on a cross was a form of execution used by Romans for hard-core criminals.

A prisoner carried his own cross to the place of execution, signifying submission to Rome's power. JESUS used the image of carrying a cross to illustrate the ultimate submission required of HIS followers. HE is not against pleasure nor was HE saying that we should seek pain. JESUS was talking about the effort we make to follow HIM moment by moment, to do HIS will even when the work is difficult and the future looks bleak.

We should be willing to lose our lives for the sake of the gospel, not because our lives are useless but because nothing, not even life itself can compare to what we gain with CHRIST. JESUS wants us to choose to follow HIM rather than to lead a life of sin and self-satisfaction. HE wants us to stop trying to control our own and to let HIM direct us. HE asks us only to lose our self-centred determination to be in charge.

Verses for 23rd March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 62 to 65

Psalms 64

A Psalm of David. As with many of David's psalms, it concerns a crisis that made him cry out to GOD.

David knew there were dangerous enemies plotting his destruction. He felt powerless to make them stop, so he prayed. David cried out to GOD for help.

We need to pray as the psalmist does, not so much for the deliverance from enemies but deliverance from fear. When we look up in prayer, heaven becomes visible.

Psalm 64 emphasizes the devious nature of David's enemies. They use secret plots. They shoot in secret. They attack suddenly. Especially because David mentions an attack by arrows from a hidden or secret position. David knew that his enemies fired their bitter words as arrows against him, and when they did, it didn't bother them in the least. They did not fear either David or GOD. They foolishly believe that they are not accountable to anyone.

The evil men opposing David acted as if they had all the arrows, but David knew that GOD was his defence, and GOD was well-armed. David's enemies shot at him suddenly without any warning, from hidden and high positions. David's friend was GOD, in a higher and more hidden position. GOD had them in HIS sights.

Suddenly they shall be wounded reminds us that often the judgment of GOD comes upon the wicked unexpectedly, without any warning. They think everything is fine until they are wounded. They used their lies and slanders to attack David, but GOD would find a way to make their own words their ruin. They would trip in the very way they hoped to trap David. GOD's dealing with the wicked would be a lesson to all men, but it would be special joy to the righteous.

GOD's faithful answer to prayer would demonstrate that HE is worthy of trust, and build the faith of the righteous. It would not only bring joy, but also increase faith.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 20: 12 to 29

On hearing Job's bold forecast of punishment on his accusers (see 19:28-29), Zophar can hardly control his temper. Not only does he feel insulted, but he is burning with inward rage (20:1-3). His hasty reply is intended to hurt Job by reminding him that the wicked person's happiness and success are short-lived (4-7). The wealth he unjustly gained will not save him, and his early death will be a fitting punishment (8-11).

The wicked feed on sin, keeping it in their mouths as long as possible to enjoy its taste before swallowing it. But it will be like poison in their stomachs and will kill them (12-16). Though a man may have pleasure in indulgence in sin, and may find happiness of a certain kind in it, yet that the consequences will be bitter – as if the food which he ate should become like gall, and he should cast it up with loathing.

There are many sins which, from the laws of our nature, are attended with a kind of pleasure. Such, for illustration, are the sins of gluttony and of intemperance in drinking; the sins of ambition and vanity; the sins of amusement and of fashionable life. We do not speak of them as "happiness".

Their lives of luxury will end, and the money they gained through oppression will be lost (17-

19). Because of their greed, GOD will punish them with poverty and misery (20-23). The sword of GOD's anger will pierce them and the fire of GOD's wrath will burn them up (24-26). Zophar triumphantly concludes that heaven and earth will unite to destroy those who fight against GOD (27-29).

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 9: 9 to 29

Mark 9: 14–29 follows the transfiguration, where Peter, James, and John went up a mountain with JESUS and saw a display of HIS glory as GOD. They also saw Moses and Elijah and heard GOD affirm JESUS as HIS SON. Now the three disciples and JESUS return from the mountain and find the remaining disciples arguing with Jewish scribes. The disciples have tried to expel a dangerous demon from a young boy but have been unable despite having performed exorcisms before (Mark 6:7–13). JESUS explains that to do GOD's work, we need faith in HIM and to be empowered by HIM. This section is parallel to Matthew 17:14–20 and Luke 9:37–43.

Prayer and faith are completely entwined. It is faith that drives us to talk to GOD, to tell HIM our needs, and to express to HIM how we rely on HIM. We need prayer to maintain and strengthen our relationship with GOD.

Verses for 24th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 66 & 67

Psalms 66

In the first part (Psalms 66:1-12), the community praises GOD for powerful acts for Israel, both in the past (the exodus from Egypt and the entry into the land) (Psalms 66:6) and in the present (deliverance from a recent but unspecified calamity) (Psalm 66: 8-12)

In the second part (Psalm 66:13-20), an individual from the rescued community fulfils a vow to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. As often in thanksgivings, the rescued person steps forward to teach the community what GOD has done (psalm 66: 16-20)

The psalmist understood that GOD was not only GOD over Israel, but the whole world. It was good and appropriate for everyone to joyfully praise GOD. Song is not the only way to praise GOD, but it is one of the ways. The psalmist encouraged all to sing out the honour of HIS name, and to do it in a way that made GOD's praise glorious.

One may begin to praise GOD by thinking upon the greatness of HIS work in creation, salvation, and restoration. Then, by telling GOD how awesome HIS works are. Praise may continue in the recognition of the great power of GOD, which brought forth the awesome works. This awesome and powerful GOD has enemies, but through HIS great power they will be conquered and brought to submit themselves to GOD.

Power brings a man to his knee, but love alone wins his heart. Pharaoh said he would let Israel go, but he lied unto GOD; he submitted in word but not in deed. Tens of thousands, both in earth and hell, are rendering this constrained homage to the Almighty; they only submit because they cannot do otherwise; it is not their loyalty, but his power, which keeps them subjects of his boundless dominion." (Spurgeon).

Philippians 2: 10-11 at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

The psalmist felt that perhaps others might be slow to think of GOD's awesome works. The psalmist identifies himself with Israel hundreds of years before his time, as if he were there. The psalmist called all the earth to observe the great works of GOD and give Him praise. It was also worth remembering that GOD observes the nations; they should look up to the ONE who looks at them.

In light of GOD's power, HIS participation in human affairs, and HIS eye upon the world, to be rebellious against HIM is foolish. To exalt yourself against HIM is madness.

GOD blesses HIS people, but sometimes the blessing is in a difficult testing. The psalmist praised GOD for life and secure position, but also recognized the hardships of life. He expressed the hardships and testing with many word pictures- refinery of silver, brought us into the net, laid afflictions on our back, to ride over our heads, through fire and water.

The psalmist had promised GOD certain sacrifices or gifts in gratitude for GOD's work when he was in trouble. He would not sin by failing to bring these.

No one should think that GOD could be persuaded merely through sacrifices or vows. It was important to make clear that the psalmist did not only sacrifice but also gave GOD the better: obedience. He did not hold on to iniquity in his heart.

This was a final and wonderful reminder that the answer to prayer did not come from what the psalmist deserved, but as a gift from the great love and mercy of GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 21: 1 to 26

Job 21: 1-3

Job's plea to listen carefully to his speech.

Because of the way Job's friends kept repeating themselves and their arguments to him, it was easy for Job to feel that they simply were not listening to him.

Instead, Job wanted to prove that he had been listening to them.

Job 21: 4-16

The prosperity of the wicked

This demonstrates again that Job's real point of crisis was his conflict with GOD, not with man (especially with his friends). His crisis was fundamentally spiritual in nature, much more than being a medical crisis, an economic crisis, a social crisis, or a family crisis. His struggle was against GOD, and he wondered where GOD was in the midst of this very dark time.

Job challenged the moral order of the universe as previously understood by his friends. He challenged them to see that if it was possible for a wicked man to be seemingly blessed, then perhaps also a righteous man like Job could seem to be cursed. Zophar said that the wicked die prematurely (Job 20:4-11); Job insisted that instead, the wicked live and become old. Job explains many of the blessings that seem to come to many of the wicked, even as they reject GOD.

Bildad said that the wicked have no offspring or descendants to remember them (Job 18:19-21); Job countered that their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring are before their eyes.

Job 21: 17-21

The Wisdom of GOD

It would do Job no satisfaction to hear that the judgment would instead come upon the wicked man's descendants. In thinking upon the seeming comfort of the wicked, Job almost despaired. He cried out to GOD to bring destruction upon the wicked in his own day, and not in the time of his household after him.

Job acknowledged that wickedness was never ultimately rewarded and was always punished in the end. The problem for Job was that it never seemed soon enough that the wicked would drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

Job 21: 22-26

GOD is all wise, yet the wicked sometimes prosper and the godly sometimes suffer.

In the broader context, Job is indeed questioning the ways and wisdom of GOD in not bringing judgment sooner upon the wicked man. At the same time, he sensed that this was wrong, so he corrected himself on this point.

Job is clearly uncomfortable in questioning the ways and wisdom of GOD, yet at the same time it just seemed so unfair that the good and bad would seemingly have the same fate.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 9: 30 to 50

JESUS told His disciples of HIS approaching death and Resurrection and taught them about who will be the greatest in GOD's kingdom. HE warned of the consequence of leading others

to sin and instructed HIS disciples to separate themselves from influences that would lead them to sin.

Mark 9: 30-31

The disciples probably understood that when JESUS spoke of “the SON OF MAN” HE was referring to the divine figure revealed in Daniel 7:13-14. But to them it must have seemed inappropriate to connect that divine person with suffering and death. After the resurrection, JESUS “opened their minds, so that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

Mark 9:34

The disciples had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. JESUS has just spoken about HIS impending suffering, but rather than seeking to understand HIS plight, the disciples were pre-occupied with their own status and ambition. Now, when JESUS inquires, they are ashamed to admit what they had been discussing.

Mark 9: 41-42

JESUS promises that if you perform a deed of kindness or service for someone because they follow CHRIST, you will receive a sure reward from CHRIST. Conversely, if someone intentionally causes a Christian to sin, that person must answer to CHRIST and is liable to suffer severe punishment.

Mark 9: 43, 45, 47

The LORD is not instructing us to literally and physically maim ourselves—if you cut off one hand you could still sin with the other, and would not be able to cut that one off! In emphatic terms HE is instructing us to sever our connection with sinful practices: don’t take hold of sin, don’t walk into sin, and don’t look at sin.

Mark 9: 43-50

JESUS summarizes HIS teaching by saying, “Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” We are to preserve ourselves from the moral decay and corruption of the world by cultivating personal holiness before GOD. At the same time, we are to preserve the unity of the church by graciously cultivating a spirit of service to fellow Christians and a spirit of acceptance of fellow Christians.

CSI Almanac – 25th March 2022 – ANNUNCIATION TO MARY



Scripture Readings:

Psalms- 41: 1-10

Old Testament Reading- Isaiah 7: 10-14

Epistle Reading- Galatians 4: 1-7

Gospel Reading- Luke 1: 26-38

Collect: We pray , O God, to pour Your grace into our hearts, that as, at the message of an angel, Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and became the mother of the Lord and the most blessed among women ,so we , believing Your word, may receive Christ to dwell in our hearts , and by our life make known the mystery of His incarnation, who was exalted our humanity in the glory of the divine, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and ever Amen.

Psalms 41: 1-10

David described the blessings that come to the righteous man or woman, and he

summarizes the life of that righteous one by his generosity to the poor. David didn't think that this was the only thing that marked the godly, but it was a significant thing.

This is another indication that this promise of blessing for obedience was connected to the Old Covenant, which dealt much more with earthly and physical blessings than with eternal and spiritual matters.

David knew that he had done much good, but that did not erase his sins. He understood that his sins were directed against God and that they made him like a sick or injured person who needed healing in his soul. His body was sick, but more important was his soul-sickness. David made a plain and honest confession of his sins to GOD and was promised an heir to rule for ever.

Isaiah 7: 10-14

During the reign of the evil King Ahaz, war broke out between Judah and Israel. Pekah, the king of Israel, entered into an alliance with the King of Syria (Rezin). The latter two went to Jerusalem to besiege it.

When Judah's King Ahaz learned of the coalition against him, his heart sank along with his people. He was an evil king and could not reasonably expect God's intervention for him. But God had not given up on Judah. God sent the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz to give him a promise of the perpetuity of Judah.

The message from Isaiah was one of comfort. Even though the kings of Israel and Syria formed a confederacy against him, God will intervene. Isaiah told Ahaz to ask for a sign to authenticate the promise from God. He refused. So Isaiah gave a sign from God, "and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The word "Immanuel" means God with us.

The virgin's son was God manifest in the flesh. This sign was not fulfilled during the days of Ahaz. This is a promise that God will be true to the line of David. Judah will have a future. That future will be established through "Immanuel." This was a sign for the perpetuity of the nation.

The New Testament clearly saw this passage fulfilled in Christ. At the end of the genealogy of Jesus Matthew makes this statement, "So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23).

Both the Old and New Testaments promise the coming of Jesus Christ. God keeps his word. God indeed came in flesh and was born of a virgin. He was supernaturally conceived without a human father.

Luke 1: 26-38

Introduction:

Christians see in the New Testament the fulfilment of the promise of the Old Testament. It relates and interprets the new covenant, represented in the life and death of Jesus, between God and the followers of Christ, the promised Messiah. The books are arranged in a more logical narrative order: the Gospels telling the life of Jesus and his teachings; the Acts detailing the work of Christ's followers in propagating the Christian faith; the Epistles teaching the meaning and implications of the faith; and Revelation prophesying future events and the culmination of the divine purpose.

Gabriel was the heavenly messenger sent to Daniel to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat and to communicate the prediction of the Seventy Weeks. He was also employed to announce the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and to announce the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary (an event often referred to as

the Annunciation). It is because he stood in the divine presence that both Jewish and Christian writers generally speak of him as an archangel.

Annunciation



In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

Mary put her life totally at GOD's disposal. Mary recognised the messenger as coming from God and, in deep faith and trust, accepted what she was being asked to do and be.

The Annunciation to Mary begins our immediate preparation for the coming of Jesus among us. There was fear at the surprising call, leading to a question of how this can happen. Then there was a sign in that Elizabeth is expecting a child before Mary said 'yes.' She did not say "ok, I will do it", but "let it be with me according to your word." It was 'yes' to a way of life, a 'yes' to the Word of God, leaving the initiative with God.

→ Let us consider today that, long before we were born, we are called by God to know, love and serve him. We have been the constant recipients of his blessings. Do we notice these in our daily lives? Do we take time to listen the still small voice of God in our day?

→ Mary was listening. She heard the message of the angel and responded with an unconditional 'yes'. We also can become filled with grace if, like her, we listen and respond with a resounding and unconditional 'yes' to all that God wants from us.

→ Surprising calls can evoke fears and questioning, leading to a desire for a sign before saying yes. Have I been through that experience? In my prayer I ask for Mary's freedom and openness to God's surprising ways? Could my fears get in the way of a generous response to God?

→ She is not flattered but perplexed, and she voices her perplexity. She hears God's messenger but wonders can this be true? How does it square with my virginity? She knows that she is free to say Yes or No. She ponders the invitation in her heart, as she ponders later events in the life of her son. Then her response is from a full heart.

Dear LORD-Seat of Wisdom, teach me how to use my head and heart in a crisis.

Galatians 4: 1-7

Paul uses three new methods to teach his Galatian readers an important lesson. It is futile to follow the Law of Moses in order to be made right before God, since justification comes only by faith in Christ. Paul shows that the arrival of Christ made it possible for all people to become God's children through faith in Him. Next, Paul makes a more personal appeal, asking what has changed to cause the Galatians to turn on Paul's teaching of the gospel. Finally, Paul builds an allegory from Scripture, illustrating the difference between being born into slavery and being born into the promise by faith in Christ.

1. Understand that the Law was not evil but unable to set us free.
2. Understand that the Law acted as a guide for God's people before Jesus came.
3. We were slaves, now we are adopted children of God.

Paul, in this letter, is writing to the church(s) in the province of Galatia. These were mainly Gentile converts to Christianity. Paul is rather forceful in his language throughout the letter. The reason for Paul's forcefulness is that the Galatians have abandoned the truth of the Gospel, which they had received at the beginning, for another gospel. This other gospel that the Galatians have allowed to influence their thinking, is one not based on salvation through the grace of God as a gift, but on works. Someone had been advocating that these Gentile converts to Christianity must adopt Jewish religious customs and laws. Paul, as he does elsewhere, strongly disagrees that these new converts need to adopt any kind of Jewish Law.

Paul has spent the last few chapters detailing the relationship of God's Law to God's people. He has said that the law was like a prison guard, which sought to keep God's people imprisoned. He has also said that the law was like a disciplinarian whose job was to keep the people in line. Now, however, he shifts images again. The Law, Paul says, is like a guardian or trustee who has been appointed by a father before his death to ensure that, upon his death, the father's estate is managed correctly. When the time comes, when the heir reaches the age set by the father, he will receive all that the father had promised him.

Paul stresses that the child who is under the authority of a trustee is no better than a slave. Even though he is one day to receive the promise of the full inheritance, the child is not yet ready to receive it. This image, Paul says, is how we were before Christ came. We were heirs to the promise of blessing and salvation but before Jesus came we were under the Law.

The Law was never intended to be a harsh burden or an impersonal set of requirements. It was intended, from the very beginning, to guide and shepherd God's people. It provided God's people with a way to flourish in response to the

blessing and salvation they had received from God by being rescued from slavery in Egypt. It was never meant to reign supreme. The Law had its place, but the time for the Law, as Israel had understood it, has passed. This is not to say that any type of moral law does not bind us. No, we are bound to Christ and the law of Love (loving God and loving our neighbour). We act as morally righteous persons in the world because Christ enables us to do so.

Paul's argument continues; the fullness of time has come. As heirs to the promised inheritance, we have come of age. Our coming of age, however, is nothing that we have done; it has not been at our initiative. Rather, God has decided that the time is right and sent his Son to be born of woman. Jesus is born of a woman and takes on the entirety of what it means to be human, including our slavery to the Law. It is this being born under the Law that lets Jesus stand in solidarity with us. He fulfils the Law and redeems us from the curse of the Law. The Law as we know it now has no power over us.

Jesus is the true Son, and he has now made a way for us to become full sons and daughters of God as well. So, Paul says, we are adopted into God's family, freed from the curse of the Law. The time has come, and we will receive a full inheritance. Not only have we been adopted into the family and have become true sons and daughters of God, but we are given the gift of the Spirit to enable us to claim our adoption and live as children of God. As children, God's Spirit comes to us so that we can call God our Father and so that we can begin to learn again what it means to be a child of God, and part of what it means to receive the Spirit and be a child of God is to fulfil the Law.

Our text ends with a reminder that we are now no longer slaves to the Law, or anything else, but we are children of God and as children of God we are full inheritors of God's Kingdom. This is good news for us. For, left up to ourselves, or even to the stewardship of the Law, we would only find death! As children, however, we share with Jesus in his inheritance!

Although by nature children of wrath and disobedience, they become by grace children of love, and partake of the nature of the children of God; for he will have all his children resemble him. May the temper and conduct of sons ever show our adoption; and may the Holy Spirit witness with our spirits that we are children and heirs of God

Verses for 26th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 70 & 71

Psalms 71

Psalm 71 has no title and it seems almost certain that 70 and 71 were intended to be read together. The emphasis on “righteousness” in Psalm 71 correlates well with the emphasis on “righteousness” associated with the king in Psalm 72.

The outline of the psalm is as follows:

Verses 1-4: Opening petitions

Verses 5-12: The main complaint

Verses 13-18: Petitions, vows, complaint

Verses 19-20: Praise and Prayer

Verses 21-24: Petition and vow of praise

The psalm has more characteristic of an individual lament than of any other type – note the petitions, complaints, and vows to praise when relief comes. However, elements of confidence, thanksgiving, and praise are smoothly modulated into the content. It is kind of confident, even jubilant, psalm of lament. The reason for this may be that the speaker in the psalm addresses God from the viewpoint of one who has attained mature adulthood and who is approaching old age (verses 17-18). The supplicant manifests a serenity often denied to the young, the product of “a long memory of God’s faithfulness and a growing hope in His life-renewing power.” The speaker is not identified, of course, but reader/hearers of the psalm may well have thought of David, or of Jeremiah, or of others, who spoke from mature experience. However, the psalm is available to anyone who finds it helpful. Delekat puts 71 among a group of psalms which refer to seekers of asylum at the temple in a literal sense. Hounded by personal enemies, a refugee had fled to the temple area for protection.

Petition for freedom and protection (71: 1-4)

The psalm begins with a formulaic expression in verse 1a, which is rooted in the ancient custom of seeking asylum and protection in a sanctuary. It does not introduce the theme to be developed, but asserts the mental stance or attitude of the worshiper. The supplications which follow in verses 1b-3b make use of traditional language. The supplicant prays never to be “put to shame,” but to be “rescued,” to be “set free,” etc. God is implored to turn his ear toward the speaker (verse 2b) so that the petitions can be heard. The appeal to the divine “righteousness” in verse 2a is a plea for the activation of Yahweh’s will for justice, for the

vindication of the innocent who are oppressed. The divine righteousness will be manifested when the suppliant is free from the grasp of unjust and ruthless persons (verse 4).

The main complaint (71:15-12)

The complaint begins with a succinct statement of confidence in God, which is followed by an affirmation of life-long trust praise in verse 6. The meaning of the verse 7 is not entirely clear. The word for “mystery” denotes a “wonder” or “portant,” which is so out of the routine course of things that it baffles. The reference here can be understood (1) as an unusual case of God’s care or (2) as an outstanding public example of divine punishment. If the meaning of “solemn warning” is understood in verse 7a, then verse 7b indicates that the speaker ignores the wrong conclusions about his or her sufferings, while persisting in trust in God.

The condition of the suppliant is the subject of talk and conspiracy on the part of enemies who are described as “soul-watchers” (verse 10), those who wait for any opportunity to harm the life of the speaker. The foes assume that the suppliant has been forsaken by God and left at their mercy (verse 11). The situation is worse by the failing strength of advanced age (verse 9); it is imperative that the suppliant not be abandoned by God while foes are strong and personal strength declines. Verse 12 forms the closing petition.

Petition and promises (71:13-18)

Verse 13 contains a petition to God for the punishment of the enemies. The petition in verse 13a echoes the petition in verse 1b. The suppliant prays that the adversaries will end up “wrapped” in ignominy and humiliation (verse 13b). The prayer for the punishment of enemies in verse 13 is matched by a petition for personal care in verse 18 – “even to grey-haired old age.”

The petitions in verse 13 and 18 frame 14-17, which are composed of statements of confidence and promises of praise if Yahweh responds to the plea for help. The suppliant has continual hope and is ready to praise Yahweh more and more (verse 14). Verse 15-16 seem to reflect the practice of bringing written prayer before Yahweh for his attention and response. In verse 17 the speaker recalls the teaching of God which has extended from youth to mature age. The subject matter of the teaching is not specified, but the wondrous deeds of Yahweh’s righteous saving-work must be intended. On the basis of the statements in verse 17, the suppliant prays that God will not forsake him or her in old age. The speaker looks ahead to old age and prays that God will not abandon him or her when the vital forces of life begin to deplete – at least not until the next generation has been told about the might and saving-power of God (v 18). The speaker wants the strength to make the coming generation know that no god can compare with Yahweh.

Praise and Prayer (71:19-20)

The speaker in the group of psalms to which 71 seems to belong identify their personal welfare with that of nation. If the singular reading of these verses is adopted, they should be understood as statements of confidence, expressing praise for past deliverance and assurance for the future. In the plural, however, verse 19 is like a hymn-like expression of praise, and verse 20 is an acknowledgement of the troubles which Yahweh has allowed his people to see, followed by supplications for renewal of life and deliverance from the depths of the netherworld.

Petition for restoration and vows of praise (71:21-24)

The suppliant prays for restoration to a satisfactory status in life and for comfort in verse 21. If verses 19-20 are understood as a prayer for the restoration of the nation, verse 21 is a prayer for the individual suppliant to share in the new well-being and to have a significant place in its society.

The vow to praise God when deliverance comes follows in verses 22-24. The speaker promises to give praise and thanksgiving to the “Holy One of Israel” (verse 22), a title of God which is seldom found outside the book of Isaiah. The title, “Holy One of Israel” indicates Yahweh’s possession of Israel and his claim on the people for their obedience. God demonstrates his holiness both in the acts of judgment and in the punishment of his own people (Isaiah 5:16) and in acts of deliverance (Isaiah 41:14, 16; 43:15-16, etc.). Holy One of Israel is exalted both in judgment and in salvation, and holds both Israel and the nations accountable. The suppliant’s praise will emphasise the righteousness of Yahweh – his acts which bring right order into the world.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 22: 12 – 30

The book of Job stands by itself, is not connected with any other, and is therefore to be considered alone. Many copies of the Hebrew Bible place it after the book of Psalms, and some after the Proverbs, which perhaps has given occasion to some learned men to imagine it to have been written by Isaiah or some of the later prophets. But, as the subject appears to have been much more ancient, so we have no reason to think but that the composition of the book was, and that therefore it is most fitly placed first in this collection of divine morals: also, being doctrinal, it is proper to precede and introduce the book of Psalms, which is devotional, and the book of Proverbs, which is practical.

The book of Job is a true history though the dialogues are poetical. The narrative we have here of Job’s prosperity and piety, his strange afflictions and exemplary patience, the substance of his conferences with his friends, and God’s discourse with him out of the whirlwind, with his return at length to a very prosperous condition, no doubt is exactly true, though the inspired penman is allowed the usual liberty of putting the matter of which Job and his friends discoursed into his own words.

In Job 22, Eliphaz leads on a third attack upon Job, in which Bildad followed him, but Zophar withdrew back. Job was misunderstood by his friends. Job had spoken of the prosperity of wicked men in this world as a mystery of Providence, but his friends took it for a reflection upon Providence, as countenancing their wickedness; and they reproached him accordingly. In this chapter, Eliphaz checks him for his complaints of God, and of his dealings with him, as if he thought God had done him wrong (verses 2-4). Secondly, Eliphaz charges him with many high crimes and misdemeanors, for which he supposes God was now punishing him; Oppression and injustice (verses 5-11) and Atheism and infidelity (verses 12-14). Thirdly, Eliphaz compares his case to that of the old world (verses 15-20). Finally, Eliphaz gives him

very good counsel, assuring him that, if he would take it, God would return in mercy to him and he should return to his former prosperity (verses 21-30). Let us focus on verses 12-30.

Eliphaz and his companions had condemned Job, in general, as a wicked man and a hypocrite; but none of them had descended to particulars, nor drawn up any articles of impeachment against him, until Eliphaz did so here, where he positively and expressly charges him with many high crimes and misdemeanors, which, if he had really been guilty of them, might well have justified them in their harsh censures of him. "Come," says Eliphaz, "we have been too long beating about the bush, too tender of Job and afraid of grieving him, which has but confirmed him in his self-justification. It is high time to deal plainly with him. We have condemned him by parables, but that does not answer the end; he is not prevailed with to condemn himself. We must therefore plainly tell him, you are the man, the tyrant, the oppressor, the atheist, we have been speaking of all this while. Is not your wickedness great? Certainly, it is, or else your troubles would not be so great. I appeal to yourself, and your own conscience; are not your iniquities infinite, both in number and heinousness?" Strictly taken, nothing is infinite but God; but he means this, that his sins were more than could be counted and more heinous than could be conceived. Sin, being committed against Infinite Majesty, has in it a kind of infinite malignity. But when Eliphaz charges Job thus highly, and ventures to descend to particulars too, laying to his charge that which he knew not, we may take occasion hence, firstly to be angry at those who unjustly censure and condemn their brothers. Here, Eliphaz, in accusing Job falsely, was guilty of as great a sin; for a man's good name is more precious and valuable than his wealth. It is against all the laws of justice, charity, and friendship, either to raise or receive calumnies, jealousies, and evil surmises, concerning others; and it is the more base and disingenuous if we thus vex those that are in distress and add to their affliction. Eliphaz could produce no instances of Job's guilt in any of the particulars that follow here, but seems resolved to calumniate boldly, and throw all the reproach he could on Job, not doubting but that some would cleave to him. Secondly, to pity those who are thus censured and condemned. Innocence itself will be no security against a false and foul tongue. Job, whom God himself praised as the best man in the world, is here represented by one of his friends, and he a wise and good man too, as one of the greatest villains in nature. Let us not think it strange if at any time we be thus blackened, but learn how to pass by evil report as well as good, and commit our cause, as Job did his, to him that judgeth righteously.

Eliphaz tells Job, that he had been cruel and unmerciful to the poor. As a magistrate he ought to have protected them and seen them provided for; but Eliphaz suspects a) that Job never did them any kindness, but all the mischief his power enabled him to do, that, for an inconsiderable debt, he demanded, and carried away by violence, a pawn of great value, even from his brother, whose honesty and sufficiency he could not but know (verse 6), you have taken a pledge from your brother for not repaying debt, imprisoned them, enslaved them, because they had nothing to pay, b) that he had taken the very clothes of his insolvent tenants and debtors, so that he had stripped them naked, and left them so (the law of Moses forbade this, Exodus 22:26, Deuteronomy 24:13),-he had not been charitable to the poor, no, not to poor travelers, and poor widows: you have not given so much as a cup of cold water (which would have cost thee nothing) to the weary to drink, when he begged for it (verse 7) and was ready to perish for want of it, even, you have withholden bread from the hungry in their extremity, have not only not given it, but have forbidden the giving of it, which is withholding good from those to whom it is really due, Proverbs 3:27. Poor widows, who while their husbands were living troubled nobody, but now were forced to seek relief, you have sent away empty from your doors with a sad heart, verse 9. Those who came to you for

justice, you have sent away unheard, unhelped; even, though they came to you full, you have squeeze them, and send them away empty; and, worst of all, the arms of the fatherless have been broken; those that could help themselves but little you have quite disabled to help themselves.” This which is the blackest part of the charge, is but insinuated: The arms of the fatherless have been broken. He does not say, “You have broken them,” but he would have it understood so, and if they be broken, and those who have power do not relieve them, they are chargeable with it. “They have been broken by those under you, and you have connived at it, which brings you under the guilt.”

Secondly, that Job had been partial to the rich and great (verse 8): “As for the mighty man, if he was guilty of any crime, he was never questioned for it: he had the earth; he dwelt in it. If he brought an action ever so unjustly, or if an action were ever so justly brought against him, yet he was sure to carry his cause in thy courts. The poor were not fed at your door, while the rich were feasted at your table.” Contrary to this is Christ’s rule for hospitality (Luke 14:12-14); and Solomon says, He that gives to the rich shall come to poverty.

2. He attributes all his present troubles to these supposed sins (verse 10, 11): “Those that are guilty of such practices as these commonly bring themselves into just such a condition as thou art now in; and therefore we conclude thou hast been thus guilty.” a) “The providence of God usually crosses and embarrasses such; and snares are, accordingly, round about you, so that, which way so ever you step or look, you find yourself in distress; and others are as hard upon you as you have been upon the poor.” b) Their consciences may be expected to terrify and accuse them. No sin makes a louder cry there than un-mercifulness; and, accordingly, sudden fear troubles you; and, though you will not own it, it is guilt of this kind that creates you all this terror.” Zophar had insinuated this, Job 20:19, 20. c) “They are brought to their wits’ end, so amazed and bewildered that they know not what to do, and that also is your case; for you are in darkness that you cannot see wherefore God contends with you nor what is the best course for you to take, for abundance of waters cover you,” that is, “you are art in a mist, in the midst of dark waters, in the thick clouds of the sky.” Note, those that have not shown mercy may justly be denied the comfortable hope that they shall find mercy; and then what can they expect but snares, and darkness, and continual fear?

Eliphaz would have thought that Job had indeed own the being of God, but denied his providence, and fancied that he confined himself to the entertainments of the upper world and never concerned himself in the inhabitants and affairs of this.

1. Eliphaz referred to an important truth, which he thought, if Job had duly considered it, would have prevented him from being so passionate in his complaints and bold in justifying himself (verse 12): Is not God in the height of heaven? Yes, no doubt he is. No heaven so high but God is there; and in the highest heavens, the heavens of the blessed, the residence of his glory, he is present in a special manner. There he is pleased to manifest himself in a way peculiar to the upper world, and thence he is pleased to manifest himself in a way suited to this lower world. There is his throne; there is his court: he is called the Heavens, Daniel 4:26. Thus Eliphaz proves that a man cannot be profitable to God (verse 2), that he ought not to contend with God (it is his folly if he does), and that we ought always to address ourselves to God with very great reverence; for when we behold the height of the stars, how high they are, we should, at the same time, also consider the transcendent majesty of God, who is above the stars, and how high he is.

2. He charged it upon Job that he made a bad use of this doctrine, which he might have made so good a use of, verse 13. “This is holding the truth in unrighteousness, fighting against religion with its own weapons, and turning its own artillery upon itself: thou art willing to own that God is in the height of heaven but thence thou interest, how does God know?” Bad men expel the fear of God out of their hearts by banishing the eye of God out of the world (Ezekiel. 8:12), and care not what they do if they can but persuade themselves that God does not know. Eliphaz suspected that Job had such a notion of God as this, that, because he is in the height of heaven, a) It is therefore impossible for him to see and hear what is done at so great a distance as this earth, especially since there is a dark cloud (verse 13), many thick clouds (verse 14), that come between him and us, and are a covering to him, so that he cannot see, much less can he judge of, the affairs of this lower world; as if God had eyes of flesh, Job 10:4. The interposing firmament is to him as transparent crystal, Ezekiel 1:22. Distance of place creates no difficulty to him who fills immensity, any more than distance of time to him who is eternal. Or, b) that it is therefore below him, and a diminution to his glory, to take cognizance of this inferior part of the creation: He walks in the circuit of heaven, and has enough to do to enjoy himself and his own perfections and glory in that bright and quiet world; why should he trouble himself about us? This is gross absurdity, as well as gross impiety, which Eliphaz here fathers upon Job; for it supposes that the administration of government is a burden and disparagement to the supreme governor and that the acts of justice and mercy are a toil to a mind infinitely wise, holy, and good. If the sun, a creature, and inanimate, can with his light and influence reach this earth, and every part of it (Psalm 19:6), even from that vast height of the visible heavens in which he is, and in the circuit of which he walks, and that through many a thick and dark cloud, shall we question it concerning the Creator?

NEW TESTAMENT

□

Mark 10: 17-31

The author of Mark’s Gospel is John Mark. We read of John whose surname was Mark, sister’s son to Barnabas, whom Paul was displeased with (Acts 15:37, 38), but afterward had a great kindness for, and not only ordered the churches to receive him (Colossians 4:10), but sent for him to be his assistant, with this encomium, He is profitable to me for the ministry (2 Timothy 4:11); and he reckons him among his fellow-laborer’s, Philemon 24. We read of Mark whom Peter calls his son, he having been an instrument of his conversion (1 Peter 5:13). It is a tradition among the ancients, that St. Mark wrote this gospel under the direction of St. Peter, and that it was confirmed by his authority. According to Jerome, after the writing of this gospel, Mark went into Egypt, and was the first that preached the gospel at Alexandria, where he founded a church, to which he was a great example of holy living.

In tenth chapter of Mark’s Gospel, we have: a) Christ’s dispute with the Pharisees concerning divorce (verses 1-12); b) The kind entertainment he gave to the little children that were brought to him to be blessed (verses 13-16); c) His trial of the rich man that enquired what he must do to get to heaven (verses 17-22); d) His discourse with his disciples, upon that occasion, concerning the peril of riches (verses 23-27), and the advantage of being impoverished for his sake (verses 28-31); e) The repeated notice he gave his disciples of his sufferings and death approaching (verses 32-34); f) The counsel he gave to James and John,

to think of suffering with him, rather than of reigning with him (verses 15-45); and g) The cure of Bartimeus, a poor blind man (verses 46-52). Let us exclusively focus on the given text, Mark 10: 17-31

This periscope begins with a hopeful meeting between Christ and a young man; He is addressed as young man in Matt 19:20, 22 but and a ruler Luke 18:18). He is a person of quality. This young man came running to Christ, which was an indication of his humility; he laid aside the gravity and grandeur of a ruler, when he came to Christ. He had now an opportunity of consulting this great Prophet, in the things that belonged to his peace, and he would not let slip the opportunity. We also find that the young man came to him when Jesus was in the way, in the midst of company: he did not insist upon a private conference with Jesus by night, as Nicodemus did, though like Nicodemus he was a ruler. Then we observe that the young man kneeled to him, in token of the great value and veneration he had for Jesus, as a teacher come from God, and his earnest desire to be taught by him. He bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus, as one that would not only do obeisance to him now, but would yield obedience to him always; he bowed the knee, as one that meant to bow the soul to him. The young mans' address to Jesus was serious and weighty; Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? Eternal life was an article of his creed, though then denied by the Sadducees, a prevailing party: he asks, what shall he do now that he may be happy for ever. Now this was, (a) A very serious question in itself; it was about eternal things, and his own concern in those things. (b) It was proposed to a right person, one that was every way fit to answer it, being himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is important for the believers, both to show eternal life, and to show the way to it. (c) It was proposed with a good design – to be instructed. We find this same question put by a lawyer, not kneeling, but standing up (Luke 10:25), with a bad design, to pick quarrels with him; he tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do? It is not so much the good words as the good intention of them that Christ looks at.

When we have a closer look at the text, we understand that Jesus encouraged this address:

(a) By assisting his faith, vs. 18. The young man called Jesus good Master for he looked upon Jesus to be God. There is none good but one, that is God, who is one, and his name one, Zechariah 14:9. Our English word God doubtless hath affinity with good; as the Hebrews name God by his power, Elohim, the strong God; so, here by his goodness, the good God.(b) By directing his practice (v. 19); Keep the commandments; and you know what they are. He mentions the six commandments of the second table, which prescribe our duty to our neighbor; he inverts the order, putting the seventh commandment before the sixth, to intimate that adultery is a sin no less heinous than murder itself. The fifth commandment is here put last, as that which should especially be remembered and observed, to keep us to all the rest. Instead of the tenth commandment, you shall not covet, our Savior Jesus Christ here puts, Defraud not. It is a rule of justice not to advance or enrich ourselves by doing wrong or injury to any other.

The young man bid fair for heaven, having been free from any open gross violations of the divine commands. Thus far he was able to same in some measure (verse 20), Master, all these have I observed from my youth. He thought he had, and his neighbors thought so too. Note, Ignorance of the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law, makes people think themselves in a better condition than they really are. Paul was alive without the law. But when he saw that to be spiritual, he saw himself to be carnal, Romans 7:9, 14. However, he that could say he was free from scandalous sin, went further than many in the way to eternal life. But

though we know nothing by ourselves, yet are we not thereby justified. 1 Corinthians 4:4. Jesus had a kindness for young man; Jesus, beholding him, loved him, verse 21. He was pleased to find that he had lived inoffensively, and pleased to see that he was inquisitive how to live better than so. Christ particularly loves to see young people, and rich people, asking the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward.

Here is a sorrowful parting between Christ and this young man.

1. Christ gave him a command of trial, by which it would appear whether he did in sincerity aim at eternal life, and press towards it: he seemed to have his heart much upon it, and if so, he is what he should be; but has he indeed his heart upon it? Bring him to the touchstone. (a) Can he find in his heart to part with his riches for the service of Christ? He hath a good estate, and now, shortly, at the first founding of the Christian church, the necessity of the case will require that those who have lands, sell them, and lay the money at the apostles' feet; and how will he dispense with that? Acts 4:34, 35. After a while, tribulation and persecution will arise, because of the word; and he must be forced to sell his estate, or have it taken from him, and how will he like that?

Let him know the worst now; if he will not come up to these terms, let him quit his pretensions; as good as the first as at last. "Sell whatsoever thou hast over and above what is necessary for your support;" probably, he had no family to provide for; let him therefore be a father to the poor, and make them his heirs. Every man, according to his ability, must relieve the poor, and be content, when there is occasion, to straighten himself to do it. Worldly wealth is given us, not only as maintenance to bear our charges through this world, according to our place in it, but as talent, to be used and employed for the glory of our great Master in the world, who hath so ordered it, that the poor we should have always with us as his receivers. (b) Can he find it in his heart to go through the hardest costliest services he may be called to as a disciple of Christ, and depend upon him for a recompense in heaven? He asks Christ what he should do more than he has done to obtain eternal life, and Christ puts it to him, whether he has indeed that firm belief of, and that high value for, eternal life that he seems to have. Does he really believe there is a true treasure in heaven sufficient to make up all he can leave, or lose, or lay out, for Christ? Is he willing to deal with Christ upon trust? Can he give him credit for all he is worth; and be willing to bear a present cross, in expectation of a future crown?

2. Upon this the young man flew off (verse 22); He was sad at that saying; was sorry that he could not be a follower of Christ upon any easier terms than leaving all to follow him; that he could not lay hold on eternal life, and keep hold of his temporal possessions too. But since he could not come up to the terms of discipleship, he was so fair as not to pretend to it; He went away grieved. Here appeared the truth of that (Matt. 6:24), You cannot serve God and mammon; while he held to mammon he did in effect despise Christ, as all those do who prefer the world before him. He bids for what he has a mind for in the market, yet goes away grieved, and leaves it, because he cannot have it at his own price.

We are tempted to wish that Christ had mollified that saying which frightened this young gentleman from following him, and by an explanation taken off the harshness of it: but he knew all men's hearts; he would not court him to be his follower, because he was a rich man and a ruler; but, if he will go, let him go. Christ will keep no man against his will; and therefore, we do not find that Christ called him back, but took this occasion to instruct his disciples in two things.

1. The difficulty of the salvation of those who have an abundance of this world; because there are few who have a deal to leave, that can be persuaded to leave it for Christ, or to lay it out in doing good.

Firstly, Christ asserts this here; He looked about upon his disciples, because he would have them all take notice of what he said, that by it they might have their judgments rightly informed, and their mistakes rectified, concerning worldly wealth, which they were apt to over-rate; How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God! Verse 23. They have many temptations to grapple with, and many difficulties to get over, which lie not in the way of poor people. But he explains himself, verse 24, where he calls the disciples children, because as such they should be taught by him, and portioned by him with better things than this young man left Christ to cleave to; and whereas he had said, How hardly will those who have riches get to heaven; here he tells them, that the danger arose not so much from their having riches as from their trusting to them, and placing their confidence in them, expecting protection, provision, and a portion from them; saying that to their gold, which they should say only to their God, Thou art my hope, Job 31:24. They have such a value as this for the wealth of the world, will never be brought to put a right value upon Christ and his grace. They that have ever so much riches, but do not trust in them, that see the vanity of them, and their utter insufficiency to make a soul happy, have got over the difficulty, and can easily part with them for Christ: but they have ever so little, if they set their hearts upon that little, and place their happiness in it, it will keep them from Christ. He enforces this assertion with, verse 25, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man, that trusts in riches, or inclines to do so, to enter into the kingdom of God. The disproportion here seems so great (though the more it is so the more it answers the intention), that some have labored to bring the camel and the eye of the needle a little nearer together. a) Some imagine there might be some wicket-gate, or door, to Jerusalem, commonly known by the name of the needle's eye, for its straightness, through which a camel could not be got, unless he were unloaded, and made to kneel, as those camel, Genesis 24:11. So a rich man cannot get to heaven unless he is willing to part with the burthen of his worldly wealth, and stoop to the duties of a humble religion, and so enter at the strait gate. b) Others suggest that the word we translate a camel, sometimes signifies a cable-rope, which, though not to be got through a needle's eye, yet is of great affinity to it. A rich man, compared with the poor, is as a cable to a single thread, stronger, but not so pliable, and it will not go through the needle's eye, unless it be untwisted. So, the rich man must be loosed and disentangled from his riches, and then there is some hope of him, that thread by thread he may be got through the eye of the needle, otherwise he is good for nothing but to cast anchor in the earth.

Christ reconciled them to it, by referring it to the almighty power of God, to help even rich people over the difficulties that lie in the way of their salvation (verse 27); He looked upon them, to engage their attention, and said, "With men it is impossible; rich people cannot by their own skill or resolution get over these difficulties, but the grace of God can do it, for with him all things are possible." If the righteous scarcely are saved, much more may we say so of the rich; and therefore, when any get to heaven, they must give all the glory to God, who worketh in them both to will and to do.

The greatness of the salvation of those that have but a little of this world, and leave it for Christ. This he speaks of, upon occasion of Peter's mentioning what he and the rest of the disciples had left to follow him. The loss is supposed to be very great; he specifies, worldly wealth; houses are here put first, and lands last: if a man quit his house, which should be for his habitation, and his land, which should be for his maintenance, and so make himself a

beggar and an outcast. Secondly, dear relations. Father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters. In these, as much as in any temporal blessing, the comfort of life is bound up; without these the world would be a wilderness; yet, when we must either forsake these or Christ, we must remember that we stand in nearer relation to Christ than we do to any creature. The greatest trial of a good man's constancy is, when his love to Christ comes to stand in competition with a love that is lawful, even, that is his duty. It is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes the martyr. And therefore, the advantage will be great. Firstly, they shall receive a hundred-fold in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters. God's providence gave Job double to what he had had, but suffering Christians shall have a hundred-fold in the comforts of the Spirit sweetening their creature comforts. Secondly, they shall have eternal life in the world to come. If they receive a hundred-fold in this world, one would think they should not be encouraged to expect any more. But that they shall have life eternal into the bargain; which is more than ten thousand-fold, ten thousand times told, for all their losses.

Verses for 28th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 74 & 75

Psalms 75

Author: Psalm 75 is attributed to Asaph, who was a prominent singer and seer in David's court

(Verse 1) Thanks to GOD who is near.

Asaph wrote this from the perspective of the congregation; they together say we give thanks unto GOD, and the thought is repeated for emphasis. The people of GOD gladly give thanks unto their GOD. They gave thanks to GOD not only for HIS wondrous works, but also for HIS character and attributes.

(Verses 2-3) GOD speaks of HIS judgement.

The next two lines are written from GOD's perspective. GOD announces that HE will judge, and that HE will judge uprightly. HE will choose the proper time. We, the people should have faith and trust in GOD's judgements and HIS proper time for them. At HIS judgements people and things either melt or dissolve or they are firmly established.

(Verses 4-5) GOD speaks to the proud.

GOD warned the proud not to boast and exalt themselves. GOD warned the proud and wicked not to resist HIM in any way.

(Verses 6-7) Reasons for humility.

In these lines GOD addresses the proud saying that they should know that their exaltation and their success did not come from earth and their own efforts. They should stop boasting. Every successful person should humbly thank GOD for their success. It is GOD who puts down one, and exalts another. One should respond with a humble mind and heart rather than with boastful words.

(Verses 8-9) Be humble because the wicked will be judged.

In these lines the word cup has been used as a figure of GOD's judgment. It symbolizes that the wicked are forced to drain the bitter cup to the last dregs. In contrast, the people of GOD rejoice in the judgements of GOD.

(Verse 10) GOD Himself will bring the wicked low and raise the righteous high.

This psalm ends with words from GOD's own perspective. HE declares that HE will put down the proud and wicked.

GOD will cut off the arrogant pride of the wicked and HE will also exalt the righteous.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 23:1 to 24:12

Job 23: 1 to 17

Author– Unknown. (However presumed to be Moses)

Context: The context for this chapter in the book of Job has its roots in chapter 1, which establishes the fact that Job was a righteous man. However, GOD permitted Satan to test Job. The immediate context for chapter 23 is the preceding chapter where Eliphaz, Job's friend accuses him of being a sinful and hence he is being punished by GOD.

Explanation: Job feels bitter. He feels that he has been wronged. He has suffered the loss of

his wealth and his family and also has been afflicted by a terrible skin disease. Job feels betrayed by his friends, who instead of comforting him, keep insisting that he is probably guilty of some terrible sin. Job tries his best to assure them that he has committed no sin and that his friends are wrong, but they refuse to believe him. Job was also bitter towards GOD, who allowed such grave injustice.

Job has been groaning in pain because GOD's heavy hand was on him and it seemed like GOD was not ready to ease Job's pain. Job desired to negotiate with GOD in court. He was sure that his cause was just and that HIS GOD was fair. However, a hint of doubt creeps into his mind as he wonders whether he has gone too far in asking a dialogue with GOD who could defeat him easily in any debate.

But later Job trusts that the LORD will not misuse HIS great power. Job believes that he will be given a chance to speak. He believes that the LORD's objective will not be to win the argument, but HE will instead want to undo any injustice that Job might have experienced. Since his current suffering was unjust, Job anticipates that there might be more suffering in his future. He fears GOD's overwhelming power. While earlier Job expressed great confidence in the LORD's sense of justice, now he is not so sure.

Job lays down his fear at the LORD's feet. He knows that he has always followed GOD's precepts and yet he is suffering unjustly. He is scared that he is worshiping a GOD whom he cannot fully comprehend. In spite of being afraid, he refuses to keep silent.

REFLECTION: Whenever we are faced with difficulties, we tend to blame someone. Most of the time we blame GOD. Like Job, we too want to know why suffering has come upon us. However by interceding in prayer and having a personal relationship and intimate conversation with GOD, we understand the answers to such questions.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 10: 32 to 45

The author of the Gospel of Mark is attributed to St Mark the Evangelist who was an associate of St Paul and a disciple of St Peter.

The Gospel of Mark chapter 10 verses 32 to 45 presents a few of the many teachings of JESUS as he makes his journey towards Jerusalem.

JESUS and HIS disciples are clearly on different wavelengths. In this verse we get to see that the disciples thought according to the standards of the world. JESUS tries to clearly contrast the world's standard with HIS own standard. HE is the LORD, and yet HE puts all HIS power, all HIS wisdom, all HIS energy, and all HIS talents at the service of others.

The question of James and John showed their interest in gaining power and glory. The question of JESUS showed HIS interest in self-giving. Becoming a disciple of JESUS means, becoming the servant of others.

Sometimes we think that the apostles were chosen by JESUS because they were good people. However, passages like this one proves otherwise. First, James and John expose their selfish love for glory. Then the others show their envy and jealousy by becoming angry when they hear about it. This kind of conflict was present among the disciples. And JESUS was right in the middle of it.

JESUS wants to live in friendship with us, even if it means putting up with our childish ways. James and John, and all of us, are being called to follow the one who in spite of having all the authority and power did not come to be served but to serve, whose main purpose in life was not to glorify HIMSELF but to empty HIMSELF for others.

So, whenever we make requests of the LORD, it has to be free of self-interest. If we ask

something of the LORD for ourselves, we need to keep in mind that it also benefits others. Our asking has to be in the service of the LORD's work in the world.

Verses for 29th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 76 & 77

Psalms 76

What Psalm 76 means

Verse 1: When King Solomon died, his country became two countries. One was Judah and the other was Israel. They had a king each. But Assyria destroyed Israel in 721 BC. BC means “years Before CHRIST came to the earth”. So, when Sennacherib attacked Judah, there was no country of Israel. That means that in this psalm, Judah and Israel are both names for GOD’s people. They do not mean two different countries.

Verse 3: Breaking the enemy’s *weapons (bow, *shield and *sword) is another way to say that GOD destroyed the enemy.

Verse 5: The word “sleeping” in the Bible is a way to describe death. Because the soldiers are dead, they cannot use their hands to fight.

Verse 9: We have said that “to *judge” means “to say who is right and who is wrong”. But it really means more than that in many places in the Bible. This is one of those places. GOD *judged the Assyrians to be wrong: the result of this was that they died. GOD *judged the poor people to be right: the result of this was that they became free. They were not *oppressed any more. This means that the enemy did not hurt them, or take their food, money, animals and children.

Verse 10: Bible students do not really know what this verse means. This translation says what the *Hebrew words say. Maybe it means that when people like Sennacherib are angry with people like the *Israelites then people will *praise what GOD does.

Verse 12: “Breaks the *spirit” means “stops them wanting to fight”.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 24:13 to 25:6

Sometimes how gradual is the decay, how quiet the departure of a wicked person, how is he honoured, and how soon are all his cruelties and oppressions forgotten! They are taken off with other men, as the harvestman gathers the ears of corn as they come to hand. There will often appear much to resemble the wrong view of providence Job takes in this chapter. But we are taught by the word of inspiration, that these notions are formed in ignorance, from partial views. The providence of GOD, in the affairs of men, is in everything a just and wise providence. Let us apply this whenever the LORD may try us. HE cannot do wrong. The unequalled sorrows of the SON of GOD when on earth, unless looked at in this view, perplex the mind. But when we behold HIM, as the sinner’s surety, bearing the curse, we can explain why HE should endure that wrath which was due to sin that Divine justice might be satisfied, and HIS people saved.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 10:46 to 11:10

Bartimeus had heard of JESUS and HIS miracles, and learning that JESUS was passing by, hoped to recover his eyesight. In coming to CHRIST for help and healing, we should look to

HIM as the promised Messiah. The gracious calls CHRIST gives us to come to HIM, encourage our hope, that if we come to HIM we shall have what we come for. Those who would come to JESUS, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency, must free themselves from every weight, and the sin that, like long garments, most easily besets them, Hebrews 12:1. Bartimeus begged that his eyes might be opened. It is very desirable to be able to earn our bread; and where GOD has given men limbs and senses, it is a shame, by foolishness and slothfulness, to make themselves, in effect, blind and lame. His eyes were opened. Thy faith has made thee whole: faith in CHRIST as the SON of DAVID, and in HIS pity and power; not thy repeated words, but thy faith; CHRIST setting thy faith to work. Let sinners be exhorted to imitate blind Bartimeus. Where the gospel is preached, or the written words of truth circulated, JESUS is passing by, and this is the opportunity. It is not enough to come to CHRIST for spiritual healing, but, when we are healed, we must continue to follow HIM; that we may honour HIM, and receive instruction from HIM. Those who have spiritual eyesight, see that beauty in CHRIST which will draw them to run after HIM.

Verses for 30th March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 1 to 39

Remember and don't forget

The author Asaph was the great singer and musician of David and Solomon's era and that Asaph was a prophet in his musical compositions.

Asaph retells the history of the Jewish nation from the time of slavery in Egypt to David's reign.

Psalm 78 is a historical psalm which reminds us not to forget about the wonders that GOD has done, it is a wisdom psalm written to instruct GOD's people and is "A Maskil of Asaph" (a psalm to give instructions). It is a narrative psalm of the great mercies GOD had bestowed upon Israel, the great sins they committed and how GOD still protected them.

The people of Israel rebelled and were not faithful to GOD, they forgot the wonders that GOD has done and also put GOD to test by making demands from HIM and continued to run away from HIM even after HE did great works on their behalf.

David, as a king, or Asaph calls upon the people to give ear to GOD's law. GOD commanded that the stories of HIS mighty acts in Israel's history and HIS laws must be passed on from parents to children, showing the purpose and importance of Christian education. This helps the next generations to obey GOD and not to repeat the same mistakes as their ancestors.

Ephraim was the most prominent tribe of Israel from the days of Moses to Saul. Though they were well armed and shot with bows, yet they had a shameful defeat which the Philistines gave them and they turned back when they came to face the enemy.

When the Israelites came into the wilderness of Mt.Sinai, GOD assured them and guided them with the cloud by day and the fire by night. Often in the wilderness the nation of Israel needed water, and many times GOD miraculously provided. One occasion was at Meribah where Moses struck the rock bringing forth water.

GOD repeatedly did great and amazing things for Israel in taking the people out of Egypt and preserving them in the wilderness. Yet Israel's response was to sin even more and to rebel against the Most High.

HE made a way for them through the Red Sea and gave them courage to pass through as the waters stood over their heads as a heap and GOD led them.

He provided a guide for them through the untrodden paths of wilderness, he led them step by step, protected them from all heat and darkness.

HE provided them with fresh waters in a dry and thirsty land where there was no water and heavenly food manna. GOD is rich in HIS mercy and gives abundantly. GOD had given them meat for their hunger, wholesome pleasant food and in abundance and also HE had given them meat.

They expressed their lack of faith in HIS power and lack of trust in HIS care. They didn't believe that GOD could give them a banquet in the wilderness.

GOD promises to provide our needs.

The gift of the Cross, the miracles of the Resurrection and Ascension, the care exercised by GOD is only by HIS goodness and mercy.

We must remember GOD's mercy and faithfulness. We need to remain faithful to GOD, especially in difficult times, this psalm reminds us about GOD's faithfulness to his people despite their unfaithfulness.

It also emphasizes each generation has a responsibility to teach the next generation about the

works and words of GOD. There are two consecutive generations who were unfaithful. The people not only failed to remember for themselves, but they failed to adequately teach the next generation.

They were brought out of Egypt to enter into the Promised Land Canaan but GOD said that the generation of unbelieving people could not enter the Promised Land;

Their seeking of GOD was sincere but short-lived. Soon they came to GOD only with flattering, insincere words and lied to GOD. But GOD in his mercy and compassion forgave all iniquities.

Asaph was concerned about passing on at least three things to the next generation

- The praises of the LORD – teaching them that GOD was worthy of our adoration and gratitude.

- GOD's strength – HIS power and greatness above and beyond all.

- HIS wonderful works – that is, GOD's power and greatness in active assistance to His people.

The supreme quality of this psalm is that throughout all its measures, over against the repeated failure of His people, GOD's persistent patience is set forth in bold relief.

Not only should our children be taught, they should be taught to teach their children so that the WORD and the work of GOD will continue throughout the generations.

The purpose of communicating to the next generation is that they would learn to trust GOD for themselves, never forgetting His wonderful works.

Losing trust in GOD and forgetting HIS works would lead to disobedience. If the younger generation is well instructed, they would be more likely to be obedient, avoiding many of the errors of their fathers.

GOD's people are assured of victory in JESUS. Day to day there may be defeats and setbacks but we must be faithful to remember and not forget.

This psalm shows so clearly the results of forgetting. Forgetfulness leads to doubt, which turns to unbelief. Unbelief leads to disobedience and rebellion. Our hope is that GOD is merciful and faithful and that HE will keep HIS promise to save His people.

Questions to ponder: What does this passage from Psalm 78 teach us? How can we apply it to our lives?

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 26: 1 to 27: 10

Author: Unknown, assumed to be Moses.

Job was a wealthy and upright man who lost all his possessions, everything physically and relationally close to him, his children, his wife was acting like a "foolish woman" and his health. He did not understand why he was suffering. Why GOD allows His children to suffer? And as for his friends, where is the sympathy and compassion he thought he would receive in such troubling times?

Job's friends wrongly assumed that suffering always came as a result of sin. With this in mind they tried to persuade Job to repent of his sin. The three friends of Job were Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Bildad, one of Job's friends who came originally to console Job, who then became one of his accusers, spoke against Job's complaint.

Job is a book that lays out the incredible sufferings of a man who trusts GOD but cannot understand why he is having to go through so many hardships and calamities. The book is presented through an ongoing series of interactions between the suffering of Job, and his so-

called 'friends', or 'comforters'.

Chapter 26 is Job's response to Bildad where Job tells his friends that they do not know everything about GOD. Wisdom does not originate from this life or from the human mind but it comes from GOD.

Job then defended his upright and honest life. He effectively sought to follow GOD's way of living. While admitting that he was not perfect, Job maintained that his motives were right. To show the poverty of Bildad's argument Job spoke of the greatness of GOD to prove that he knew it and even more perfectly than his friends. Job praises GOD and HIS awesome power in creation. Job describes that the power of GOD is amazing and impressive.

Job and his friends lived in a time when people truly believed that any evil was a result of sins. More the sin, more the suffering. Job, however, maintains his integrity. Regardless of what his three friends declare, Job claims innocence.

We see Job's frustration and Job's integrity. Job says that as long as the Almighty GOD lives, he will not speak wickedness. Since GOD lives forever, Job says he's never letting go of his integrity.

How many of us would be able to make a statement like Job? How many of us can be so faithful?

Job tells the greatness of GOD. Nobody can escape the eye of GOD, not even the dead. GOD not only sees everything, but HE made everything and controls it. When dealing with people, it is more important to love and understand them than to give advice. Compassion produces greater results than criticism or blame.

GOD has made Job's life difficult but Job wanted to teach these men about GOD's power.

Job says that the ungodly in the end will be punished and no final cry for mercy will save them. Moreover, his friends' false accusations against Job put them in the class of the ungodly.

GOD's power sees everything! There is no place, no situation, and no heart, no anything that is out of HIS reach to see and know about. All our lives are truly an opened book before HIS greatness, and even when we pass off the scene, HE knows us in those places as well.

GOD knows all that goes on in the heavens and the unlimited reaches of the universe. GOD knows what goes on in every corner of the earth, with every participant of humanity. All creation recognize HIM and fear and tremble before HIS presence.

Job eventually experiences the LORD in a new and wonderful way and with him confessing his own lack of humility before the LORD.

We have all known people who were strong in the faith, who believed and practiced every word of Scripture. People who wanted to follow JESUS more than anything else in this world. However Satan never gives up. Satan can take the smallest opening in one's life and exploit it masterfully. That's why we must be vigilant and on our guard.

In the midst of all accusations, Job was able to declare that his conscience was clear. Only GOD's forgiveness and determination to live rightly before GOD can bring a clear conscience. When we confess our sins to GOD, he forgives us. Then we can live with clear conscience.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 11: 11 to 18

This event is referred to as JESUS "Triumphal entry" into the city.

JESUS came to Jerusalem and went to the temple courts and as it was late he went out to Bethany.

Mark starts by telling the story of JESUS cursing the fig tree, then interrupt that story to

describe JESUS driving out the money changers from the temple and only then will he return to the story of the fig tree. This is Mark's way of telling us that these two events are related to each other.

In this passage, St. Mark 11:11-18, two unusual incidents take place: the cursing of the fig tree and the clearing the temple. Both are related. The temple was supposed to be a place of worship but true worship has disappeared and the fig tree showed promised fruit but had no fruit. JESUS was showing HIS anger at religious life without substance.

If we claim to have faith without putting it to work in our life, we are like the barren fig tree. True faith has great potential to work out things. We need to ask GOD to help us to bear fruit for HIS kingdom.

Fig trees a popular source of inexpensive food in Israel, requires 3 three years from the time they are planted until they can bear fruit. Each tree yields a great amount of fruit twice a year, in late spring and in early autumn. This incident occurred early in the spring fig season when the leaves were beginning to bud. The figs normally grow as the leaves fill out, but this tree, though full of leaves, had no figs. The tree looked promising but offered no fruit. JESUS' harsh words to the fig tree could be applied to the nation of Israel. Fruitful in appearance only but was spiritually barren. **Christians must bear fruits.**

The second related incident was that JESUS became angry when He entered the temple on seeing the Money changers and merchants. We Christians are right to be upset about sin and injustice and should take a stand against them. Money changers and merchants did business in the temple courts of the Gentiles during Passover, making it impossible for non-Jews to spend any time in worship. JESUS became angry because God's house of worship had become a place of extortion and barrier to Gentiles who wanted to worship.

Our prayer time should be a time of reflection and pondering and not preoccupied with the affairs of the day.

The heart is the place for love and relationship and do not allow it to become a den for the worry, doubt, distrust or other robbers of peace.

Prayer: Gracious heavenly FATHER, help us to drive those things out of our lives which are not pleasing to YOU. Help us to be humble and gentle. Guide us to live and to serve YOU, as YOU desire. In JESUS' name, we pray. Amen.

Verses for 31st March 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 40 to 72

In verses 9 – 31, we read about GOD's people Israel (the *Israelites) in the *desert. They were coming from Egypt to the *holy land.

In verses 40 – 55, we read about the *plagues that GOD used to get them out of Egypt.

Now in verses 56 – 64, we read about Israel (the people) in Israel (the land). They turned away from GOD and did not obey him. They were *like “a bow that did not shoot straight”, verse 57. A bow like this is not good. So, the people of Israel were not good. Instead of loving and *worshipping GOD in his house in Shiloh, they loved *idols instead. They put these *idols on high hills, where they *worshipped them, verse 58. Shiloh was a place about 30 kilometres north of Jerusalem. They kept the *ark there. The *ark was a box. They kept the *covenant-rules in it. But GOD was so angry because of their *idol *worship that he:

- went away from the house that they had made him at Shiloh
- did not give them any more help
- gave the *ark (his power and *glory) to their enemy, the Philistines
- let the enemy kill many of the people of Israel

The story about this is in I Samuel 4 and 5. The wife of a *priest had a baby when the Philistines took the *ark of GOD. She called the baby Ichabod. This is a *Hebrew word that meant “the *glory is gone”. She meant that the *ark of GOD was gone! In verse 63, “ate” means “killed them by burning them to death”

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 28: 1 to 28

Job 28:28

The fear of the Lord that is wisdom.

Fear of and reverence for GOD are fundamental to the believers' relationship with GOD.

Fearing the LORD makes us concerned and alert that we do not offend our Holy GOD.

Without this foundation, no true wisdom exists and no redemptive experience will stand the test of time and temptation. True fear of GOD and true Biblical wisdom cause us to turn from evil and result in the comfort of the HOLY GHOST. The chapter teaches we should seek wisdom with the kind of determination that causes people to risk their lives seeking gold and jewels. To fear GOD and yet continue in sin is a moral impossibility. The person that acclaims GOD's majesty and recognizes His opposition to evil will be characterised by an earnest, decisive and total endeavour to separate from sin.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 11: 19 to 33

Mark 11:23

Say unto this mountain.

The faith that JESUS refers to here is GOD – given faith that enables a person to face mountain of impossibility and see it move by GOD's power. Revelation is needed to know

GOD's will in relation to our personal mountains of impossibility. Some mountains are to be claimed, others are to be thrown into the sea. During times of testing and trials, revelation is needed to activate GOD's faith in us in order for a miracle to occur.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
APRIL

Verses for 1st April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1-5 & 8-13 and Psalms 80

Psalms 79: 1-5 & 8-13

The Story of Psalm 79

Something bad had happened to the *Jews. They had not obeyed GOD, so he let their enemies beat them. Bible students think that this happened 600 years before JESUS came to the earth. A country called Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took many people away as *prisoners.

Maybe this psalm is by one of the *prisoners. He asks GOD to do to the Babylonians what they had done to the *Jews, only worse. We call psalms like this “Psalms of Imprecation”. You can read about them at the end of Psalm 69 in this series of psalms. Psalm 69 is in Book 2 of The Psalms of David.

The reason that he gives is this. If GOD does nothing, people will think that GOD is weak, or even that there is no GOD! That is why he says in verse 9 “For the *glory of YOUR name, save us. So that YOUR name will always be famous, *forgive us our *sins”. And in verse 10 “Where is their GOD?”

“The countries that do not love GOD” in verses 1, 6, 10, 12 translates just one *Hebrew word*, “*countries*” or “*nations*”. Here it means just Babylon, but it could mean any country that hurts GOD’s people.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 29: 1 to 17

Job 29: 2

O that I were ...as the days when God preserved me.

Job preserved in his desire for the communion with GOD that he had once known. He longed for GOD’s special care and protection. GOD’s light to show him the way in dark or difficult circumstances. GOD’s intimate fellowship and love, GOD’s grace to help him do good. GOD’s wisdom to share with others.

Our LORD’s providence, protection, guidance, fellowship, communication, love and wisdom given to Job, is also offered to all those who believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 12: 1 to 17

Mark 12:1**Parable of the husband men.**

The parable points out the guilt of the Jewish nation. They turned the kingdom of GOD into a private possession, showed contempt for HIS WORD and refused to obey HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.

Mark 12:10**The Corner Stone.**

CHRIST is the rejected stone thrown away by Israel but about to become the capstone or cornerstone of GOD's new people, the church. HE is the most important stone in this new structure that GOD is building.

Verses for 2nd April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 81 & 82

Psalms 82

The Story of Psalm 82

We do not know who wrote this psalm, or when. It is a picture of GOD leading a meeting in *heaven, where HE lives. HE is telling the gods what HE has decided to do. Who are these gods? Bible students suggest four answers:

- the rulers of countries on the earth, *like kings
- the false gods of the countries on the earth
- the people of Israel 2500 years ago
- *angels that have authority over countries on earth

Now the first three of these are either human, or gods made by human people. But verses 6 and 7 of the psalm may tell us that these gods are not human. They are “sons of the *Most High (who will) die like Adam”. We could translate “Adam” here as “men”. In verse 6, “sons of the *Most High” means “sons of God”. This either means *angels (who live with God in *heaven*) or *his people Israel (Exodus 4:22)*. *It is easiest to read the psalm with two meanings. At first, “the gods” meant “the people of Israel”. Now it means “angels with authority over countries of the earth” (Ephesians 6:10).*

There is a picture in the first chapter of the Book of Job in the Bible. The picture shows the *angels meeting God in *heaven.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 29:18 to 30:10

Being thus honoured and useful, Job had hoped to die in peace and honour, in a good old age. If such an expectation arise from lively faith in the providence and promise of GOD, it is well; but if from conceit of our own wisdom, and dependence on changeable, earthly things, it is ill grounded, and turns to sin. Every one that has the spirit of wisdom, has not the spirit of government; but Job had both. Yet he had the tenderness of a comforter. This he thought upon with pleasure, when he was himself a mourner. Our LORD JESUS is a King who hates iniquity, and upon whom the blessing of a world ready to perish comes. To Him let us give ear.

Job contrasts his present condition with his former honour and authority. What little cause have men to be ambitious or proud of that which may be so easily lost, and what little

confidence is to be put in it! We should not be cast down if we are despised, reviled, and hated by wicked men. We should look to JESUS, who endured the contradiction of sinners.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 12: 18 to 34

Mark 12: 24

Do ye not...err..?

These words of JESUS were directed to Sadducees, who were priestly ministers of Israel. JESUS indicated that they were in disbelief and doctrinal error as spiritual leaders for two primary reasons. They know not the scriptures and they did not experientially know the power of God.

Numerous spiritual leaders today lead their people into error because of these same two things, either they do not have sound Biblical foundation and understanding of GOD's WORD in their lives and therefore mishandled the Scriptures., they do not have personal knowledge of the power of GOD and the manifestations of the HOLY SPIRIT and thereby hinder others in doing so. The challenge to both for every spiritual leader and all Christian believers is to know GOD's WORD and enter into the experience of GOD's power so as to know JESUS completely and serve HIM effectively.

Verses for 4th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 86 – 88

Psalms 88

The Story of Psalm 88

Asking GOD to hear prayer in affliction.

The psalmist- Heman begins by extolling Yahweh as the GOD of HIS salvation, we expect that he experienced that rescue, that deliverance in the moment. This was not the case. This title was both in past remembrance and clinging to a future hope. It is one of the small glimmers of light in darkness.

To address GOD as the GOD of HIS salvation, to discern His hand in the infliction of sorrows, is the operation of true though feeble faith. The references to GOD reveal a remarkable sense of HIS grace and goodness. The psalmist's prayer was passionate and constant, desperate for GOD to bend toward him to hear and answer his prayer.

The psalmist tells GOD what he feels and experiences – that GOD Himself has caused his downfall, setting him in darkness. The psalmist had a deep sense of his own sinfulness. Even as he felt himself sinking under all waves, he did not protest that GOD's wrath was unfair. The psalmist felt that there was no escape. Life was draining from him and if GOD did not respond, there seemed to be no remedy.

The worst of the psalmist's afflictions was the sense that GOD had in some way forsaken him, that his soul was cast off from GOD. Afflicted and alone, the psalmist felt overwhelmed, as if he were about to drown in his misery.

The psalmist stretched out his hands to GOD and reminded GOD of his constant prayer. After a brief focus on the terror and uncertainty of the grave, the psalmist once again set his focus on the LORD. Like David, he sought GOD in the morning (Psalm 5:3, 55:17, 59:16).

The psalm here ends, with no answer but a continued cry to GOD, who alone can rescue from such distress and despair. This situation of the psalmist was so much similar to Job in the Old Testament.

In verses 7, 16 and 17, Heman writes about water. His trouble is *like the sea. It is heavy and pours over him. It is all round him *like a *flood. It makes him feel that he cannot move. It was *like being in a prison, verse 8, and he cannot get out. We do not know what the prison was. Maybe he was so ill that he could not move. Maybe people put him in a place where

they could not see him. This was because he looked so bad. His friends and the people that loved him did not want to look at him, verses 8, 18. He made them feel sick! Maybe the prison in verse 8 is *Sheol itself. He is “near to *Sheol”, verse 3, which means “almost dead”, verse 5. There is nothing that he can do, only pray: and GOD does not answer! HE sends no help. Heman asks if GOD does *miracles for the people in *Sheol. The answer then was “No!”

But the story from Luke’s *Gospel at the top of the psalm says that for Christians the answer may be “Yes”. JESUS made the *widow’s son alive again! He came back from *Sheol. But this is not usual. We must make sure that we tell GOD that we believe in HIM and love HIM before we die!

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 30: 11 – 31

Job 30: 12-14

Job watched the men as they talked. And Job thought that they were making plans to attack him. Job felt low in the eyes of these worthless men and could not avoid them. Job thought of himself as a city with a wide, gapping breach in its wall. Job mourned the agony of his present state of being despised among men, when before he was respected and honoured. His honour and prosperity had vanished.

Job 30:15

Before Job’s troubles, Job was confident. He thought that people would respect him for his whole life. He had great security (Job 29:18-20). But Job’s feeling of security and honour did not last.

Job 30:16-19

Job described the persistent pains that were ever with him and his soul cried out. Job was suffering pain because of his illness and the pain affected Job’s whole body. Job felt as if something was holding Job’s collar and neck tightly and he was unable to breathe. So Job thought that he would soon die and his friends would bury him and his body would become like dust.

Job 30:20-23

Job accused GOD. GOD seemed so powerful. And Job was very weak. Job thought that GOD was using HIS great power to kill Job.

It seems strange to remember Job 2:3. The truth is that GOD was proud of Job. The devil had fiercely attacked Job. But Job continued to praise GOD. Whatever happened, Job would still trust GOD. Job would always be loyal to GOD. Job did not always realise that GOD was helping him.

Classically there are two ways of soliciting the favour of GOD. One way is by trying very hard to be very very good and hoping that GOD will take notice. The other way is to beg GOD for HIS blessing and to refuse to let go off the hook until Job comes through... It is those who refuse to give up on GOD who end up with HIS blessing.

Job 30:24-26

Job did not deserve these terrible troubles. Good people do not always have good lives.

Job 30:27-30

In verses 28 and 30, Job spoke about the terrible illness that affected his skin. Job had painful spots over his whole body (Job 2:7). In these verses, Job explained that his skin had become dark. And it felt too hot. Job called for help. But the people did not want to help him.

Job 30:31

Formerly, Job played music. Then the sounds that he made were happy, like the sound of the children in Job 21:12.

But now the sounds that Job made were sad. He was deeply in pain and cried because of his pain. His physical and spiritual agony was more than it seemed he could bear.

All GOD's people at some point in their walk with GOD, cry out to GOD for help but it seems to be that GOD does not answer. Even the LORD JESUS experienced this. Through this experience our faith is tested. At such times we must nevertheless persevere in faith. We know from GOD's dealing with Job and with faithful believers throughout history that no true follower of the LORD is ever abandoned by GOD and no earnest prayers ever go unheard.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 12: 35 – 44

Mark 12: 35-37

The Challenge of JESUS

Mark tells us that after JESUS gave his response to the scribe- who wanted to know which commandment Jesus considered to be the most important, after that incident no one dared to ask JESUS any more questions. Now it's Jesus' turn. HE has a question – and a few words – for those who are seeking to trap HIM.

JESUS asks a very important question of: Who is the Messiah (verse 35)?

The scribes were the teachers of the law and taught that the coming Messiah would be born in the genealogical line of King David. Therefore, they referred to the expected CHRIST as the son of David.

Then JESUS quotes a line from Psalm 110:1 – The LORD said to my LORD, “Sit at MY right hand, until I put your enemies at your feet” to show that David considered the Messiah to be his LORD, not just his son (verse 36).

The religious leaders did not understand that the Messiah would be far more than a human descendant of David, HE would be GOD Himself in human form (verse 37).

The answer to this question is that the Messiah is not only the son of David, HE is the divine king-SON OF GOD. This, by the way, is the exact title given to JESUS in Mark 1:1, JESUS CHRIST, the SON OF GOD.

When the Messiah finally came, they missed HIM altogether because they were looking in the wrong direction as they held an inadequate view of the Messiah.

We must consider if there is any way in which we have an inadequate view of JESUS. Some people know that JESUS came to be a teacher and an example for us to follow but they fail to see that HE came to be our Saviour. Others know that HE came to be our Saviour but fail to see that HE is our King as well. Or perhaps the deeper issue is that we affirm these truths with our minds but fail to take them into our heart. Our lives become a mess and what we know to be true about JESUS is replaced with our own fears and anxiety. We affirm Sunday

morning that JESUS is seated upon HIS throne but by Tuesday morning we live as if there is no throne and that we alone must fix the problems of the world.

Mark 12: 38-40

The problem is that the scribes were living two-faced lives.

In this passage JESUS makes a series of charges against the scribes.

The issue here is not what they are teaching, it's how they are living. They liked to walk around in long robes and they liked greetings in the market place (verse 38) or taking the best seats in the synagogues or at feasts (verse 39) and making long prayers (verse 40).

Verse 40- Some of the Jewish religious leaders took advantage of unsuspecting and lonely widows. They would seek and receive offerings from them, exploiting the widows willingness to help those whom the widows believed to be men of GOD. By manipulation these leaders persuaded the widows to give more than they could afford, while they themselves lived in luxury on these misguided offerings.

This same pattern has occurred throughout the history of the Church, right up to today, each age has its experts in the art of religious extortion. Their life is inconsistent and therefore JESUS says that religion used for self-gain and self-advancement is a sin and separates us from GOD and will receive greater condemnation (verse 40).

Mark 12: 41-44

JESUS leads us to a worthy example to follow in our lives- whole hearted devotion by a poor widow.

JESUS is seated opposite the treasury, HE has a full view of what is going on. Many rich people come and put in large sums of money and then comes a poor widow who puts in two small copper coins (verse 42). These two small copper coins, at that time, equal to a day's wage (Matthew 20:2). Her contribution would seem to be inconsequential. It is unlikely that this small amount of money would accomplish anything.

JESUS uses this as a teachable moment for His disciples. JESUS then makes a contrast between the pride and hypocrisy of these wealthy scribes and the devotion and sacrificial giving of a poor widow who gave all that she had.

HE says that she actually put in more than (verse 43) anyone else because everyone else gave out of their abundance but she gave out of her poverty (verse 44). She gave to God everything she had (verse 44). This is a picture of what whole-hearted devotion looks like. She held nothing back. There are at least two lessons here for us.

The first and most obvious is that we are to hold nothing back from GOD. Secondly, we should be encouraged by the sovereignty of GOD over what we bring to him. This perhaps reminds us of JESUS feeding that immense crowd with only 5 loaves and 2 fish. JESUS took meagre provisions, blessed them, and used them for HIS mighty purposes. Here JESUS says that two small copper coins are more than all the rich had to offer. It makes all the difference if GOD is in it. We can sometimes feel as if we have nothing of great value to offer the LORD but this passage shows us that GOD can indeed do a lot with a little.

Questions to ponder

→ It has been said that, "The greatest gift is that which costs the giver the most."

Is it easier for me to give than to receive? Why?

→ While we might confess the right things about JESUS, sometimes we fail to live them out. Why do you think there is a disconnection between what we say we believe and how we live?

→ The scribes were devouring widows' houses... What people in our society today are vulnerable to such exploitation?

→ What do we learn here about how GOD views our giving? Why do you think it is important for us to give sacrificially?

Verses for 5th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 89: 1 – 8 & 19 – 52

Psalms 89: 1- 8

The title of this psalm is A Contemplation of Ethan the Ezrahite. There are several men named Ethan in the Hebrew Scriptures, but this man is mentioned specifically in 1 Kings 4:31 as someone who was famous for his wisdom – yet surpassed by Solomon’s greater wisdom. This means he was likely a contemporary of Solomon and was also alive during the reign of David. Ethan shared with Heman a reputation for wisdom.

Ethan began this psalm with a declaration of praise, focused on the mercies of Yahweh. The great loving kindness of GOD lasts forever, so the praise of HIM should also be sung forever. This is a psalm with a lot of trouble, but the presence of trouble didn’t silence the psalmist’s praise; he sang of GOD’s mercies. Ethan not only experienced the mercies and faithfulness of GOD; he also wanted to make them known to others so that they might also experience God’s faithfulness and mercy. Ethan said this to declare the goodness of God. He emphasises on the enduring character of God’s mercy and faithfulness, and how they were established.

Ethan noted the covenant GOD made with David as described in 2 Samuel 7. There, GOD promised to build and establish the house of David. GOD promised David, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12). This promise was partially fulfilled in Solomon, the direct son of David and immediate heir to his throne. It was perfectly fulfilled in the One known as the Son of David – the Messiah, JESUS CHRIST (Matthew 12:23).

GOD promised David, I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:13). Again, this was fulfilled in an immediate and partial way with Solomon, but in a full and perfect way with JESUS the Messiah.

The psalmist brought together all creation to recognize the greatness and majesty of GOD. GOD is incomparably greater than all created things. Understanding the incomparability and holiness of GOD should bring forth a sense of awe and praise from His people, especially as they meet together. HE is to be held in reverence by all those around HIM.

Ethan continued his meditation on the incomparability of GOD with attention to HIS might, HIS ability to control unruly creation like raging seas, stormy waves, and sea monsters/serpents and expressed the supremacy of the one true GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 31: 1 – 23

Have you ever found yourself in the position of needing to give a defence of your actions? Or even a defence of your character?

It's difficult to do. And one thing that makes it so difficult is that you're not wanting to boast and wanting to be humble and modest.

Even the Apostle Paul experienced this uncomfortable need to defend himself in 2 Corinthians.

Similarly Job's friends believe that GOD works in this world in such a way that good is always and only rewarded and sin is always and only punished – in this life. And so, the friends see what's happened to Job and all of his suffering and they assume that GOD is punishing him for some sort of sin.

And so, in this chapter – chapter 31 – Job is basically calling to GOD's attention the fact that he's not done anything deserving the kind of treatment that GOD has been giving him. Job chapter 31 records Job's last words of self-defence.

Job protested that he was a godly and blameless man. His larger context was to explain the sense of injustice he felt at his suffering and humiliation, and to make a final defence before his friends who accused him of a secret sin deserving punishment.

In Chapter 31 Job speaks on many issues of spiritual ethics that JESUS covers in Matthew 5-7, including the relationship between lust and adultery (Job 31:1, 9-12), loving one's neighbour as oneself (Job 31:13-15), almsgiving and social justice (Job 31:16-23), and the love of money and other idolatries (Job 31:24-28).

Job also proclaimed his blameless life because he lived an essentially truthful life. He was not afraid to be weighed on honest scales, and have his life examined in an honest way.

Job continued the presentation of his own righteousness by noting the good and compassionate treatment of his servants. The goodness of a man or a woman is often best indicated by how they treat those thought to be inferior to them, not how they treat their peers or those thought to be superior to them. One reason Job treated his servants well was because he understood that he would have to answer to GOD for his actions towards others, including his servants. He understood that GOD cared about his servants and would avenge ill-treatment of them. Job showed a heart for holiness and ethical living.

As a further testimony to his righteousness, Job insisted that he had been good and kind to the poor, helpless, widows and orphans. He knew that if he had been cruel and oppressive to the poor and needy, that he would indeed deserve punishment, and this specifically motivated him to care for others.

Job says that it's common knowledge that those ill-treating other individuals meet with destruction and disaster from GOD.

Now, we do need to remind ourselves that in CHRIST all of our sins are forgiven. GOD has promised in the New Covenant to not remember our sins and lawless deeds ever again. And we praise HIM for these wonderful merciful realities.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 13: 1 – 13

Mark 13: 1 – 4

This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15) but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the centre of Jewish life for almost 1,000 years – so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple (Matthew 23:16) and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Acts 6:13).

The disciples seemed to be amazed at the sites of the city of Jerusalem. They had good reason

to be amazed, because the temple compound, as remodelled by Herod the Great, was one of the magnificent structures of the ancient world.

The beauty of the ancient temple is well documented. The Jewish historian Josephus says that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates that were so brilliant that when the sun shone it was blinding. Where there wasn't gold, there were blocks of marble of pure white and from a distance it looked like snow was on the temple.

The temple began to mean more to the people than GOD Himself meant. The temple was a good thing, but good things can become the worst idols. Sometimes GOD cuts down even good things if we allow them to become our idols. As great as the temple was, JESUS never hesitated to claim that HE was greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6). But ultimately, Rome crushed the Jews of that day. Jerusalem was destroyed and levelled, including the temple – just as JESUS said.

Mark 13: 5 – 8

JESUS warns of the danger of false messiahs who come in HIS name. They will pretend to be JESUS or representatives of JESUS, but they will not be true representatives of JESUS.

JESUS reminded us that before HE returned there would be many wars and threats of war on the earth. In troubled times, many people assume that the end of the age is near. Jesus said, “Catastrophes such as wars, famines and earth quakes will happen, but these do not signal the end.”

Man has often thought that such things would signal the end, but Jesus would point to a more specific sign to watch for. The idea is of giving birth to a new age of sorrows, and perhaps implying an increase of intensity and frequency in these calamities.

Mark 13: 9 – 13

JESUS told His disciples to be prepared for the persecution that would come against them before the end. This persecution was not the sign of the end.

JESUS also promised that before the end the gospel must go out to the whole world. The presence of persecution does not relieve the Church of this responsibility. JESUS told His followers to not worry about what to say when they had to give an answer for being a follower of JESUS. At that moment, the HOLY SPIRIT would give them words to say. A powerful example of this principle is found in Acts 4:1-22, where Peter and the other disciples made a dramatic proclamation of JESUS before the hostile Sanhedrin.

The followers of JESUS should expect the most painful kinds of rejection and betrayal as they sought to stand strong for JESUS. Researchers estimate that since the Day of Pentecost, more than 43 million Christians have been killed for their faith. Christians suffer discrimination and, in some regions, severe harassment. When we face trials and persecution, we can't be so desperate for an escape that we will compromise. Instead, we must endure. He who endures to the end, will be saved.

Verses for 6th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 90 & 91

Psalms 90

The story of Psalm 90

These are “words that Moses prayed”. That does not mean that Moses wrote the psalm. Some Bible students think that he did. Other students think that later writers used words and ideas from “the Books of Moses”. These are the first 5 books of the Bible. This psalm makes Bible students think of Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 32. The psalm uses “words that Moses” said, from these books.

The psalm is in 4 parts. The first 3 parts are in verses 1-12. They could be about anybody in the world. They are true for all of us. But the last part, verses 13-17, is about GOD’s people, the *Jews. Something bad had happened to them. They are praying that GOD will be good to them. We do not know what this bad thing was. Some Bible students think that it was when the Babylonians beat them and took them to Babylon. We call this “the exile”. But it could be anything after the time of Moses!

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 31:24 – 32:14

Elihu, A new counsellor.

Elihu is introduced here into the narrative. He had refrained from expressing his opinion earlier because he was younger than the others. He believed, however, that he had insight into job’s suffering and could instruct him in the correct attitude he should have before GOD.

Elihu’s speech differs from the first three in its emphasis that suffering can be GOD’s merciful chastisement in order to enlighten the soul and to bring about a more intimate relationship with GOD. However, like the other counsellors, Elihu assumed that Job had sinned and therefore deserved his suffering.

Job 32:8

A spirit of man.

Despite Elihu’s claim to spiritual insight from GOD, his statements and his theology are not thereby infallible. Some are full of insight, others fall short of Biblical revelation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 13: 14 – 31

Mark 13:14

Abomination of desolation.

The abomination that causes desolation refers to that which defames or pollutes what is holy. CHRIST's statement may prophetically refer both to the Roman invasion of Jerusalem when the temple was destroyed and to the placing of the image of the antichrist in Jerusalem just before CHRIST returns to judge the wicked.

Verses for 7th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 92 to 94

Psalms 93

What Psalm 93 means

Verse 1:

In the *Hebrew Bible, "The *LORD is ruling" is "The *LORD is wearing". HE wears HIS authority and HIS power as clothes. Everyone can see them.

The word "great" in *Hebrew is really "belt". Nobody can take this power and authority away from GOD. This is because HE has fastened the belt and nobody can undo it!

LORD is a special name for GOD. It means that HE will always be alive. HE will always make His people safe. They are the people that love and work for Him.

The word "war" is not in the *Hebrew Bible. It is there to give us help to understand how the *Jews felt. Hebrew was the language that the *Jews spoke. They wrote the psalms in *Hebrew.

Verse 2: tells us that GOD has been king for a very long time. HE was king of everything before HE made (created) the world. It is this verse that suggests Genesis 1: 6-10. HE was king before there was a world!

Verse 3: Three times we read "the rivers rose up". This suggests rivers that get higher and higher ... until they drown people! This means "danger!" The loud noise and the storm also mean "danger!" That danger was maybe when Assyria, Egypt and Babylon attacked Judah and Israel. This happened many times between 750 and 590 B.C.

Verse 4: But GOD is stronger than Assyria, Egypt and Babylon. Or, if the first meaning is correct, stronger than the waters in Genesis 1: 6-10.

Verse 5: The rules of GOD are in the Bible. Psalm 119 says a lot about GOD's rules. The house of GOD is usually the temple in Jerusalem. The temple was a special house that Solomon built. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, they also destroyed the temple. But, after the *exile, the *Jews built it again. If the second meaning is the correct one, then this means the new temple. They believed that GOD lived in this house. And GOD is good. That made HIS house special. It made it beautiful.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 32:15 – 33:18

Job 33: 9

I am clean without transgression. Elihu falsely stated that Job was claiming moral perfection that he was without transgression all his life. Job had never insisted that he was sinless, but only that he had followed GOD's ways with all his heart and could never recall having committed a serious transgression that merited such severe punishment.

NEW TESTAMENT**Mark 13:32 – 14:11****Mark 13: 35****At even. Midnight...morning**

CHRIST affirms that HIS return for the faithful of HIS churches could occur at four possible times during the night or early morning. This points to the fact that HIS coming for them could be at any time and emphasizes the unexpectedness and hiddenness of the first stage of HIS second coming, when the faithful will be caught up from the earth since it is imminent and unexpected, all believers must be spiritually alert and faithful.

Verses for 8th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 95 & 96

Psalms 96

The story of Psalm 96

A hymn inviting all humanity to praise the glories of Israel's GOD (Psalms 96:1–3), who is the only LORD (Psalms 96:4–6). To the just ruler of all belongs worship (Psalms 96:7–10); even creation is to offer praise (Psalms 96:11–13).

GOD loves to receive the rejoicing and praise of His people expressed in a song, especially the new song as HE has done extraordinary things for us, and we should excel in praise and thanksgiving.

These songs to the LORD are not only celebrations; they are also proclamations. They proclaimed HIS salvation and declared HIS glory and HIS wonders to all the people of GOD, then to all the nations of the earth, and finally to creation itself.

From day to day means we should never stop proclaiming the good news of GOD's salvation. "Every man should praise GOD every day – every morning, and every evening – for the assurance that there is a way of salvation provided for him, and that he may be happy for ever.

Glory refers to the majestic aura of the divine presence. If the LORD JESUS has become King of your heart, and has brought blessing to you, do not hesitate to give voice to your allegiance. Sing unto Him a new song; show forth HIS salvation, and declare HIS glory. The psalmist would not give God empty or unthinking praise. He first spoke regarding the greatness of GOD, and noted that HIS greatness made Him greatly to be praised.

The LORD is, in every possible sense, 'great;' great in dignity, in power, in mercy; and therefore 'greatly to be praised' by every creature. HE is the Creator who made the heavens. Idols, though they have usurped the name and place of the Divine Majesty, yet they have nothing of the LORD's nature or power in them and are worthless.

In GOD are combined all that is mighty and lovely, great, powerful and beautiful. "Not in outward show or parade of costly robes does the glory of GOD consist; such things are tricks of the world with which the ignorant are dazzled; holiness, justice, wisdom, grace, these are the splendours of LORD's courts, these are the jewels and the pomp of the courts of heaven." (Spurgeon).

The worship of GOD is described as our bringing something to GOD rather than our coming to GOD to get something from HIM. We usually think of it the other way around. We think

of coming to church to receive either: (1) knowledge through the teaching or (2) specific gifts from GOD as HIS answers to our prayers.

We should come into GOD's presence not only to receive, but also to give unto HIM. We should give HIM our time, our attention, our worship, our surrender, our service, our resources, and much more.

Whether others recognize HIS reign or not, the LORD nevertheless reigns over the whole world. The LORD shall not abuse His invincible power and established dominion to the oppression of His people, but shall govern them by the rules of justice and equity, which is the only foundation of a true and solid peace.

The Psalmist exults in most jubilant and triumphant strains, calling the whole creation to break forth into joy, and to celebrate the glories of redemption. Paul had this concept in mind in Romans 8:21: because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD.

The reign of JESUS means equality for the oppressed, equal-handed justice for the poor, peace among the nations. The psalm ends with the joyful confidence that GOD will judge and set things right. The goodness of this is apparent to those who love GOD, love HIS ways, and hurt over the injustices of the present age.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 33:19 – 34:12

Job 33: 19-33

GOD might get their attention through pain, by let them undergo suffering, and so they can't stand the sight of food neither have no appetite. They lose weight, wasting away to nothing, reduced to a bag of bones. They hang on the cliff-edge of death, knowing the next breath may be their last. "But even then an angel could come, to take up your case, a messenger who would mercifully intervene, cancelling the death sentence with the words: 'I've come up with the ransom!' Before you know it, you're healed, and you may fall on your knees and pray – to GOD's delight!

In this chapter Elihu addresses Job himself, and entreats his attention to what he had to say to him, and offers several things to induce him; and recommends himself as one that was according to his wish, instead of GOD, a man like himself, and of whom he had no reason to be afraid, Job 33: 1-7; and then he brings a charge against him of things which he himself had heard, of words that had dropped from him in the course of his controversy with his friends; in which he too, much strongly insisted on his own innocence and purity, and let fill very undue and unbecoming reflections on the dealings of GOD with him, Job 33: 8-11; to which he gives an answer by observing the superior greatness of GOD to man, and GOD's sovereignty over him, not being accountable to GOD for anything done by him; and therefore man should be silent and submissive to GOD, Job 33: 12, 13; and yet, though he is so great and so absolute, and uncontrollable, and is not obliged to give an account of HIS affairs to man, and the reasons of them.

Yet GOD condescends by various ways and means to instruct man in HIS mind and will by dreams and visions, he opens the ears of men, and seals instruction to them, and restrains them from their evil purposes and doings, , and to weaken their pride and humble them, and preserve them from ruin, Job 33: 14-18 and sometimes by chastening and afflictive providences, Job 33: 19-22 and which become teaching ones; through the interposition of a divine messenger, and upon the afflicted man's prayer to GOD, and humiliation before him, GOD is gracious and favourable to him, and delivers him; Job 33: 23-30; and the chapter is

concluded with beseeching Job to mark and consider well what had been said unto him, and to answer it if he could or thought fit; if not, silently to attend to what he had further to say to him for his instruction, Job 33: 31-33.

Job complained of his diseases, and judged by them that GOD was angry with him; his friends did so too: but Elihu shows that GOD often afflicts the body for good to the soul. This thought will be of great use for our getting good from sickness, in and by which GOD speaks to men.

Pain is the fruit of sin; yet, by the grace of GOD, the pain of the body is often made a means of good to the soul. When afflictions have done their work, they shall be removed. A ransom or propitiation is found. JESUS CHRIST is the Messenger and the Ransom, so Elihu calls HIM, as Job had called HIM his Redeemer, for HE is both the Purchaser and the Price, the Priest and the sacrifice. So high was the value of souls, that nothing less would redeem them; and so great the hurt done by sin, that nothing less would atone for it, than the blood of the SON of GOD, who gave his life a ransom for many. A blessed change follows. Recovery from sickness is a mercy indeed, when it proceeds from the remission of sin. All that truly repent of their sins, shall find mercy with GOD.

The works of darkness are unfruitful works; all the gains of sin will come far short of the damage.

We must, with a broken and contrite heart, confess our sins to GOD 1 John 1:9. We must confess the fact of sin; and not try to justify or excuse ourselves. We must confess the fault of sin and the folly of sin.

Job 34: 1-12

When Job does not reply to Elihu's challenge, Elihu turns to the onlookers and repeats some of Job's rash statements about the injustice of GOD (34:1-6). Let them judge for themselves. Surely such words prove Job's wickedness (7-9). GOD is not unjust, says Elihu, and no one can tell him what to do. HE is the governor of the universe (10-13).

Job certainly said nothing like this. We can understand how Elihu thought this about Job, because Job claimed to delight in GOD and he now seemed to claim that it profited him nothing.

Many people today believe the idea of Elihu (and Eliphaz) and believe it as an absolute spiritual law instead of a general principle. Some take the passage from Galatians 6:7: Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Yet it is important to understand the context of Paul's statement, which was encouragement and exhortation for Christians to give materially for the support of the ministry. It is true that the principle of (Galatians 6:7) has application beyond giving and supporting teachers and ministers. It has a general application in life; what we get out is often what we put in. Yet Paul did not promote some law of spiritual karma that ensures we will receive good when we do good things or always receive bad when we do bad things. If there were such an absolute spiritual law, it would surely damn us all. Instead, Paul simply related the principle of sowing and reaping to the way we manage our resources before the Lord.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 14: 12 – 21

Passover was considered the holiest festival of the Jewish year, commemorating the deliverance from Egypt when the angel of death "passed over" the firstborn found in Jewish homes because of the Passover lamb blood placed on the door frames.

The Passover was a tradition for the Jewish people that GOD had commanded them to

follow. It was a special meal that was to help them remember how HE saved them after hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt. And the LORD told the Israelites to have the Passover meal every year so that they wouldn't forget who HE was and who they were (Exodus 12: 21-27).

Details of the preparation and setting for the meal are described here in these verses (Mark 14: 12-21). "So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal" (14:12-16). The first watch of the night is noted: "When it was evening, he came with the twelve" (14:17). The ominous words of JESUS around which they gather at table begin the evening: "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray ME, one who is eating with me" (14:18). The drama unfolds as the disciples in distress address Jesus, "Surely, not I?" (14:19). JESUS describes the action that will reveal the betrayer, and it could be anyone at this point: "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with ME" (14:20).

Judas listened to JESUS teach with amazing authority, raise Jairus's daughter from the dead. Then Judas witnessed JESUS raise Lazarus from the dead after being dead four days in the tomb. Judas was front and centre for each undeniable miracle. Yet despite all the evidence, Judas' initial favourable impression eroded. Judas's plan for JESUS was not Jesus' plan for Judas. JESUS was not giving Judas what he wanted—wealth, rule and fame. So Judas began to take matters into his own hands. Frustration turned to greed, and greed to rage, then rage into treachery. Judas went to the religious leaders, to betray CHRIST for money. So now for a week Judas has been looking for his opportunity. Judas is waiting for JESUS to be alone, away from the crowds. And that opportunity is now upon him in Mark 14:12, when JESUS and His men will celebrate the Passover alone. JESUS knew what no one else knew. Judas' heart was inflamed with satanic ambitions.

Satan knew all the Old Testament prophecies. Satan knew CHRIST was meant to be the Lamb of GOD slain for sins. Satan knew if CHRIST died on that cross that his kingdom and dominion would be destroyed forever. Satan didn't want JESUS dead—GOD wanted CHRIST to die for our sins. Satan wanted to stop it. And if Satan can get Judas to betray JESUS so the Sanhedrin will move fast, then the crowd will rise up and stop the crucifixion. I believe that's what Satan wanted—he had no desire to see CHRIST on the cross. Satan is against the cross. It's as if Satan wants to create a scenario which will halt the direction of CHRIST to the cross. So Satan moves into Judas. But even bigger, behind this event is . . . The Cross is the PLAN of GOD.

The death and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST have always been the focal point of Christianity. The cross is the apex of redemptive history, the sufficient single atonement for sin, the satisfaction of divine justice, the propitiation of holy wrath, the epitome of sovereign grace, the necessary object of saving faith and the only hope for eternal life.

Judas lived in CHRIST's glorious presence experiencing GOD's truth, beauty, power, wisdom and fellowship daily, yet he missed it. Judas is the greatest example of wasted opportunity. What privileges, opportunities, has GOD given you- Christian, that, you too might be wasting? JESUS gave Judas every opportunity to turn to HIM in salvation. But Judas wanted his money, his way—are you the same? Or on this day, will you cry out for mercy, turn from your sin and depend on CHRIST alone? Some of you need to take a hard look at your heart. All true Christians follow CHRIST and want to obey HIS Word. Do not leave here not knowing where you are at with CHRIST.

Are you daily remembering GOD's Love for you? That GOD became a man and died for you, must be on your heart every day.

No matter what people say or do, GOD's will be done in your life. Do not think for a moment that whoever or whatever is against you, hurting you, causing you pain is not under the absolute sovereign hand of GOD? Trust Him with little things and all things.

Verses for 9th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 97 to 99

Psalms 98

The story of Psalm 98

This is a *royal psalm. "Royal" means "as a king". In the royal psalms, (93 and 95 to 99) GOD is the king of everything. The *Jews wrote the psalm when they returned from the *exile. Jews are people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children. The exile was in Babylon. The king of Babylon took them from Judah where they lived. He made them stay in Babylon. After 70 years, the king of Persia beat the king of Babylon in a war. He let the *Jews go home to Judah. They built the temple in Jerusalem again. The king of Babylon had destroyed it. The *Jews made the book of psalms to sing in the temple. The temple was GOD's house in Jerusalem. The *Jews wrote the *royal psalms because they believed that GOD was really the king that sent them home.

Christians believe that GOD is the king of everything. So, Christians sing the *royal psalms also. But Christians believe that one day GOD will come to the earth. As JESUS came to Bethlehem, so GOD will come again to the earth. JESUS is GOD. But next time, HE will not come as a baby. HE will come as a king ... King of Everything! As verse 9 says, "HE is coming to rule the earth". We do not know when, but HE will come. We are so certain that we say "HE is coming".

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 34: 13- 37

When we reprove for what is amiss, we must direct to what is good. Job's friends would have had him own himself a wicked man. Let will only oblige him to own that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Let us, in giving reproof, not make a matter worse than it is. Elihu directs Job to humble himself before GOD for his sins, and to accept the punishment. Also to pray to GOD to discover his sins to HIM. A good man is willing to know the worst of himself; particularly, under affliction, he desires to be told wherefore GOD contends with him. It is not enough to be sorry for our sins, but we must go and sin no more. And if we are affectionate children, we shall love to speak with our FATHER, and to tell HIM all our mind.

Elihu reasons with Job concerning his discontent under affliction. We are ready to think everything that concerns us should be just as we would have it; but it is not reasonable to expect this. Elihu asks whether there was not sin and folly in what Job said. GOD is righteous in all HIS ways, and holy in all HIS works, Psalm 145:17. The believer saith, Let my SAVIOUR, my wise and loving LORD, and choose everything for me. I am sure that will be wisest, and the best for HIS glory and my good.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 14: 22 – 31

Mark 14:24

Blood of the New Testament.

CHRIST's blood was shed for us in order to bring us forgiveness and salvation. HIS death on the cross established a new covenant between GOD and all who receive CHRIST as LORD and SAVIOUR. Those who repent and turn to GOD through faith in CHRIST will be forgiven, be delivered from the power of Satan, receive new spiritual life, be made children of GOD, be baptized with the HOLY SPIRIT, and have access to GOD at any time in order to receive mercy, grace, strength and help.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 11th April 2022

HOLY MONDAY

I. Jesus cursing the fig tree

The cursing of the fig tree is an incident in the gospels, presented in Mark and Matthew as a miracle in connection with the entry into Jerusalem, and in Luke as a parable.

In the Jewish scriptures the people of Israel are sometimes represented as figs on a fig tree (Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 24), or a fig tree that bears no fruit (Jeremiah 8:13), the cursing of the fig tree in Mark and Matthew and the parallel story in Luke are thus symbolically directed against the Jews, who did not accept Jesus as king.

Gospel of Mark, 11:12–25

Most scholars believe that Mark was the first gospel and was used as a source by the authors of Matthew and Luke. Mark uses the cursing of the barren fig tree to bracket and comment on his story of the Jewish temple: Jesus and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem when Jesus curses a fig tree because it bears no fruit; in Jerusalem he drives the money-changers from the temple; and the next morning the disciples find that the fig tree has withered and died, with the implied message that the temple is cursed and will wither because, like the fig tree, it failed to produce the fruit of righteousness. Chapter 13 verse 28 Mark has Jesus again use the image of the Fig tree to make plain that Jerusalem will fall and the Jewish nation be brought to an end before their generation passes away.

Gospel of Luke, 13:6–9

Luke replaces the miracle with the parable of the barren fig tree. Jesus and the disciples are traveling to Jerusalem when they hear of the deaths of Galileans, and Jesus gives the events a prophetic interpretation through a parable: a man planted a fig tree expecting it to bear fruit, but despite his visits it remained barren; the owner's patience wore thin, but the gardener pleaded for a little more time; the owner agrees, but the question of whether the tree would bear fruit, i.e. acts that manifest the Kingdom of God, is left hanging. Luke has Jesus end his story with a warning that if the followers do not repent they will perish.

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is described as God's vineyard, tree, or planting (Judges 9:8–15; Isa. 3:14; 5:1–7; Jer. 12:10; Ezek. 17:2–10; 19:10–14). As any Israelite knew, the first fruits of the harvest belong to God (Ex. 23:19; Neh. 10:35–37), which helps conceptualize their relationship to God: as his own special planting, they must yield spiritual fruit as his covenant people (Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8–10). Israel's fruitfulness is not the basis of their relationship with God, for it is God who gives fruitfulness (Deut. 7:13; 28:4). A lack of fruitfulness is a sign of God's curse for their rebellion (Deut. 11:17).

This foundational metaphor for Israel's spiritual health vividly blooms in the prophetic era. The time had come for God's people to yield fruit that would bless the world (Isa. 27:6).

Several times the prophets describe God as inspecting Israel for "early figs," as a sign of spiritual fruitfulness (Mic. 7:1; Jer. 8:13; Hos. 9:10–17)—but he finds "no first-ripe fig that my soul desires." So in two exiles (Assyrian and Babylonian), God pours out the curse of barrenness (Hos. 9:16), and Israel becomes a rotten fig (Jer. 29:17).

But all is not lost. God promises to one day replant Israel and produce healthy figs from her again (Joel 2:22; Amos 9:14; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 8:12; Ezek. 36:8).

The fig tree cursing is not just about historical Israel. It's about us. It's about all the people of God throughout time.

A Christian by definition must produce spiritual fruit (even if only small early figs). It's also about the threat of and temptation toward false pretences of fruit.

Gospel of Matthew, 21:18–22

Matthew compresses Mark's divided account into a single story. Here the fig tree withers immediately after the curse is pronounced, driving the narrative forward to Jesus' encounter with the Jewish priesthood and his curse against them and the temple. Jesus responds to the disciples' expressions of wonder with a brief discourse on faith and prayer, and while this makes it less clear that the dead fig tree is related to the fate of the temple, in Matthew 24:32–35 the author presents the budding tree as a sign of the certain coming of the Son of Man.

II. JESUS cleansing the temple

A temple is a holy place. It is not a place of the world it is a place of God. Heavenly treasures are very different from earthly treasures.

Temples are used to connect with God to seek his presence, inspiration, guidance and to build our heavenly treasures through the acts of prayer and rituals. To have people dealing with goods for money in the temple is blasphemy.

Jesus cleansed the temple as it is meant to be a house of God not a house of men, merchants, and money. The sin was in gouging the people, focusing on money, rather than serving God. The scriptures warn us against earthly treasures. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." – Matthew 6:19-21

Jesus is stated to have visited the Temple in Jerusalem, where the courtyard is described as being filled with livestock, merchants, and the tables of the money changers. Jerusalem was packed with Jews who had come for Passover, perhaps numbering 300,000 to 400,000 pilgrims.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade"— John 2:13–16

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves — Matthew 21:12–13

From around the world, first-century Jews came to the temple at Passover to sacrifice to the Lord (Ex. 12:1–28; Lev. 23:4–8). It was impractical to bring sacrificial animals long distances; so, they were available in Jerusalem — for a price. Most Jews also paid the temple tax at Passover, and money-changers were there to convert Roman coinage into appropriate currency. Though not inherently evil, these practices became occasions for sin. Pilgrims paid exorbitant rates to change money, and sellers exploited those in poverty, overcharging for the poor man's offering of pigeons and doves (Lev. 5:7). To make things worse, these merchants set up shop in the Court of the Gentiles, making it useless as a place of prayer due to the hustle and bustle the buying and selling created.

Therefore Jesus drove out the sellers (Matt. 21:12). These merchants, and the priests who allowed their presence, cared nothing for true worship as long as

They could make money and keep up the rituals. Our Saviour hated this sacrilege, which kept the nations from learning about the living God in His sanctuary.

We cannot underestimate the importance of this act. It showed Jesus as having authority to purify and take charge of the temple, a messianic task (Ezek. 43:1–12)

Just as Jesus cleanses the temple, we need to cleanse and keep our bodies spiritually pure.

The bible tells us to strive for peace with one another. “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14. Jesus also taught us that our bodies are temples and that God's presence can reside within us if we are worthy.

We have noted that Jesus cursing the fig tree is closely related to the cleansing of the temple, with both symbolizing God's judgment against Israel. Jesus links the miracle of the fig tree's destruction to the power of faith and prayer. Jesus uses the incident of the fig tree to teach critical lessons on faith and prayer. The source of the power for performing the miracle is God. He must be the object of our faith. Jesus is saying that the greatest possible difficulties can be removed when a person has faith.

To be effective, prayer must be offered in faith — faith in the all-powerful God, who works miracles. But it must be offered in the spirit of forgiveness. Faith and the willingness to forgive are the two conditions of efficacious prayer.

God is still in the miracle-work today; He can take a rebel and make him into a servant of Christ. He can affect someone's heart and mind and bring them into submission to the Holy Spirit.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 12th April 2022

HOLY TUESDAY

The tumultuous events of Tuesday and the Olivet Discourse are recorded in Matthew 21:23–24:51, Mark 11:20–13:37, Luke 20:1–21:36, and John 12:20–38.

Jesus’ authority questioned

The cleansing of the Temple on Holy Monday caused the Pharisees to question Jesus’ right to do “these things.” Jesus had not received His authority from the religious leaders . . . so they wanted answers.

Attempts were made to force Jesus to state that He had divine power from God. Then He could be charged with blasphemy, even arrested. Knowing their motives, Jesus agreed to answer their questions if they first answered whether John the Baptist’s work was human or divine. If divine, John’s preaching affirmed Jesus as divine. If human, those who followed John would riot. It was the Sanhedrin’s responsibility to know the difference between true and false prophets, yet they shamefully admitted they didn’t know. Thus, Jesus did not answer their question (Matthew 21:23–27; Mark 11:27–33).

The conspiracies to trap Jesus escalated. The problem the Temple authorities had with Jesus is that what he taught changed everything about how they believed they should honour God. And hence Israel’s religious leaders had one goal: to get rid of Jesus of Nazareth. According to common interpretation of the Bible, Holy Tuesday is when Jesus was issued various challenges by the Pharisees and Sadducees over subjects such as marriage in heaven, parable of tenants (Luke 20: 9-16), paying taxes to Caesar, and the source of His authority (Matthew 21:23—23:39; Mark 11:27—12:44; Luke 20:1—21:4).

By this same interpretation, this is the day Jesus commented on the widow’s donation (Mark 12; Luke 21) and was approached by a number of God-fearing Greeks (John 12:20–36).

Tuesday would also be the day Jesus spoke His seven “woes” against the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13–36) and the evening on which He delivered the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24—25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5–36).

This time Jesus did not remain silent:

- Tribute to Caesar (Matthew 22:15–22) – Aware of their hypocrisy, Jesus reminded the Pharisees and Herodians that a sphere of authority belongs to God. Man has responsibilities in both political and spiritual matters.

- Marriage at the Resurrection (Mark 12:18–27) – In response to their fictitious story of seven brothers, Jesus revealed the Sadducees’ ignorance of the Scriptures and God’s power to overcome death and give life.

- Whose Son is Christ (Matthew 22:41–46) – Jesus questioned the Pharisees regarding the Messiah’s coming from the line of David. Contrary to the Pharisees’ claim that He was a human son of David, Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 in which David ascribed deity to Him. Jesus warned the crowds and disciples about the hypocrisy and unbelief of the nation’s religious leaders. By imposing eternal restrictions, the truth remained hidden. Jesus pronounced seven condemnations (“Woes”) addressing the false religion that was abhorrent to God (Matthew 23:13–33). When a (Mosaic) Law expert was sent to question Jesus about The Greatest Commandment, Jesus quickly summarized the entire Ten Commandments into two. The Old Testament established these two points: Love for God and love for others who are made in God’s image (Matthew 22:34–40).

How painful that Holy Tuesday must have been to cause Jesus to utter His final lament over the city of Jerusalem (John 12:37–40). Even before His crucifixion, Jesus’ heart would be pierced by Israel’s lack of faith. Their failure to recognize His deity left the people unprepared. The mourning of the nation of Israel would be great (Zechariah 12:10–11). Soon the Temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem with it.

As Jesus left the Temple, His disciples asked two critical questions: “When will this happen [the destruction of the Temple], and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?” This prompted Jesus’ prophetic Olivet Discourse found in Matthew 24–25. He not only answered their questions, but presented practical lessons for those who will be living at that time, encouraging them to be faithful, watchful, and prepared. These lessons are relevant to all believers—in any Age.

After a tiring day of confrontation and warnings about the future, once again, Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany to stay the night.

Adaptive Change is not easy. Adaptive change challenges our beliefs and ways of thinking. Conflict shows up as the tender young branches of an adaptive change. Adaptation is a process of conservation as well as loss. The questions raised include; “of all that we care about, what must be given up to survive and thrive going forward?” and “of all that we care about, what elements are essential and must be preserved into the future, or we will lose precious values, core competencies, and lose who we are?”

Jesus was leading adaptive change in Jerusalem’s temple on Tuesday of Holy Week. Read again the way he responded to the objections raised. Jesus has exemplified the advice he gives his disciples as the sun begins to set over the Judean countryside, “...don’t worry about what you’ll say. When the time comes, say what’s on your heart—the Holy Spirit will make his witness in and through you.”

Adaptive change for the church has at its heart our desire to continue our witness to the power of God’s grace. It requires that we keep that desire foremost in our lives so that we’ll be willing to do whatever it takes to respond to God’s call to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Jesus has insight. Divine insight. He has a heavenly perspective. We face a life and future that includes insecurities and uncertainties. Variable outcomes confront our minds as we enter each new day. The only security we have is not set on our possessions or achievements. But in our relationship and unity with the creator – The GOD revealed in Christ. He is a God who is close. A God who is Love. And a God who has our “now” and “not yet” firmly held. There is no need to fear the outcome of anything we face. Because in Christ – we are eternally secure. Meditate on the scriptures. And pray that God gives you a divine perspective today.

We have all sinned and deserve God's judgment. God, the Father, sent His only Son to satisfy that judgment for those who believe in Him. Jesus, the creator and eternal Son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that He died for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserve, was buried, and rose from the dead according to the Bible. If you truly believe and trust this in your heart, receiving Jesus alone as your Saviour, declaring, "Jesus is Lord," you will be saved from judgment and spend eternity with God in heaven.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 13th April 2022

HOLY WEDNESDAY

This is the day on which:

- I. Judas agrees to betray Jesus
- II. Jesus gets anointed at Bethany

After Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Sanhedrin and religious leaders of that time got jealous of the incredible treatment that Jesus was receiving from the general public. They felt threatened by the love and respect Jesus was gaining. They also felt insulted by the way Jesus pointed out at them on the previous day. So in the New Testament account of Holy Week, this jealous group gathered and plotted to kill Jesus before the feast of Pesach.

On the Wednesday before his death, Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper. As he sat at the supper table with his disciples, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table (Matthew 26: 6-13).

The Gospel of John describes Judas as an untrustworthy person. It claims that Judas was the treasurer for Jesus and his 12 disciples, carrying the money bag the group shared and sometimes stealing from it. When a woman put perfume on Jesus shortly before the last supper, Judas objected, the Gospel of John says "'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' He did not say this because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it." John 12:4-6. Judas Iscariot wanted to keep the money for himself.

The pouring ointment upon the head of Christ was a token of the highest respect. Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good to bestow upon Him. This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that it would be reported, as a memorial of the women's faith and love, to all future ages, and in all places where the gospel should be preached. This prophecy is fulfilled.

The woman probably did not know all that her action meant when she anointed her Lord for his burial. The consequences of the simplest action done for Christ may be much greater than we think...She thus showed that there was, at least, one heart in the world that thought nothing was too good for her Lord, and that the best of the very best ought to be given to him.” (Spurgeon)

Be ready to do something extraordinary for CHRIST.

Many suggestions have been offered regards to Judas betraying Jesus:

- Judas resented the leadership of the Galilean fishermen among the disciples
- Perhaps Judas was disillusioned with the type of Messiah Jesus revealed Himself to be; wanting a more political, conquering Messiah.
- Perhaps Judas watched the ongoing conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders and concluded that they were winning and Jesus was losing; therefore, he decided to cut his losses and join the winning side.
- Perhaps he came to the conclusion that Jesus simply was not the Messiah or a true Prophet

The Scriptures present no sense of reluctance in Judas, and only one motivation: greed and selfishness. The words stand: “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” Judas failed to grasp who Jesus really was.

Then Judas went to the Sanhedrin and offered to deliver Jesus to them in exchange for money (Matthew 26: 14-16), 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave in the Old Testament (Zechariah 11:12). Then Judas returned to Jesus’ side, pretending continued admiration and faithfulness. From this moment on, Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus.

The greater profession men make of religion, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God. Observe, that Christ’s own disciple, who knew so well his doctrine and manner of his life, and was false to him, could not charge him with anything criminal, though it would have served to justify his treachery. What did Judas want? Was not he welcome wherever his Master was? Did he not fare as Christ fared? It is not the lack, but the love of money, that is the root of all evil. After he had made that wicked bargain, Judas had time to repent, and to revoke it; but when lesser acts of dishonesty have hardened the conscience people do without hesitation that which is more shameful.

We all need to take time to ask what we really want in a situation, whether we have selfish motivations that we are hiding (and maybe not admitting to ourselves). In the same way, we must recognize our selfish motivations, we must ask whether what we want will lead to something good. As we walk with God, we must seek his help to develop a long view of things, and consider where our plans will end. We always need God’s grace to see what we can do better, what needs fixing.

Our great and holy God owns all of creation, so all that we have is really His anyway. But He gives us resources to steward, and one way we show our gratitude for His gifts is to give back to Him those things that we highly value. Let us be faithful to return to our Creator His good gifts, and may we be willing to give up what is valuable to us for the sake of God’s kingdom.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 14th April 2022

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Matthew 26: 17-29; Mark 14: 12-25; Luke 22: 7-38; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-34; John 13:1-38
John records a great deal more about this evening than the other gospels. In fact, five of John's twenty-one chapters are devoted to details of just this evening. During dinner, Jesus washes the disciples' feet (John 13:1–20), gives them a new commandment to love one another (John 13:31–35), explains that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:1–14), and promises the Holy Spirit (John 14:15–31; 16:1–15). He tells the parable of the true vine and the branches (John 15:1–17), promises that the disciples will be persecuted (John 15:18–27), and goes into the implications of the resurrection (John 16:16–33). Finally, He prays for them that God will spiritually protect and equip them (John 17).

Maundy Thursday has been celebrated since the earliest days of the Christian Church. It commemorates Jesus' last supper with his disciples and the institution of the Lord's Supper and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, he pleads with the Lord to take away the cup of wrath from him but also submits to the Father's will. The apostles fall asleep during these hours of agony and anxiety. Jesus knew that one of his disciples would betray him, and pointed him out. It was a shuddering time for the rest. Yet still it was part of the mysterious plan of God. The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Holy Thursday is called Maundy Thursday from the old Latin name for the day, "Dies Mandatum," i.e. "the day of the new commandment" referring to the command given by Christ at the Last Supper, that we should love one another before he washed the feet of his disciples.

Maundy Thursday is believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples. Most notably, that Passover meal was when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. He then commanded them to do the same for each other.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34).

Well, for one thing, it raised the definition of love to a new and higher standard. Jesus sacrificially met His followers’ deepest need—that of new spiritual life and the forgiveness of sins. He even loved His enemies, and He calls us to show love to those who don’t appear to deserve it. Just as Jesus loved sinners “to the end” (or “to the max” John 13:1) when He had nothing to gain from them, so must we. The Bible says that there was nothing attractive about sinful mankind that drew Him to love us. God loved us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). Salvation is not only a wonderful gift that protects us from the penalty that we deserve Romans 6:23, the work of Christ also imbues new life, grants spiritual strength, and motivates godly action in those who believe:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:11-14)

The main question is are we observing Christ’s new command to love—especially those who deserve it least?

“Beloved, let us love one another. For love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8).

THE LORD’S SUPPER

I. The principal object of our Lord’s Supper, is to remind us of Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross. The bread is intended to bring to our recollection the “body” of Christ, which was wounded for our transgressions. The wine is intended to bring to our recollection the “blood” of Christ, which was shed to cleanse us from all sin. The atonement and propitiation which our Lord effected by His death as our Surety and Substitute, stand out prominently in the whole ordinance.

II. The benefit of the Lord’s Supper depends entirely on the spirit and frame of mind in which we receive it. The bread which we there eat, and the wine which we there drink, have no power to do good to our souls, as medicine does good to our bodies, without the co-operation of our hearts and wills. They will not convey any blessing to us, by virtue of the minister’s consecration, if we do not receive them rightly, worthily, and with faith.

The state of mind which we should look for in ourselves, before going to the Lord’s Table, is we ought to “examine ourselves whether we repent truly of our former sins—whether we steadfastly purpose to lead a new life—whether we have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ—and a thankful remembrance of His death—and whether we are in charity with all men.” If our conscience can answer these questions satisfactorily, we may receive the Lord’s Supper without fear.

Let us take heed to ourselves in the matter of the Lord’s Supper. It is easy to err about it. On one hand, we are not to be content with staying away from the Lord’s Table under the vague

plea of unfitness. As long as we so stay away, we are disobeying a plain command of Christ, and are living in sin. But, on the other hand, we are not to go to the Lord's Table as a mere form, and without thought. As long as we receive the sacrament in sinful state of mind, we derive no good from it, and are guilty of a great transgression. It is a dreadful thing to be unfit for the sacrament, for this is to be unfit to die. It is a no less dreadful thing to receive it unworthily, for this is most provoking to God. The only safe course is to be a decided servant of Christ, and to live the life of faith in Him. Then we may draw near with boldness, and take the sacrament to our comfort.

III. Finally, we learn from these verses, the nature of the spiritual benefits which the Lord's Supper as intended to convey, and the persons who have a right to expect them. We may gather this lesson from the significant actions which are used in receiving this sacrament. Our Lord commands us to "eat" bread and to "drink" wine. Now eating and drinking are the acts of a living person. The object of eating and drinking is to be strengthened and refreshed. The conclusion we are meant to draw, is manifestly this, that the Lord's Supper is appointed for "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls," and that those who ought to partake of it are those who are lively, real Christians. All such will find this sacrament a means of grace. It will assist them to rest in Christ more simply, and to trust in Him more entirely. The visible symbols of bread and wine will aid, quicken, and confirm their faith.

A right view of this point is of the utmost moment in these latter days. We must always beware of thinking that there is any way of eating Christ's body, and drinking Christ's blood, but by faith—or that receiving the Lord's Supper will give any person a different interest in Christ's sacrifice on the cross from that which faith gives. Faith is the one grand means of communication between the soul and Christ. The Lord's Supper can aid, quicken, and confirm faith, but can never supersede it, or supply its absence. Let this never be forgotten.

IV. Let it be a settled principle in our Christianity, that no unbeliever ought to go to the Lord's Table, and that the sacrament will not do our souls the slightest good, if we do not receive it with repentance and faith. The Lord's supper is not a converting or justifying ordinance, and those who come to it unconverted and unjustified, will go away no better than they came, but rather worse. It is an ordinance for believers, and not for unbelievers, for the living and not for the dead. It is meant to sustain life, but not to impart it—to strengthen and increase grace, but not to give it—to help faith to grow, but not to sow or plant it. Let these things sink down into our hearts, and never be forgotten.

Are we alive unto God? This is the great question. If we are, let us go to the Lord's Supper, and receive it thankfully, and never turn our backs on the Lord's Table. If we do not go, we commit a great sin.

Are we yet dead in sin and worldliness? If we are, we have no business at the communion table. We are on the broad way that leads to destruction. We must repent. We must be born again. We must be joined to Christ by faith. Then, and not until then, we are fit to be communicants.

A clear understanding of this point is of great importance. It will place us in the right position of mind, and teach us how we ought to feel in drawing near to the Lord's Table. It will produce in us true humility of spirit. The bread and wine, will remind us how sinful sin must be, when nothing but Christ's death could atone for it. It will produce in us hopefulness about our souls. The bread and wine will remind us that though our sins are great, a great price has

been paid for our redemption. Not least, it will produce in us gratitude. The bread and wine will remind us how great our debt to Christ, and how deeply bound is we are to glorify Him in our lives. May these be the feelings that we experience, whenever we receive the Lord's Supper!

Jesus participates in the Last Supper with his followers, in which he breaks the bread and passes around a cup of wine, signifying his sacrifice. The breaking of the bread and the pouring of the cup, Jesus makes it clear that his sacrifice and death is for our redemption. As he invited his disciples to partake in the Last Supper, he invites us also to a meal of faith shared among believers. By eating and drinking the Lord's Supper together, we are reminded that Jesus wants us to love each other and to forgive each other. This is the command represented in the word "Maundy." These elements are a reminder and promise of God's love for us.

The simple meal is also a symbolic teaching that Jesus's crucified body and shed blood spiritually feed us. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, as we share this meal, we share in the death and resurrection of Christ. This means that we accept with a believing heart that his body was offered for us and his blood was shed for us, granting us forgiveness and new life.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26: "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Every time we participate in communion, we recognize what happened during the events of Maundy Thursday. That our Lord Jesus was betrayed, to be tried and crucified the next day on Good Friday.

As we remember the depth of Jesus's suffering for us, the meal takes on a sadness and sombreness. Yet, we remember that Jesus rose from the dead and he will come again. Thus, this is a meal to be celebrated and laced with joy.

As he ate the Passover with the disciples, so now we eat and drink with him, the sacramental sign of his presence and his love among us. Faith nourished in prayer leads us to the Eucharist, the sign of unity and of mission in his people. In this extraordinary mystery of the Eucharist, the Lord becomes part of us and us of HIM and union with GOD.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 15th April 2022

GOOD FRIDAY

CROSS: ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SALVATION

Old Testament: Exodus 14: 15-22

Psalm: Psalms 22

Epistle: Hebrews 13: 8-17

Gospel: John 19: 23-30

Collect: GOD our very being and our salvation, we thank and praise YOU for YOUR everlasting love towards the creation. We thank YOU for sending YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST into this world as a sacrificial lamb for the redemption of the humankind. Enlighten us to understand and continue the plan of salvation for YOUR glory, through JESUS CHRIST who lives and reigns with YOU and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD forever. Amen.

THE SEVEN WORDS ON THE CROSS:

Christ Jesus died on the Cross to redeem mankind, to save us from our sins because of his love for us. As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ was mocked, scorned, and tortured in the praetorium. Condemned to death by Pontius Pilate, he carried his Cross up the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem to Calvary, was nailed to the cross, and hung between two common criminals. He suffered an indescribable end.

1st Word of meditation:

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

“By interceding for His transgressors through this prayer, Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that was foretold by Isaiah, hundreds of years prior. This prayer, from upon the cross particularly, would have been a confirmation of His identity to those awaiting their

beloved messiah, as described by the prophets of God.”

Jesus of Nazareth is looking down from the Cross just after he was crucified between two criminals. He sees the soldiers who have mocked, scourged, and tortured him, and who have just nailed him to the cross. He probably remembers those who have sentenced him – Caiaphas and the high priests of the Sanhedrin. Pilate realized it was out of envy that they handed him over (Matthew 27:18, Mark 15:10). But is Jesus not also thinking of his Apostles and companions who have deserted him, to Peter who has denied him three times, to the fickle crowd who only days before praised him on his entrance to Jerusalem, and then days later demanded his crucifixion?

Is he also thinking of us, who daily forget him in our lives?

Does he react angrily? No! At the height of his physical suffering, his love prevails and He asks His Father to forgive! Could there ever be greater irony? Jesus asks his Father to forgive, but it is by His very Sacrifice on the Cross that mankind is able to be forgiven!

Right up to his final hours on earth, Jesus preaches forgiveness. He teaches forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matthew 6:12). When asked by Peter, how many times should we forgive someone, Jesus answers seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22). He forgives the paralytic at Capernaum (Mark 2:3-12), the sinful woman who anointed him in the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:37-48), and the adulteress caught in the act and about to be stoned (John 8:1-11). During the Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, Jesus tells them to drink of the cup: “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28). And even following his Resurrection, his first act is to commission his disciples to forgive: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23). “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” Mark 11:25

2nd Word of meditation:

“I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

Now it is not just the religious leaders or the soldiers that mock Jesus, but even one of the criminals, a downward progression of mockery. But the criminal on the right speaks up for Jesus, explaining the two criminals are receiving their just due, whereas “this man has done nothing wrong.” Then, turning to Jesus, he asks, “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). What wonderful faith this repentant sinner has in Jesus! Ignoring his own suffering, Jesus responds with mercy in His second Word, living out his own Beatitude – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

The second Word again is about forgiveness, this time directed to a sinner. Jesus shows his Divinity by opening heaven for a repentant sinner – such generosity to a man that only asked to be remembered! This expression offers us hope for salvation, for if we turn our hearts and prayers to Him and accept his forgiveness, we will also be with Jesus Christ at the end of our lives.

“And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” John 12:32

Jesus was blameless, without sin, and was not guilty of such a horrific death, but two men who were guilty of their crimes hung next to Him that fateful day. Both men spoke to Jesus, but only one would die to be greeted into the promise of Heaven. The response of Jesus in

this instance was profound to the criminal, as He promised this sinner that he too would enter the gates of Heaven to live in Paradise, not later but that day!”

3rd Word of meditation:

“Dear Woman, here is your son!” and “Here is your mother!” (John 19:26-27).

When Jesus recognized His mother standing near the cross with the Apostle John, He entrusted His mother’s well-being to John’s responsibility.

Jesus and Mary are together again, at the beginning of his ministry in Cana and now at the end of his public ministry at the foot of the Cross. John is the only Evangelist to record Our Lord’s mother Mary at the Cross. The Lord refers to his mother as woman at the Wedding Feast of Cana (John 2:1-11) and in this passage, recalling the woman in Genesis 3:15, the first Messianic prophecy of the Redeemer, anticipating the woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12.

What sorrow must fill Mary’s soul! How she must have felt meeting her Son as he carried the Cross on the Via Dolorosa. And then she had to watch him being nailed to the Cross. Once again, a sword pierces Mary’s heart: we are reminded of the prophecy of Simeon at the Presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:35).

The loved ones of Jesus are with Him in John’s Gospel. There are four at the foot of the Cross, Mary his Mother, John, the disciple whom he loved, his mother’s sister Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. He addresses his third word to his mother Mary and John, the only eye-witness of the Gospel writers.

Jesus again rises above the occasion as he cares for the ones that love him. The good son that He is, Jesus is concerned about looking after his mother. But Jesus looks to John to care for her.

“Behold I make all things new.” Revelation 21:5

“Jesus established a new relationship between His beloved mother and His beloved disciple. He said to her, “Woman, behold your son, for whom, from now on, you must have a motherly affection,” and to John, “Behold you mother, to whom you must pay a sonly duty.” And so from that hour, that hour never to be forgotten, that disciple took her to his own home.”

4th Word of meditation:

Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15: 34 tells us that about the ninth hour Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

This was the only expression of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Both Gospels related that it was in the ninth hour, after 3 hours of darkness that he cried out this fourth Word. The ninth hour was three o’clock in Judea. Jesus of Nazareth fulfils the Messianic prophecy of the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53:12, Mark 15:28, Luke 24:46).

One is struck by the anguished tone of this expression in contrast to the first three Words of Jesus. He feels separated from his Father. This cry is from the painful heart of the human Jesus who must feel deserted by His Father and the Holy Spirit, not to mention his earthly companions the disciples, who “all left him and fled” (Matthew 26:56, Mark 14:50). As if to emphasize his loneliness, Mark (15:40) even has his loved ones “looking on from afar.” Jesus is now all alone, and he must face death by himself.

But is not this exactly what happens to all of us when we die? We too are all alone at the time of death! Jesus completely lives the human experience as we do, and by doing so, frees us from the clutches of sin.

His fourth Word is the opening line of Psalm 22, and thus his cry from the Cross recalls the cry of Israel, and of all innocent persons who suffer. Psalm 22 of David makes a striking prophecy of the crucifixion of the Messiah at a time when crucifixion was not known to exist: "They have pierced my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones" (22:16-17). The Psalm continues: "They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots" (22:18).

There cannot be a more dreadful moment in the history of man as this moment. Jesus who came to save us is crucified, and He realizes the horror of what is happening and what He now is enduring. He is about to be engulfed in the raging sea of sin. Evil triumphs, as Jesus admits: "But this is your hour" (Luke 22:53). But it is only for a moment. The burden of all the sins of humanity for a moment overwhelm the humanity of our Saviour.

But does this not have to happen? Does this not have to occur if Jesus is to save us? It is through the Cross that the Divine Plan of God His Father will be accomplished (Ephesians 1:7-10). It is by His death that we are redeemed. "This is good and pleasing to God our Saviour, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

"He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." 1 Peter 2:24

5th Word of meditation:

"I thirst" (John 19:28).

Here, Jesus was answering the Messianic prophecy from Psalm 69:21: "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst."

We might equate "thirsting" with Christ's call to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Another possible connection would be to link this statement with Christ's invitation that all who are thirsty are invited to drink from the waters of life (Revelation 22:17). These interpretive links are not necessarily wrong. It is out of this place of physical exhaustion that Jesus declares his thirst. The hours spent in the sun, coupled with the physical pain he was feeling, would have created mild, if not severe, dehydration. Jesus speaks of his own thirst out a real human need for sustenance and relief. On the cross, Jesus is physically thirsty."

The fifth Word of Jesus is His only human expression of His physical suffering. Jesus is now in shock. The wounds inflicted upon him in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, losing blood on the three-hour walk through the city of Jerusalem on the Via Dolorosa to Golgotha, and the nailing upon the cross are now taking their toll.

The Gospel of John first refers to thirst when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. After first asking for "a drink," he answers the woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). This passage implies there is more than just physical thirst.

Jesus also thirsts in a spiritual sense. He thirsts for love. He thirsts for the love of his Father, who has left him unaided during this dreadful hour when He must fulfil his mission all alone. And he thirsts for the love and salvation of his people, the human race. Jesus practiced what he preached:

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:12-13

6th Word of meditation:

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished;” and he bowed his head and handed over the spirit. (John 19:30).

The Gospel of John recalls the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb in Exodus 12 in this passage. The soldiers offered wine on a sprig of hyssop to the Lord. Hyssop is a small plant that was used to sprinkle the blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts of the Hebrews (Exodus 12:22). John’s Gospel related that it was the Day of Preparation, the day before the actual Sabbath Passover, that Jesus was sentenced to death (19:14) and sacrificed on the Cross (19:31). John continues in 19:33-34: “But when they came to Jesus and saw he was already dead, they did not break his legs,” recalling the instruction in Exodus 12:46 concerning the Passover Lamb. He died at the ninth hour (three o’clock in the afternoon), about the same time as the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the Temple. Christ became the Paschal or Passover Lamb, as noted by St. Paul: “For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7). The innocent Lamb was slain for our sins, so that we might be forgiven. The sixth word is Jesus’ recognition that his suffering is over and his task is completed. Jesus is obedient to the Father and gives his love for mankind by redeeming us with His death on the Cross.

The above painting is meant to capture the moment. What was the darkest day of mankind became the brightest day for mankind.

The Synoptic Gospels narrated the horror of the event – the agony in the garden, the abandonment by his Apostles, the trial before the Sanhedrin, the intense mockery and torture heaped upon Jesus, his suffering all alone, the darkness over the land, and his death, starkly portrayed by both Matthew (27:47-51) and Mark (15:33-38).

In contrast, the passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John expresses his Kingship and proves to be His triumphant road to glory. John presents Jesus as directing the action the entire way. The phrase “It is finished” carries a sense of accomplishment. In John, there is no trial before the Sanhedrin, but rather Jesus is introduced at the Roman trial as “Behold your King!” (John 19:14). Jesus is not stumbling or falling as in the Synoptic Gospels, but the way of the Cross is presented with majesty and dignity, for “Jesus went out bearing his own Cross” (John 19:17). And in John, the inscription at the head of the cross is pointedly written “Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews” (John 19:19). The inscription INRI at the top of the Cross is the Latin Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum.

When Jesus died, He “handed over” the Spirit. Jesus remained in control to the end, and it is He who handed over his Spirit.

The Gospel of John begins to reveal the Holy Spirit. Jesus mentions living water in John 4:10 and during the Feast of Tabernacles refers to living water as the Holy Spirit in 7:37-39. At the Last Supper, Christ announces he would ask the Father to send “another Paraclete to be with you always, the Spirit of truth” (14:16-17). The word Paraclete is also translated as Advocate, Counsellor, Helper, or Comforter. “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (14:26). The symbolism of water for the Holy Spirit becomes more evident in John 19:34:

“But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.” The piercing of his side fulfils the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10: “They will look on me whom they have pierced.” The piercing of Jesus’ side prefigures the Sacraments of Eucharist (blood) and Baptism (water), as well as the beginning of the Church.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

The work His Father had sent Him to do, which was to teach the Gospel, perform miracles, and achieve reconciliation for His people, was fulfilled. The debt of sin was paid.

“Jesus is saying in “It is finished” that the debt owed by man to his Creator on account of Adam’s sin is finally and forever dealt with. Jesus, with “it is finished,” is saying not only does He take away man’s sin, but now He removes it as far as the east is to the west, for is finished, done, signed, and sealed because of the blood of Jesus. When Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30) He brought about the completion of all the Old Testament prophecies, symbols, and foreshadowing about Himself.”

7th Word of meditation:

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46)

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44). Jesus willingly gave his life.

The seventh Word of Jesus is from the Gospel of Luke, and is directed to the Father in heaven, just before He dies. Jesus recalls Psalm 31:5 – “Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.” Luke repeatedly pleads Jesus’ innocence: with Pilate (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22) and immediately after His death with the centurion – “Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent” (Luke 23:47).

Jesus was obedient to His Father to the end, and his final Word before his death on the Cross was a prayer to His Father.

The relationship of Jesus Christ to the Father is revealed in the Gospel of John. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14). At the Feast of the Dedication, he remarked, “The Father and I are one” (10:30), and again at the Last Supper: “Do you not believe I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works” (14:10). And He can return: “I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father” (16:28). And in his Prayer before his Passion, he calls for unity: “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (17:11). Jesus Christ fulfils His own mission and that of His Father on the Cross:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, So that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Because He was fully God and fully man, Jesus could have taken himself off the cross, remained alive, and exerted His divine authority. He chose not to do so. His divine nature means He intentionally had to choose to no longer hold onto life. In context, it appears: “For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name’s sake you lead me and guide me; you

take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God” (Psalm 31:3-5). “

The significance of Jesus’ statement lies in a conversation he had with religious leaders about his role in God’s great plan:

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again- John 10:14.

No one truly took Jesus’ life from him. God had given him a specific task. That task was to lay down his life on behalf of the world (John 10:18).

Just as it was Jesus’ God-given task, it was also Jesus’ choice to lay down his life.

When everything was said and done, Jesus’ work on the cross was all but complete, and his proclamation, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” finished the work.

Jesus faced the incredible task of laying down his life as a ransom for the world. This task was traumatic and overwhelming, but Jesus accepted it willingly. After hanging on the cross for three hours, Jesus finally gave up his own life. He was not helpless at the hands of those who crucified him—he alone had the authority to end his life.

In Matthew 20:28, Jesus says, “The Son of Man came . . . to give his life as a ransom for many.” The crucifixion was Jesus’ plan, and it was his plan from before creation—he’s the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

The story doesn’t end here; there is the hope we celebrate at Easter. But for now, let’s take a moment to acknowledge the suffering sacrifice of our Saviour. You can give thanks to Jesus for his steadfast love and faithfulness that led him to lay down his life for you as a ransom. Remembering the resurrection of Jesus is a way to renew daily hope that we have victory over sin.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 16th April 2022

HOLY SATURDAY HOPE FOR NEW LIFE

Old Testament: Daniel 12: 1-4

Psalm: Psalms 4

Epistle: 1 Peter 4: 1-12

Gospel: John 19: 38-42

Collect: GOD of hope, we come to YOUR presence today for hope and strength in the midst of turbulent situations around us. While everything changes. YOU remain unchanged and YOUR promises are trust worthy. LORD strengthen us with the hope of new life so that we may become a channel of hope to the hopeless, through JESUS CHRIST YOUR SON our LORD, who lives and reign with the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD now and forever. Amen

I. Accounts of the burial are Matthew 27:45–57; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:44–56; John 19:38–42.

After Jesus had given up the ghost, when it was a clear case that he was dead; as it was before the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified, and before one of them pierced the side of Jesus with his spear, though that confirmed it: but it seems to be before these last things were done, and yet after the death of Christ, that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and desired leave to take down the body of Jesus. This Joseph was a counsellor, one of the Jewish Sanhedrim; though he did not give his consent to the counsel of the court concerning Jesus: he is here described by the place of his birth, Arimathea.

Being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews; not one of the twelve, but a private hearer, who had sometimes secretly attended on the ministry of Christ, loved him, and believed in him as the Messiah, but had not courage enough to confess him, and declare for him, for fear of being put out of the synagogue and Sanhedrim: but now being inspired with zeal and courage, “went in boldly,” as Mark says, and besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: from off the cross, that it might not be any more insulted by his enemies, and might not be thrown with the other bodies into the place where the bodies of malefactors were cast, but that it might be decently interred. This Pilate, the Roman governor, had the disposal of, and to him Joseph applies for it; which was a great instance of his affection for Christ, and was a declaring openly for him, and must unavoidably expose him to the malice and resentment of the Jews:

and Pilate gave him leave; having first inquired of the centurion, whether he was dead; of which being satisfied, he readily granted it; not only in complaisance to Joseph, who was a man of note and figure, but on account of the innocence of Jesus, of which he was convinced, and therefore was very willing he should have an honourable burial: he came therefore; to the cross, with proper servants with him, and took the body of Jesus; down from the cross, and carried it away.

And there came also Nicodemus, one of the three rich men in Jerusalem; to the cross, who earlier first came to Jesus by night to discourse with HIM about HIS Messiah ship, doctrine, and miracles, John 3:1 for being one of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, and a Rabbi or master in Israel, he was ashamed or afraid to converse publicly with HIM; however, he went away a disciple; and though he did not openly profess HIM, he loved HIM, and believed in HIM, and now JESUS being dead showed his respect to HIM: and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

“So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.” Mark 15:46–47.

Then took they the body of Jesus, It being taken down from the cross, and carried to the designed place of interment; they, Joseph and Nicodemus, either themselves, or by their servants, took the body; “wrapped it in linen clothes”; rolled it about the body many times, as was the custom of the eastern nations to do; this was what Joseph prepared: with the spices; which they either wrapped up with the linen cloth.

The wrapping up the body of Christ in a fine linen cloth, was a token of his purity and innocence; and significant of that pure and spotless righteousness he had now brought in: the strewing it with spices may denote the fragrance of Christ’s death to Jehovah the Father, in whose sight it was precious, and whose sacrifice to him is of a sweet smelling savour; and also to all sensible sinners, to whom a crucified Christ is precious; since by his death sin is expiated, the law fulfilled, justice satisfied, reconciliation made, security from condemnation obtained, and death is abolished.

There laid they Jesus therefore, because it was a new sepulchre, and no man had been ever laid there before.

II. Points to ponder:

Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ in secret. Disciples should openly own themselves; yet some, who in lesser trials have been fearful, in greater have been courageous.

When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it. The embalming was done by Nicodemus, a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed, may afterward resemble a strong cedar. Hereby these two rich men showed the value they had for Christ's person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross.

We must do our duty as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and his own time. We also are here taught not to be particular as to the place of our burial. He was buried in the sepulchre next at hand. Here is the Sun of Righteousness set for a while, to rise again in greater glory, and then to set no more.

The commitment God calls us to have is nothing greater than the commitment Jesus had in enduring suffering for our salvation. In the last days we need to have a commitment to God that will endure through great struggles. Taking up the cross meant that you were absolutely committed and not looking back. Many of us are defeated in our battle against sin because we refuse to sacrifice anything in the battle. We only want victory if it comes easily to us. Jesus called us to have the kind of attitude that would sacrifice in the battle against sin.

“Whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin.”

It need not mean that he no longer commits any act of sin, but that his old life, dominated by the power of sin, has been terminated.

Peter gave us two time references that are helpful in having the right attitude in our following of Jesus Christ.

- First, no longer should we live in sin, and we should answer every temptation and sinful impulse with the reply, “no longer.”

- Second, we should carefully consider how to live the rest of our time. God has appointed us some further days on this earth; when each of us must answer to Him how we live this time.

They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

III. The observance commemorates the final day of Christ's death, which is traditionally associated with HIS triumphant descent into hell. When after his death, Christ descended into hell to free all the souls who had died since the beginning of the world and allow the trapped righteous souls to reach heaven.

Peter has already told us that Jesus preached to the spirits in prison, preaching a message of judgment (1 Peter 3:19). Apparently during this same time Jesus also preached a message of salvation to the faithful dead in Abraham's Bosom (Luke 16:22) who anticipated the work of the Messiah for them. This preaching to those who are dead was not the offer of a second chance, but the completion of the salvation of those who had been faithful to God under their first chance.

In doing this, Jesus fulfilled the promised that He would lead captivity captive (Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8) and He would “proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18).

IV. Application:

We must give ourselves to watchful prayer, primarily having our hearts and minds watching and ready for the return of Jesus Christ. But this also means watching ourselves and watching this world, measuring our readiness for Jesus' coming.

Love does cover a multitude of sins, both the sins of the one loving and the sins of the one

who is being loved. Practice hospitality without grumbling.
Love will show itself as we give to the church family what God has given us as gifts. As we do so, we are good stewards of the manifold grace of God given to us.

Every part is important; each has its job to do. Even the smallest, seemingly least important part of the body of Christ is important. As we serve one another, we do it with the strength God provides, the ability which God supplies – so that to Him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.

Verses for 18th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 115-117

Psalms 115

Psalms 115:1

Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.

We must never seek glory for ourselves, but rather always desire to manifest God's glory and honour His name before the world. We must determine to live in such a way that we will not bring shame or reproach upon the name of Christ or His church.

Psalms 115:9

Trust thou in the Lord.

Those who trust in the Lord rather than in things that can be seen receive the Lord as their help and shield. He remembers those who fear Him and promises to bless them. God rules in the heaven, but He has delegated the rule of the earth to the children of men.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 40:15 – 41:11

Job 40:15

Behemoth.

Many commentators identify the behemoth as the hippopotamus, the leviathan is often identified as a giant crocodile or a whale. By these illustrations GOD emphasized that if Job could not subdue the great creatures of the world, then he was in no position to question and counsel the GOD who had made these creatures. Job must trustfully submit to GOD's rule over the universe, the affairs of humankind and the lives of His followers. He must trust GOD and maintain his faith in GOD both during the suffering and afflictions of life and during the times of blessing.

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 16: 1-19

Mark 16:9 – 20

Resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Scholars dispute whether 16:9 -20 was the original ending of Mark, primarily because, it is omitted in the earliest Greek manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses. And its literary style and emphasis differ somewhat from the rest of Mark. On the other hand there is strong evidence that this ending of Mark is very ancient.

This much is certain it represents the authentic witness of the early church's beliefs and her charismatic experience of the HOLY SPIRIT at a very early period. When properly interpreted, nothing in these verses contradicts other portions of Scripture.

Verses for 19th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 118 & 119:1-24

The Story of Psalm 118

The *Jews have a legend. A legend is a story that may or may not be true. The legend is about building the *temple in Jerusalem. The *temple was the house of GOD. They cut big stones to build the *temple. One stone was the wrong shape and size. They threw it away. Then they needed one that shape and size. They needed it to fix two walls together. So, they found the stone that they threw away. They put it in an important place at the top of the two walls. It fixed the two walls together. As Psalm 118:23 says, "The builders (men who were building) threw away a stone. It is now in an important place at the corner".

The legend makes Bible students think this: the *psalmist wrote Psalm 118 after the *Jews had built something. Perhaps they had just built the *temple, or the walls of Jerusalem. (We call the person that wrote the psalm the *psalmist.) Now Solomon built the *temple in 950 B.C. (B.C. means "years Before Christ came to the earth.) Soldiers from Babylon destroyed it in 586 B.C. The *Jews built it again in 516 B.C. They built the walls round Jerusalem again in 444 B.C.

Bible students think that the date of Psalm 118 is 444 B.C. This is because the *Jews had a special *feast (big party) in 444 B.C. They called it "the *feast of tree houses". This was because they made little houses with branches from trees. They lived in them for a few days in October. This *feast happened every year. But in 444 B.C., it was very important, because they had just built the walls of Jerusalem. The story is in Nehemiah 8:14-18. But why do

Bible students think this? They think this because of a strange verse in the psalm, (verse 27). One way to translate the middle of the verse is, “with branches in your hands, go with the people at the *feast”.

Psalms 118 is the sixth of the Egyptian Hallel. It is the last of the Egyptian Hallel. There are more Hallel in Psalms 135 and 136, but they are not Egyptian. “Egyptian” means that they made the *Jews think of what GOD did in Egypt. HE led them from Egypt hundreds of years before. HE made them free. But HE also led them from Babylon 900 years later. HE made them free again. So the Psalm starts, “Thank the *LORD because he is good”. *LORD is a special *covenant name for GOD.

A *covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to his people. They agree to love and obey Him.

But the psalm continues, “Israel and the house of Aaron and everyone that is afraid of the *LORD must now say, ‘His kind love will always be with us’.” So, the “I” and the “me” in verses 5-28 is not one person. It is all the people of Israel, and the house of Aaron, and the people that are afraid of the *LORD. Psalm 116 is about one person in trouble. He prayed to GOD, and then could say “He saved me!”

But Psalm 118 is about a whole country in trouble. They prayed “Hosanna now!” and He saved them too. Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means “Save us now!” Hebrew is the language that the *Jews spoke. But we can all read Psalm 118 for ourselves, even if it was for all the people.

So Bible students believe that the *psalmist wrote Psalm 118 for a special “feast of tree houses”* in 444 B.C. The *Jews sang this psalm at every *feast of tree houses after that. They also sang it, and the other Egyptian Hallel, at the Passover. This was the *feast (big party) in March-April when they remembered Egypt. They remembered that GOD made them free from Egypt. Christians also sing this psalm at Passover. Christians call their Passover “Easter”*. For Christians the Psalm means more than it does for the *Jews. It means that JESUS, not Israel, is the stone that the builders threw away. Builders are people that build things. For Israel, her people became the important “stone” in the history (story) of the world. Israel is still important because of all the trouble round her. But for Christians, JESUS is the important “stone”. HE causes people of different countries to join together and live in unity. So when we read Psalm 118 we must remember this: it means two different things. It means one thing to *Jews, and something else to Christians. But we must also remember that GOD made it like this. HE wanted what happened to the *Jews to be a picture of what would happen to JESUS. As JESUS is the Christian *Messiah, we call this a messianic psalm.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 41: 12-34

The Leviathan is a mighty creature with great power and no human can deal with it. This leviathan has been created by GOD. If such language describes the terrible force of Leviathan, just one of the creation by GOD, then, what words can express the power of GOD’s wrath? Under a humbling sense of our own vileness, let us revere the Divine Majesty; take and fill our allotted place, cease from our own wisdom, and give all glory to our gracious GOD and Saviour. Remembering from whom every good gift cometh, and for what end it was given, let us walk humbly with the LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 15: 1-19

1 Corinthians 15:2

If ye keep in memory what I preached.

Believers are not those who merely have faith in Jesus Christ. Rather believers are those who have faith in Christ as He is revealed in the full message of the gospel. Their faith in Christ is always bound to the Word of God and the doctrine of the apostles. For this reason believers can be described as people who submit without reservation to its authority, hold firmly to its teaching, trust its promises, heed its warnings and follow its command.

Verses for 20th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 25-72

Psalms 119:27

Make me to understand the way of thy precepts.

GOD's WORD can only be understood fully with His help, thus we should continually pray to GOD, through His HOLY SPIRIT, to draw near to us, to increase our understanding and to teach us His truth.

Psalms 119:50

My comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

GOD has ordained that His WORD, made powerful by the SPIRIT, will bring comfort, hope and strength to His faithful as we experience trouble and sorrow. Because GOD's WORD is living and active, it has power to revive and restore us who abide in it and in GOD. When in trouble, turn to the LORD and His WORD and wait for His SPIRIT to impart His life and peace to you.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 42: 1-17

Job 42:5**Now mine eye seeth thee.**

Job had earlier prayed to see His Redeemer, now that longing was fulfilled. The LORD's words and presence brought Job a greater revelation of GOD's ways and character. Through this personal Experience, Job was transformed by a sense of forgiveness, a renewed confidence in GOD's goodness and reassuring experience of His love, GOD's appearance to Job was a vindication of Job's uprightness, and it is assurance to all faithful believers that the LORD will accept our sincere questions when we are undergoing unexplained adversity and suffering. GOD is patient with His own and sympathizes with our weaknesses, our His understandings and even our anger. As with Job, if we endure, GOD will manifest His presence and extend His care to us.

NEW TESTAMENT**1 Corinthians 15: 20-34**

All that are by faith united to Christ, are by His resurrection assured of their own. As through the sin of the first Adam, all men became mortal, because all had from him the same sinful nature, so, through the resurrection of Christ, shall all who are made to partake of the Spirit, and the spiritual nature, revive, and live for ever. There will be an order in the resurrection. Christ himself has been the first-fruits; at His coming, His redeemed people will be raised before others; at the last the wicked will rise also. Then will be the end of this present state of things. Would we triumph in that solemn and important season, we must now submit to His rule, accept His salvation, and live to His glory. Then shall we rejoice in the completion of His undertaking, that GOD may receive the whole glory of our salvation, that we may for ever serve Him, and enjoy His favour. What shall those do, who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Perhaps baptism is used here in a figure, for afflictions, sufferings, and martyrdom, as Matthew 20:22, 23. What is, or will become of those who have suffered many and great injuries, and have even lost their lives, for this doctrine of the resurrection, if the dead rise not at all? Whatever the meaning may be, doubtless the apostle's argument was understood by the Corinthians. And it is as plain to us that Christianity would be a foolish profession, if it proposed advantage to themselves by their faithfulness to GOD; and to have our fruit to holiness, that our end may be everlasting life. But we must not live like beasts, as we do not die like them. It must be ignorance of GOD that leads any to disbelieve the resurrection and future life. Those who own a GOD and a providence, and observe how unequal things are in the present life, how frequently the best men fare worst, cannot doubt as to an after-state, where everything will be set to rights. Let us not be joined with ungodly men; but warn all around us, especially children and young persons, to shun them as a pestilence. Let us awake to righteousness, and not sin.

Verses for 21st April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 73-120

Psalms 119:89

Thy word is settled in heaven.

For us today, Scripture refers to the authoritative writings of both the Old Testament and New Testament the Bible. They are GOD's original revelation of HIMSELF and HIS saving activity for all people. Scripture is the very life and WORD of GOD. Down to the very words of the original manuscripts, the Bible is without error, absolutely true, trustworthy and infallible. This is true not only when it speaks of salvation, ethical values and morality.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 1: 1-18

Joshua 1:5

I will be with thee.

GOD's foundational promise to Joshua -I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee is likewise GOD's commitment to all believers during their journey and conquests of

faith. GOD's abiding presence with us is now a reality through HIS SON and the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 15: 35-49

- 1) How are the dead raised up? That is, by what means? How can they be raised?
- 2) As to the bodies which shall rise. Will it be with the like shape, and form, and stature, and members, and qualities?

The former objection is that of those who opposed the doctrine, the later of curious doubters. To the first the answer is, this was to be brought about by Divine power; that power which all may see does somewhat like it, year after year, in the death and revival of the corn. It is foolish to question the Almighty power of GOD to raise the dead, when we see it every day quickening and reviving things that are dead. To the second inquiry; the grain undergoes a great change; and so will the dead, when they rise and live again. The seed dies, though a part of it springs into new life, though how it is we cannot fully understand. The works of creation and providence daily teach us to be humble, as well as to admire the Creator's wisdom and goodness. There is a great variety among other bodies, as there is among plants. There is a variety of glory among heavenly bodies. The bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be fitted for the heavenly bodies. The bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be fitted for the heavenly state; and there will be a variety of glories among them. Burying the dead, is like committing seed to the earth, that it may spring out of it again. Nothing is more loathsome than a dead body. But believers shall at the resurrection have bodies, made fit to be for ever united with spirits made perfect. To GOD all things are possible. HE is the Author and Source of spiritual life and holiness, unto all His people, by the supply of HIS HOLY SPIRIT to the soul; and HE will also quicken and change the body by HIS Spirit. The dead in Christ shall not only rise, but shall rise thus gloriously changed. The bodies of the saints, when they rise again, will be changed. They will be then glorious and spiritual bodies, fitted to the heavenly world and state, where they are ever afterwards to dwell. The human body in its present form, and with its wants and weaknesses, cannot enter or enjoy the kingdom of GOD. Then let us not sow to the flesh, of which we can only reap corruption. And the body follows the state of the soul. He, therefore, who neglects the life of the soul, casts away his present good; he who refuses to live to GOD, squanders all he has.

Verses for 22nd April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 121-160

Psalms 119:136

Rivers of waters run down mine eyes.

Those who love GOD's WORD will experience grief and sorrow, even anger, when they see GOD's laws rejected and scorned by ungodly, these feelings will undoubtedly continue until return of CHRIST.

Psalms 119:151

Thou are near, O Lord.

The psalmist experiences GOD's nearness in times of trouble because he loves the LORD and is devoted to meditating on HIS WORD. The LORD is near to all who love HIM and HIS WORD. If you have trouble in your life, take your Bible and let GOD's SPIRIT and WORD revive your relationship with Him.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 2: 1-21

Joshua 2:5

Whither the men went I know not.

Rahab's lie does not justify lying by New Testament believers in special circumstances. At this time, Rahab was not a member of the covenant community and was not bound to the moral laws of the covenant. Her lying never received approval of the Scripture, only her faith and works.

GOD in no way needed to rely on deception to fulfil His covenant promises or to protect the spies.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 15: 50-58 & Galatians 1: 1-5

1 Corinthians 15:52

We will be changed.

The resurrection of the body is an essential doctrine in Scripture. It refers to GOD's raising a human body from the dead and reuniting it with the person's soul and spirit, from which at death it was separated during the intermediate state.

Our bodily resurrection is guaranteed by the fact of Christ's resurrection.

Verses for 23rd April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 120-125

Psalms 120:1-7

He heard me.

The grand thought of this pilgrim psalm is that GOD who created the heavens and earth also watches over the lives of all those who trust HIM and HIS WORD. No evil will be allowed to destroy their fellowship with HIM.

Psalms 121:2

My help cometh from the LORD.

Family friends or wealth must never be viewed as our ultimate source of help in this life. That belongs to GOD, the only source for meeting our needs physically and spiritually. We must trust in HIM with all our hearts and seek HIM for grace to help in time of need.

Psalms 122:1

The house of the LORD.

GOD's house should be a place where the believer joyfully experiences intimate communion with the LORD, the fellowship of the SPIRIT and the love of fellow believers.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 3: 1-17

Joshua 3:5

Sanctify yourselves.

The act of sanctification points to the principle that GOD will not act powerfully on behalf of His people if they are not inwardly clean and aligned with His will. Before we ask GOD to perform signs and wonders in our midst, we must first make sure our hearts are pure and our desires guided by His HOLY SPIRIT.

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 1: 6-24

Galatians 1:15

GOD, who separated me.

Although Paul was primarily referring to his apostolic ministry, there is a sense in which each believer has been set apart by grace so that GOD may reveal His SON in him or her. We have been separated from sin and the present evil age so that we might live in fellowship with GOD and witness to JESUS CHRIST before the world. To be set apart means to be with GOD, for GOD and near GOD, living in faith and obedience for His glory and the revealing of His SON.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 25th April 2022

Mark, Evangelist

Collect: Almighty God, who taught us through Mark the evangelist to discern Your glory in the passion of Your Dear Son; preserve Your Church from all false teaching, and grant that we may ever stand firm in the truth of the Gospel; through Jesus Christ Your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

Verses for 26th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 136 – 138

Psalms 138: 1-5

When we can praise GOD with our whole heart, we need not be unwilling for the whole world to witness our gratitude and joy in HIM. Those who rely on HIS loving-kindness and truth through JESUS CHRIST, will always find HIM faithful to HIS WORD. If HE spared not HIS own SON, how shall HE not with HIM freely give us all things? If GOD gives us strength in our souls, to bear the burdens, resist the temptations and to do the duties of an afflicted state, if he strengthens us to keep hold of himself by faith, and to wait with patience for the event, we are bound to be thankful.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 5:1 – 6:5

Joshua 5:2**Circumcise again the children of Israel.**

Under the old covenant circumcision marked every male as a child of Abraham and a servant of the LORD GOD. Circumcision qualified them to partake of the blessings of the covenant. It was moreover, a sign of their obedience to the covenant. Even though GOD's people had invaded the Promised Land, the spiritual preparation of circumcision and the Passover was needed before they could begin the actual conquest.

Joshua 5:14**Captain of the host of the Lord.**

Joshua is made aware of the unseen presence of GOD and HIS heavenly army prepared to do battle alongside His faithful people. Joshua's experience teaches us as believers that we are not alone in our struggles on this earth. There are spiritual forces fighting on our behalf as well as against us. We have the HOLY SPIRIT, who remains constantly at our side as our helper and defender.

Joshua 6:1**Jericho.**

The city of Jericho covered about eight acres. It was a fortress city not just for its residents, but also for the inhabitants of the nearby countryside. The walls may have been as much as 30 feet high and 20 feet wide. Jericho was considered to be invincible, protected by the gods of the Canaanites. The capture of Jericho was the key to Joshua's whole strategy, for it would demonstrate that Israel's GOD was superior to the Canaanite gods, thus the defeat of the Canaanites.

NEW TESTAMENT**Galatians 3: 1 – 18****Galatians 3:5****The Spirit.**

Paul's reference to the SPIRIT include both the baptism in the SPIRIT and subsequent special operations.

Galatians 3:11**The just shall live by faith.**

Paul quotes to illustrate the justification by faith, by inner righteousness through the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT.

Galatians 3:14**Blessing of Abraham.**

We are redeemed from the curse of sin and the law and receive the blessing of Abraham through Jesus Christ, as a result we can receive the promise of the SPIRIT by faith with HIS life and power.

Verses for 27th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 139 – 141

Psalms 139

Thou hast searched me.

This psalm describes various aspects of GOD's attributes, especially HIS omnipresence and omniscience as these characteristics relate to HIS care for HIS people. The GOD of heaven and earth created us and has perfect knowledge of us HE is always with us and HIS thoughts are always directed towards us in every situation.

Psalms 140:1—13

Deliver me O LORD from evil men.

We should ask GOD to deliver us not only from evil people, but also from the evil one-satan. As our greatest enemy, he seeks to snare and destroy us.

Psalms 141:5

Let the righteous smite me.

If we sincerely desire to please our LORD we will welcome rebuke that convicts us of anything contrary to the holiness of GOD. When a righteous person cries out fervently against sin and compromise in the church he or she should be supported. Our attitude towards such servants of GOD reveals our own spiritual state.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 6: 6 – 21

Joshua 5:20

The wall fell down flat.

The wall collapsed by a direct act of GOD. The city was taken because of Israel's obedience to GOD's WORD and their faith in the miraculous power. Because the city was not rebuilt for several hundred years, very little of the remains of this level of the destroyed city have been found most of what was left weathered away.

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 3: 19 – 29

Galatians 3:19

Wherefore then serveth the law?

The word for law means teachings or direction. The law can refer to the Ten Commandments, the Pentateuch or any commandment in the Old Testament. Paul's use of law here would include the sacrificial system of Mosaic covenant.

Although Old Testament law was holy, good and righteous, it was inadequate in that it could not impart spiritual life or moral strength. The law acted as a temporary tutor for GOD's people until salvation through faith in CHRIST came. The law was given to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Verses for 28th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 142 – 144

Psalm 142

I cried unto the Lord with my voice.

This psalm comes from a person who is deeply troubled and overwhelmed by a desperate situation. Although the psalmist is experiencing loneliness without any supporting human companionship or sympathy, the LORD still remains his refuge, friend and helper. When believers are afflicted and oppressed, rather than remaining silent, they should cry out to GOD, who has pledged Himself to be our comforter and helper in time of need.

Psalm 143

Hear my prayer, O Lord.

This Psalm describes a believer who was facing overwhelming adversity and testing and who feels he has reached the end of his endurance. All he has left is prayerful hope that GOD will revive him again and deliver him, out of his great trial.

Psalm 144

Blessed be the LORD my strength.

GOD is an immovable rock, stronghold, shield and deliverer for those who take refuge in HIM. HE trains the hands of the righteous for war and their fingers for battle in all areas of spiritual conflict.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 6: 22 – 7:5

Jericho was to be a solemn and awful sacrifice to the justice of GOD, upon those who had filled up the measure of their sins. So HE appoints, from whom, as creatures, they received their lives, and to whom, as sinners, they had forfeited them. Rahab perished not with them that believed not, Acts 14:31. She, and they with her, were plucked as brands from the burning. With Rahab, or with the men of Jericho; our portion must be assigned, as we possess or disregard the sign of salvation; even faith in CHRIST, which worketh by love. Let us remember what depends upon our choice, and let us choose accordingly. GOD shows the weight of a Divine curse; where it rests there is no getting from under it; for it brings ruin without remedy.

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 4: 1 – 20

Galatians 4:6

The Spirit ...crying Abba, Father.

One of the Holy Spirit's task is to create in GOD's children a feeling of filial love that causes them to know GOD as their Father. The term ABBA is Aramaic meaning Father, it was the word JESUS used when referring to Heavenly Father. The combining of the Aramaic term ABBA with the Greek term for father expresses, the depth of intimacy, deep emotion, earnestness, warmth and confidence by which the Spirit of adoption causes us to cry out. Father to GOD. Two sure signs of the Spirit's work within us are the spontaneous cry to GOD as Father and the spontaneous obedience to JESUS as LORD.

Verses for 29th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 145 & 146

The Story of Psalm 146

Bible students call the last 5 psalms the *Hallelujah Psalms. This is because they all start and end with the Hebrew word “Hallelujah”.

The *Jews spoke the Hebrew language and wrote their psalms in Hebrew.

“Hallel” means “*praise”, or “tell someone that they are very great”. The “u” means “you” ... all of you! “Jah” is one of God’s names.

Most Bibles translate it *LORD with 4 capital letters. It has a meaning and a use. The meaning may be that HE will always be alive. The use is as a *covenant name.

A *covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to His people. And His people agree to love and obey HIM.

We do not know who wrote Psalms 146–150. And we do not know when they wrote them. Most Bible students think that the *psalmist wrote them for the new *temple in Jerusalem. The *psalmist was the person that wrote the psalms. For half of the psalms David was the *psalmist. But there were many other *psalmists, most of them after David died. Some Bible students think that maybe Ezra or Nehemiah was the *psalmist for Psalms 146–150. The *temple was GOD's house in Jerusalem. Enemies destroyed it 600 years before JESUS came to the earth. But 70 years after the army of Babylon destroyed it, the *Jews built it again. They made the Book of Psalms at this time to use in the new *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 7: 6 – 26

Achan...the anger of the LORD.

The sin of Achan, its consequence within Israel and the severe penalty upon Achan and his family reveal severe principles of judgement when GOD's people flagrantly sin. When there is serious sin among GOD's people blessing of GOD is diminished, hindered or lost altogether. GOD will not bless the people who refuse to remove sin from their midst. Purity must be guarded and Obedience demanded.

NEW TESTAMENT

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Galatians 4:21 – 5:12

Galatians 5:6

Faith which worketh by love.

The Bible maintains that a person is saved through faith. In this passage Paul defines the exact nature of that faith. Saving faith is a living faith in a living Saviour, a faith so vital that it cannot avoid experiencing itself in the love motivated deeds, show a real concern for the work of GOD's kingdom and actively resist sin and the world does not qualify as saving faith.

Verses for 30th April 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 147 & 148

Psalms 147:6

The Lord lifteth up the meek.

The word meek often includes the idea of suffering and refers to those who are afflicted, because, such people cannot cope with all of life problems and responsibilities by themselves, in humility they call upon GOD for HIS help and strength. GOD lifts up the meek and gives support. The psalmist assures them of GOD's help and ultimate victory. As GOD supported the meek in Old Testament times, JESUS ministers to the afflicted and humble under the new covenant. Since GOD delights in those who are of a humble spirit, of humility so that they may please HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 8: 1 – 29

Observe Joshua's conduct and prudence. Those that would maintain their spiritual conflicts must not love their ease. Probably he went into the valley alone, to pray to GOD for a blessing, and he did not seek in vain. He never drew back till the work was done. Those that have stretched out their hands against their spiritual enemies, must never draw them back. GOD, the righteous Judge, had sentenced the Canaanites for their wickedness; the Israelites only executed his doom. None of their conduct can be drawn into an example for others. Especial reason no doubt there was for this severity to the king of Ai; it is likely he had been notoriously wicked and vile, and a blasphemer of the God of Israel.

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 5:13 – 6:10

Galatians 5:13

Called to liberty.

The freedom that comes through CHRIST is first and foremost, liberation from the condemnation and slavery of sin, and the whole dominion of Satan. True liberation begins with the believers union with CHRIST and receiving the HOLY SPIRIT.

Galatians 6: 6 – 10

Communicate unto Him.

It is the duty of all who are taught GOD's Word to help provide material support for those who instruct. Those who are worthy of support include those in the fivefold ministry.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
MAY

Verses for 2nd May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 6 – 9

Psalms 6

Psalm 6 is known as the first of the seven penitential psalms – songs of confession and humility before God.

Verse 1:

We don't know what the occasion of this song was, but because of his sin David sensed he was under the rebuke of God. Therefore, he called out to God to lighten the chastisement.

There may be times when we believe we are chastened by God's hand when really, we suffer trouble brought upon ourselves. Nevertheless, there are certainly times when the LORD does chasten His children.

We know that God's chastening hand is not primarily a mark of His displeasure, but rather it is a mark of adoption. Hebrews 12:7 makes it clear that chastening is evidence of our adoption: If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? When God corrects us it doesn't feel pleasant, but it is good and it is for our good.

Living before the finished work of Jesus, David had less certainty about his standing with God. On this side of the cross, we know that all the anger God has toward the believer was poured out on Jesus at the cross. God chastens the believer out of correcting love and not out of anger.

Verses 2 & 3:

David knew the trial of physical weakness and pain. In the midst of this kind of chastisement, he cried out to God for mercy. David knew the trials of spiritual weakness and pain. The difficulty of these trials drove David to seek mercy from God. These trials of body and soul were amplified by David's sense of God's anger against him. When we are not confident in God's love and assistance, even small trials feel unbearable. God wants us to yearn for higher ground and to use that yearning as a motivation to seek Him and get things right with Him.

Verses 4 & 5:

In his agony David pleads for deliverance – but on the ground of God's mercy, not his own righteousness. David knew that the LORD's chastisement was righteous, but he also knew that God is rich in mercy.

David felt distant from God. When we sense that God is near us, we feel that we can face anything. But when we sense that He is distant from us, we feel weak before the smallest trial.

The fact that David appealed to the mercy of God for deliverance was evidence that he was aware that he did not deserve it.

Verses 6 & 7:

God's chastising hand was heavy upon David. His life seemed to be nothing but tears and misery. David's trial had at least three components.

- David felt God was angry with him.
- David lacked a sense of God's presence.
- David couldn't sleep.

Verses 8 – 10:

It may be that the sin that led David into this chastisement was association with the ungodly. Here we see David acting consistently with his change of heart and telling all ungodly associates to depart. It is important to separate from ungodly associations.

David ended the psalm on a note of confidence. He made his agonized cry to God, and God heard him. Weeping has a voice before God. It isn't that God is impressed by emotional displays, but a passionate heart impresses Him. David wasn't afraid to cry before the LORD, and God honoured the voice of his weeping. David knew that when God heard and answered his prayer, it would be trouble for his enemy.

What a sudden change is here! Having made his request known to God, the psalmist is confident that his sorrow will be turned into joy. By the workings of God's grace upon his heart, he knew his prayer was accepted, and did not doubt but it would, in due time, be answered.

His prayers will be accepted, coming up out of the hands of Christ the Mediator.

The word signifies prayer made to God, the righteous Judge, as the God of his righteousness,

who would plead his case, and right his wrongs.

A believer, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, can go to God as a righteous God, and plead with him for pardon and cleansing, who is just and faithful to grant both. He prays for the conversion of his enemies, or foretells their ruin.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 8:30 – 9:15

Joshua 8: 30 & 31

This is in fulfilment of Deuteronomy 27-28. There, the Lord told Israel when they came to the Promised Land, to come to these mountains, build an altar, sacrifice to the Lord, and read the law. We see an appropriate act of worship, and consecration to God, following a great victory. God always should get the glory.

Joshua 8: 32 – 35

In this act of obedience we see Joshua as a man of the Book, obeying the command of Joshua 1:8. We also see Israel as a people of the Book ordering their lives after God's word. This was a beautiful place to do this, and the whole nation could hear this reading of the Law. The area has a natural amphitheatre effect because of the contour of the hills.

According to Deuteronomy 27-28, the altar was built on the mountain of cursing, Mount Ebal. We need the covering sacrifice exactly at the point where our sin and failures are revealed, and God's curse is pronounced on our sin.

Joshua 9: 1& 2

When the Canaanite kings heard how the Lord delivered Jericho to Israel, they had reason to be afraid. When they heard how the Lord gave them victory over Ai, they had reason to be afraid.

Joshua 9: 3 – 6

The Gibeonites will try to deceive Israel into making a peace treaty with them, though Israel was forbidden to make peace with any of the tribes of Canaan (Exodus 23:23-24). Notice the methods of deception used by the Gibeonites. They were clever (craftily), they misrepresented themselves (pretended), and they even gave false "evidence" as part of their deception (old sacks...old wineskins...old and patched sandals...dry and mouldy bread). Beyond their deceptive appearance, the Gibeonites simply lied. They said, "We have come from a far country" when of course they had not. All their other devices simply lead to strengthen the deception offered.

Joshua 9: 7 – 13

Plainly, the Gibeonites lied to Israel. But despite their lies, they have a proper admiration and honour for the GOD of Israel. Because of the name of the LORD your GOD; for we have heard of His fame shows that it is because GOD fights for Israel, they know it would be useless to oppose the nation.

Joshua 9: 14 – 15

The Gibeonite deception was clever, and therefore powerful. But the real problem was that Joshua and the leaders of Israel never sought the Lord. This shows that they trusted their senses instead of the LORD. "Look at this bread. Feel and taste how stale it is. Surely, they must have come a long way." They walked by sight, not by faith. Because they believed that the Gibeonites were from a distant land, they made the treaty with them. God allowed Israel to make treaties with distant nations, but not with the Canaanites.

NEW TESTAMENT

Galatians 6: 11 – 18 and Philippians 1: 1 – 11

Galatians 6: 11 – 18

Paul personally picks up the pen and writes with large letters to emphasize his concluding words and to validate that the letter was genuine. He writes a conclusion and summary of the entire book. Paul is taking the pen in hand at the end of this letter and underlining and highlighting his central message. It's the only time in any of his letters that he provides a concluding summary of his book in this way. It will either make or break the church. What he says is this: What's most important is that to avoid false gospels, and instead boast in the cross. What is most important for both individual, and church, is two things: that the false gospel of self-salvation should be avoided, and that instead boast only and exclusively in the cross.

The first thing that Paul says as he picks up his pen is that he warns us. He warns us against a tendency that we all have. He warns us of a danger that can and will seep into our churches. The danger is this: that we will want to contribute something to our salvation. The danger is that we will try to add to the gospel, and by doing so will actually subtract from the gospel and end up destroying our souls. It's not that we try to blatantly replace the gospel. We simply add to it. And adding to it destroys it.

Paul says that there is a counterfeit gospel that will seep into our lives and into our churches. It is one of the greatest dangers we face. The counterfeit gospel is that we think we have to contribute to our own salvation, to our own acceptance with God, through our own efforts. All through Galatians, Paul has been warning against this danger. It's a clear and present danger, and one that seems to be built right into our hearts. Our hearts are out of alignment and continually want to veer off toward self-salvation. It takes a lot of focus to resist this drift. The danger is doing something external that contributes to our salvation. It's doing something that, we think, adds to what Jesus has done in order to earn acceptance with God. This is the danger: that we will pick some external behaviour as our contribution to our salvation. And slowly, without even realizing it, we begin to trust in our own righteousness rather than in the finished work of Christ at the cross.

There are 2 problems. The first problem is Paul sees the options here as gospel on one hand — trusting Jesus Christ alone for salvation — or some external self-salvation project, and he instantly recognizes that many of us will do anything we can to avoid trusting in Jesus Christ alone. There is something within all of us that balks at trusting in Jesus Christ alone. Our motivation is wrong. Our motivation is to avoid the harsh truth that there is nothing we can contribute in order to be accepted by God.

There's a second problem. Paul says that those who are pushing for works-righteousness can't themselves keep the standard they're arguing for. "For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law..."

At the end of his letter, Paul picks up his pen to emphasize the importance of avoiding the false gospel of self-salvation. Avoid trying to earn God's approval through your own righteousness. What does Paul say we should do instead? Not only should we avoid the false gospel of self-salvation, but we should also boast exclusively in the cross. This is what's most

important. The great theme of every preaching from beginning to end should be: that our only confidence, our only boast, our only hope is the saving work of Jesus Christ at the cross.

Everybody boasts in something. It could be your popularity, intellect, appearance, influence, income, or job performance. It could be your religious accomplishments. But we also need to understand something else. Our boasting, our obsession, our identity, should ultimately come from one place only: the cross of Jesus Christ. Paul says, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul looked at the cross and saw that God loved us enough to send his Son to die for us. He looked to the cross and saw his salvation. Christ has paid the full price for our salvation. We’ve been forgiven and justified. God’s wrath has been turned away, and we now stand innocent before God. Don’t boast in anything else. Boast only in the cross.

If you glory in the cross, you have to stop trusting in your own merits and trust in Christ alone. “Only if we have humbled ourselves as hell-deserving sinners shall we give up boasting of ourselves, fly to the cross for salvation and spend the rest of our days glorying in the cross.” So understand that we all boast. Then understand that it only makes sense to boast in one thing: the cross. And then understand what it does to us. When we boast in the cross, it changes everything. The cross completely changes what we value and care about.

The gospel completely changes what we boast in. It completely changes our identity and values. When the cross grips us, we begin to see it as the only thing that truly matters. Friends, Paul wants us to get this. At the end of his letter he takes a pen in his hand. He wants us to get what matters most. And this is what he says: don’t you ever think it’s up to you to measure up. Put all of your confidence, all of your boasting, in what Jesus has done for you. If you’re going to brag about anything, brag about Jesus and his saving work.

- o For those who walk in this new creation, peace and mercy will be upon them and the grace of Jesus will be with them.
- o What counts is God changing us from the inside out.
- o Mature Christians minister out of pure motives of love.

Verses for 3rd May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 10 – 14

Psalms 11:1 – 7

In the Lord put I, my trust.

This psalm rebukes those who counsel flight or compromise when Biblical principles are at stake. Faithful believers will take refuge in the Lord. And remain committed to righteousness even if the moral and spiritual foundations are destroyed in both society and church the result

will be that the Lord's countenance doth behold the upright.

Psalms 13:5

My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

The answer to God's apparent delay is to trust in His loving kindness, which will appear in His own time and way.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 9:16 – 10:11

The Gibeonites do not justify their lie, but plead that they did it to save their lives. And the fear was not merely of the power of man; one might flee from that to the Divine protection; but of the power of God himself, which they saw engaged against them. Joshua sentences them to perpetual bondage. They must be servants, but any work becomes honourable, when it is done for the house of the Lord, and the offices thereof. Let us, in like manner, submit to our Lord Jesus, saying, We are in thy hand, do unto us as seemeth good and right unto thee, only save our souls; and we shall not repent it. If He appoints us to bear his cross, and serve him, that shall be neither shame nor grief to us, while the meanest office in God's service will entitle us to a dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of our life. And in coming to the Saviour, we do not proceed upon an adventure. We are invited to draw nigh, and are assured that he that cometh to Him, he will in no wise cast out. Even those things which sound harsh, and are humbling, and form sharp trials of our sincerity, will prove of real advantage.

When sinners leave the service of Satan and the friendship of the world, that they make peace with God and join Israel, they must not marvel if the world hate them, if their former friends become foes. By such methods Satan discourages many who are convinced of their danger, and almost persuaded to be Christians, but fear the cross. These things should quicken us to apply to God for protection, help, and deliverance.

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 1: 12 – 30

Philippians 1:19

The Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit, who dwells in the believer, is called the Spirit of Jesus Christ, because it is Christ who imparts the Spirit to the believer at conversion, and subsequently baptizes the believer in the Spirit. This Spirit is the same Spirit who anointed in His ministry and redemptive mission.

Verses for 4th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 15 – 17

Psalm 15

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?

This psalm Answers the question: What sort of person experiences the intimate presence and fellowship of God? It implies that we can cause God to withdraw His presence from our lives

through our acts of unrighteousness, deceit, slander or selfishness. Thus we should examine our actions daily, confess our sins, turn from them, constantly seek through Christ to present ourselves to God as those approved, and realise that to lose communion with God is to lose everything.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 10: 12 – 43

Joshua 10:12

Spake Joshua to the Lord.

Joshua prayed for a miracle, and God answered his prayer. As believers we should not hesitate to pray that the Lord would work in extraordinary ways on our behalf. God's people live in hostile and evil world, thus we are faced with such challenges and difficulties that miracles are sometimes needed to fulfil His plan and purpose for our lives.

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 2: 1 – 18

Philippians 2:12

Work out your own salvation.

As believers saved by grace, we must work out our salvation to the end. If we fail to do this, we will lose the salvation given to us. We do not work out our salvation by mere human efforts, but by means of God's grace and the Spirit's power given to us.

In order to work out our salvation we must resist sin and follow the desires of the Holy Spirit within us. This involves a sustained effort to use every God appointed means for defeating evil and revealing Christ's life. Thus, working out our salvation focuses on the importance of sanctification.

Verses for 5th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18: 1 – 50

The story of Psalm 18

This is a very special psalm. It is so special that you will find it in 2 places in the Bible. It is here in the Book of Psalms. It is also in a part of the Bible that we call the Book of Samuel. Samuel is in 2 parts. 1 Samuel tells the story of David before he became king of Israel. 2 Samuel tells us the story of David after he became king. 1 Samuel also tells us about the lives

of Samuel the prophet and Saul the king. Why is Psalm 18 in the Book of Samuel? (2 Samuel 22) Because it is David's own story of his life. Here we have put it in 6 parts. This gives help to everyone that reads it. It is like 6 different psalms. We can study it like that. But we must read the whole psalm to understand the life of David. That is why it is also in 2 Samuel. The title (in brackets) of each part is not in the Hebrew Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 11: 1 – 23

Joshua 11:18

Joshua made war a long time.

The conquest of Canaan was an extended series of campaigns lasting about 5 years. This can be deduced from the age references of Caleb five years elapsed in his life from the beginning of the conquest until Caleb was given Hebron.

Joshua 11:20

Lord to harden their hearts.

Because the wickedness of the Canaanites was so terrible GOD decided they must be destroyed. To accomplish this HE hardened their hearts so that they resolved stubbornly to make war against Israel. There may come a time when a person or nation becomes so wicked that mercy is withdrawn and judgement is inevitable.

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 2:19 – 3:6

Philippians 2:19

Timotheus.

Timothy was a good example of what a minister and missionary of GOD should be. He was an eager and obedient student of the Word of GOD, a worthy servant of Christ, a man of good reputation, beloved and faithful, genuinely concerned for others, dependable, devoted to Paul and the Gospel.

Verses for 6th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 19 – 21

Psalms 19:12

Cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Sincere believers endeavour to love and serve GOD with all their hearts. Because they are still imperfect in this life, however, they may fall short of GOD's will without knowing it and thus need to seek GOD's will and forgiveness for their errors and hidden faults. On the other hand, presumptuous or wilful sins are the great transgressions that involves despising GOD and His WORD and the loss of a place in HIS kingdom.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 12: 1 – 24

Fresh mercies must not drown the remembrance of former mercies, nor must the glory of the present instruments of good to the church diminish the just honour of those who went before them, since GOD is the same who wrought by both. Moses gave to one part of Israel a very rich and fruitful country, but it was on the outside of Jordan. Joshua gave to all Israel the holy land, within Jordan. So the law has given to some few of GOD's spiritual Israel worldly blessings, earnest of good things to come; but our LORD JESUS, the true Joshua, provided for all the children of promise spiritual blessings, and the heavenly Canaan.

We have here the limits of the country Joshua conquered. A list is given of the kings subdued by Israel: thirty-one in all. This shows how fruitful Canaan then was, in which so many chose to throng together. This was the land GOD appointed for Israel; yet in our day it is one of the most barren and unprofitable countries in the world. Such is the effect of the curse it lies under, since its possessors rejected CHRIST and HIS gospel, as was foretold by Moses, Deuteronomy 29:23. The vengeance of a righteous GOD, inflicted on all these kings and their subjects, for their wickedness, should make us dread and hate sin. The fruitful land bestowed on His chosen people, should fill our hearts with hope and confidence in HIS mercy, and with humble gratitude.

NEW TESTAMENT

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Philippians 3: 7 – 21

Philippians 3:8 – 11

That I may win Christ.

These verses show the apostle's heart and the essence of faith. Paul's greatest longing was to know Christ Jesus more intimately, to experience His personal fellowship and nearness in greater measure. His pursuit involved the following.

True knowledge of Christ involves listening to His Word, following His Spirit, responding to His dealings with us in faith, truth and obedience, and identifying with His concerns and purposes.

To know the power of the resurrection of Christ.

To share in Christ's sufferings by self-denial.

JOHN APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Old Testament- Exodus 33: 18 – 23

Psalms- Psalms 27

Epistle- 1 John 1: 1 – 4

Gospel- John 21: 20 – 25

Collect:

Almighty GOD, whose apostle and evangelist John revealed to us YOUR SON as the Light of the World, grant us so as to walk in that Light that we may abide in YOUR Truth and live in YOUR presence; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU in the unity of the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, now and ever. Amen.

Verses for 7th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 22 – 24

Psalms 24:4

Clean hands, and a pure heart.

David emphasizes that those who want to worship and serve GOD and receive HIS blessing must be pursuing a pure heart and a righteous life. Clean hands are hands free from external acts of sin. A pure heart refers to inward holiness, right motives and goals, only the pure in heart will see GOD.

Psalms 24:7 – 10

King of glory.

These verses are Messianic, the king of glory is the LORD JESUS. The generation of them that seek him must pray that the king of glory shall come. This prayer for GOD's kingdom to come anticipates CHRIST's eternal reign and the final destruction of evil.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 13: 1 – 23

Joshua 13:6

Them will I drive out.

GOD promised to drive out the Canaanites before Israel, yet the promise was conditional on Israel's obedience. Because Israel neglected to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, GOD allowed some of them to remain among HIS people. This led to numerous problems for the Israelites, especially that of falling into idolatry. GOD is not bound to HIS promises if we are not faithful to their conditions.

Joshua 13:7

Divide this land for an inheritance.

The dividing of the land among the 12 tribes, was a deep spiritual experience for the Israelites, it fulfilled GOD's promise concerning the land and inspired hope for a greater fulfilment of the peace they now enjoyed.

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 4: 1 – 23

Philippians 4:7

Peace of God ...shall keep your hearts.

When we call on GOD from hearts that remain in CHRIST and HIS WORD, then the peace of GOD will flood our troubled souls. This peace is an inner tranquillity mediated by the Holy Spirit. It involves a firm conviction that Jesus is near and that God's love will be active in our lives for good. When we lay our troubles before God in prayer, this peace will stand guard at the door of our hearts and mind, preventing the cares and heartaches of life from upsetting our lives and undermining our hope in Christ. If fear and anxiety return, prayer petition and thanksgiving will once again place us under the peace of God that guards our hearts. There we are safe and rejoice in the Lord.

Verses for 9th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 29 – 31

Psalms 29

A Psalm of David.

Exhortation to give glory to GOD

The mighty and honourable of the earth are bound to honour and worship HIM; but few attempt to worship HIM in the beauty of holiness. When we come before HIM as the Redeemer of sinners, in repentance faith, and love, HE will accept our defective services, pardon the sin that cleaves to them, and approve of that measure of holiness which the HOLY SPIRIT enables us to exercise. We have here the nature of religious worship; it is giving to the LORD the glory due to HIS name. We must be holy in all our religious services, devoted to GOD, and to HIS will and glory. There is a beauty in holiness, and that puts beauty upon all acts of worship. The psalmist here sets forth GOD's dominion in the kingdom of nature. In the thunder, and lightning, and storm, we may see and hear HIS glory. Let our hearts be thereby filled with great, and high, and honourable thoughts of GOD, in the holy adoring of whom, the power of godliness so much consists. O Lord our GOD, thou art very great! The power of the lightning equals the terror of the thunder. The fear caused by these effects of the Divine power, should remind us of the mighty power of GOD, of man's weakness, and of the defenceless and desperate condition of the wicked in the Day of Judgment. But the effects of the Divine word upon the souls of men, under the power of the Holy Spirit, are far greater than those of thunder storms in the nature world. Thereby the stoutest are made to tremble, the proudest are cast down, the secrets of the heart are brought to light, sinners are converted, the savage, sensual, and unclean, become harmless, gentle, and pure. If we have heard GOD's voice, and have fled for refuge to the hope set before us, let us remember that children need not fear their Father's voice, when HE speaks in anger to His enemies. While those tremble who are without shelter, let those who abide in His appointed refuge bless Him for their security, looking forward to the Day of Judgment without dismay, safe as Noah in the ark.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 13:24 – 14:5

Joshua 13: 24 –28

The portion of Gad's land

Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which is before Rabbah, and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as its border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Joshua 13: 29-32

The portion of half the tribe of Manasseh's land.

Moses also had given an inheritance to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families. These are the areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward.

Joshua 13:33

More on the inheritance of the Levites

But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.

- a. The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them: In Joshua 13:14, we are told that the Levites had no land for an inheritance, but instead had the sacrifices Israel brought to God. They also received a greater inheritance than that: God Himself.
- b. The Lord God of Israel was their inheritance: In this sense, if there is any tribe that Christians are spiritually connected to, it is the tribe of Levi. We also are called priests (1 Peter 2:5) and have a special inheritance in God (Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:12, and 1 Peter 1:4).
- c. As He had said to them: Many of us are dissatisfied with our place before God. We wish He would have given us something different, and we can even get bitter towards God about this. The primary answer to this is to see ourselves as priests and to understand that our real inheritance is GOD Himself.

Joshua 14: 1 & 2

The distribution of the land on the western side of the Jordan River.

Joshua, Eleazar and representatives from each tribe came together to supervise the casting of lots, which was directed by the Lord.

Joshua 14: 3 – 5

Although there were twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), the descendants of one of his sons, Joseph, divided into two tribes (Manasseh and Ephraim). For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their commons for their livestock and their property. As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 1: 1 – 17

The apostle Paul follows the normal pattern for writing a letter in ancient times. We write a letter by saying who the letter is to first, and we conclude with writing who the letter is from. In the ancient culture of Paul, a letter began with writing who the letter is from, and then stating who the letter is to.

Paul had an extensive history of contact with the city of Corinth, beginning with when he established the church in Corinth, coming there after Athens and staying a year and a half (Acts 18). He wrote a letter to the Christians in Corinth from the city of Ephesus (Acts 19), 1 Corinthians 5:9. Paul then received reports about disturbances in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11); and questions from the congregation (1 Corinthians 7:1). Then Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to respond to these reports.

Paul's standing and authority as an apostle were not appreciated among the Christians of Corinth. Paul was not an apostle because of a popular election, not an apostle through the appointment of the other apostles. But an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, not the will of any man." Paul was a "special ambassador" of Jesus Christ to the world and to the church.

Most people today associate the word church with a building where Christians meet. But the

ancient Greek word for church (ekklesiai) was a non-religious word for an “assembly” of people, typically gathered together for a specific purpose.

Corinth was a major city of business, especially because of its location. The Corinthian people are shown to have, at times, morality problems, doctrine problems, church government problems, spiritual gift problems, church service problems, and authority problems. Understanding the tension between the church and the city is important to understanding the letter of 1 Corinthians. The bottom line is this: is the church influencing the city, or is the city influencing the church?

The words sanctified and saints communicate the same idea, of being set apart from the world and unto God. The Corinthian Christians are called saints, but this was not based on the outward performance of the Corinthians. It was founded on a promise of God, They are saints together with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is both their Lord and our Lord, and because they share a common Lord, they share an essential unity.

The greeting including grace and peace is typical of Paul’s letters, and draws from both Greek and Jewish customs. Grace is always first, peace always second. This is due to the fact that grace is the source of peace. Without grace there is and can be no peace, but when grace is ours, peace must of necessity follow.

Paul will later spend most of this letter rebuking sin and correcting error, yet he is still sincerely thankful for God’s work in the Corinthian Christians. Paul thanks God for the gifts among the Corinthians, even though they were causing some trouble. He recognizes that the gifts were not the problem, but wrong attitudes and beliefs about the gifts.

Paul praises God for their positives, and expresses confidence that God will take care of their weak points, and confirm them to the end, so that they would be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Confident because God is faithful. He is the One who has called them into the fellowship of His Son, so He is the One who will confirm them to the end and present them blameless.

Paul pleads with them – to be unified as believers. The Corinthian church suffered under quarrelling and conflict. This conflict had made them divide up into “parties” or “cliques,” each party having its own “leader.” When Paul explained it like this, it shows how foolish it is to focus on anyone but Jesus.

For Paul, preaching was more important than baptizing, the power of baptism is in the spiritual reality it represents, and not in who performs it. Also Paul says, if one preaches the word with a reliance on wisdom of words, they can make the gospel of no effect.

Verses for 10th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 32 & 33

Psalms 32:2

Imputeth not iniquity, to show that GOD treats sincerely repentant sinners as righteous, not because righteousness is something they earn through works, but receive as a gift when they confess their sins and believe in the LORD.

Psalms 33:6

By the word of the LORD....the breath of HIS mouth.

This verse contains an important Biblical truth, the union of the power of GOD's WORD with the power of GOD's SPIRIT always releases the creative power of GOD on behalf of His people.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 14:6 – 15:12

Joshua 14:14

Caleb ...holy followed the LORD.

Caleb remained faithful to GOD and received fully his promised inheritance. His life illustrates the believer's faithfulness and acceptance of the promise of the Father under the new covenant.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 1: 18 – 31

I Corinthians 1:18

It is the power of GOD.

The message of the Cross not only involves wisdom and truth, but the active power of GOD coming down to save, heal, drive out demons and redeem from sin's power.

1 Corinthians 1:20

The wisdom of this world.

The wisdom of the world is a wisdom that excludes GOD, emphasizes human self-sufficiency, makes humanity the highest authority and refuses to recognize the revelation of GOD in JESUS CHRIST. This wisdom GOD calls foolishness, for through it humans have failed to find the truth or come to know their Creator. The believers' worldview when derived from the Word of GOD and the revelation of the Cross will be fundamentally incompatible with the secular worldview of human wisdom. The gospel and the message of the cross must be err to be accommodated to philosophical science or any other so called human wisdom.

Verses for 11th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 34 & 35

The Story of Psalm 34

Saul was King of Israel. He wanted to kill David. David ran away. Saul followed him. David went to Gath, which was a Philistine city. The king of Gath was Abimelech. He was not a friend to David. David became afraid. He should have trusted in the LORD. He did not, but made a plan of his own. He made Abimelech think that he, David, was crazy. For this reason, Abimelech did not kill David. In those days they thought that it was wrong to kill crazy people. Abimelech sent David away. He went to a cave in Adullam, which was a few miles away. 400 people went to the camp that David made in Adullam. They were running away from a difficult life in Judah. Today we would say that they were refugees. The story is in a Part of the Bible that we call I Samuel, chapters 21 and 22. In Psalm 34 David thanked GOD that he was safe

Psalm 34 is an alphabet psalm. There are 22 verses in it. Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. Verse 1 begins with aleph, verse 2 with Beth, and so on. We have put verse 16 before verse 15, because this makes it easier to understand. Because it is an alphabet psalm there are a lot of different ideas in it. Other alphabet psalms are 9, 10, 25, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 15: 13 – 63

Achsah obtained some land by Caleb's free grant. He gave her a south land. Land indeed, but a south land, dry and apt to be parched. She obtained more, on her request, and he gave the upper and the nether springs.

Those who understand it but of one field, watered both with the rain of heaven, and the springs that issued out of the earth, countenance the allusion commonly made to this, when we pray for spiritual and heavenly blessings which relate to our souls, as blessings of the upper springs, and those which relate to the body and the life that now is, as blessings of the nether springs. All the blessings, both of the upper and the nether springs, belong to the children of GOD. As related to CHRIST, they have them freely given of the FATHER, for the lot of their inheritance.

Here is a list of the cities of Judah. But we do not here find Bethlehem, afterwards the city of David, and enabled by the birth of our Lord Jesus in it. That city, which, at the best, was but little among the thousands of Judah, Micah 5:2, except that it was thus honoured, was now so little as not to be accounted one of the cities.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 2: 1 – 16

1 Corinthians 2:12

That we might know.

The things that GOD has prepared for those who love HIM can be understood by believers through the SPIRIT's revelation and illumination. As believers read and study the Bible, the SPIRIT illuminates their understanding of the truth. The SPIRIT also gives to faithful believers a strong assurance of the divine origin of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2:16

We have the mind of CHRIST.

To have the mind of CHRIST means knowing HIS will and HIS redemptive plan and purpose. It means appraising and seeing things the way GOD sees them.

Verses for 12th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 36 & 37

Psalms 37: 1—40

Fret not thyself.

This psalm is not a prayer, but a series of proverbial expressions of instructions about Godly wisdom. Its theme concerns the believers attitude toward the apparent success of the wicked and the hardship of the righteous, it teaches that the ungodly will eventually be cast down and lose all they acquired on earth, whereas the righteous who remain loyal to GOD will have HIS presence, help and guidance on earth and will inherit salvation and the promised land. According to the New Testament the believers' inheritance is a new heaven and a new earth.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 16:1 – 17:10

Joshua 17:4

The LORD commended Moses.

This verse makes it clear that the people regarded the Pentateuch as the WORD of GOD to be obeyed in every detail .The written WORD of GOD , revealed by HIM to Moses , constituted the standard of authority for all GOD's people , including Eliezer the priest and Joshua.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 15

1 Corinthians 3:1

Not...spiritual.

One of the Corinthian church's major problem was its attempt to experience GOD's blessing while refusing to separate itself from the world's evil ways.

JESUS Himself warns that any church that tolerates within its fellowship the world's unrighteous practices or the distortion of Biblical truths. The SPIRIT calls such a church to repentance.

Verses for 13th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 38 & 39

Psalms 38: 3

No soundness in my flesh.

The psalmist emphasizes two consequences of committing serious sin after knowing the LORD and having received HIS mercy. Divine anger and judgement. The teaching that GOD always forgives and forgets sin without ever chastening the repentant sinner, even after experiencing GOD's forgiveness, may experience for some time thereafter the temporal consequences of their forgiven sin, sometimes for years.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 17:11 – 18:10

Joshua 17:13

Did not utterly drive them out.

Israel failed to possess the land fully and to completely drive out the Canaanites for two reasons. They wanted the profit and affluence gained from the forced labour and tribute of the Canaanites. Compromising the will of GOD for cease and money sowed the seeds for widespread apostasy.

Joshua 18:1

Set up the tabernacle.

Israel moved its centre of worship from Gilgal to Shiloh. There they set up the tabernacle, the place in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept and where GOD manifested HIS presence among the people in a special way. The tabernacle remained in Shiloh till the time of judges. Until Philistines captured it during the time of Samuel.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 3: 16 – 4: 5

1 Corinthians 3:17

Him shall God destroy.

Paul presents one of the strongest warnings in the New Testament to anyone responsible for building Christ's church. The passage has special relevance for all those in teaching, leadership positions. If anyone defiles or corrupts GOD's temple, GOD Himself will punish that individual with terrible ruin and eternal death. People corrupt and destroy Christ's church by showing indifference to Scriptural truth.

Verses for 14th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41

The Story of Psalm 40

If you read Psalms 37 – 39 you will find that David has been very sad. Now GOD has answered all his prayers. Psalm 40 is a song that says, ‘Thank you’ to GOD. But David still has problems. So the end of the psalm asks for more help. We can use the end of the psalm by itself. We see this in Psalm 70, which is Psalm 40: 13 – 17. It is after Psalm 40 for you to study it.

What Psalm 40 means

Verse 2: It is not easy to get out of very wet (muddy) ground.

Verse 5: We do not know what GOD has planned for each of us.

Verse 6: A master would make a hole in his slave’s ear and fasten it to the door, if the slave wanted to stay with his master.

Verse 7: In the New Testament JESUS said that this was about HIM. This is in Hebrews 10: 7.

Verses 12 – 17: Here the psalm changes. It is not a song of praise and thanks any more.

David has more problems, so he asks GOD for more help.

In verse 15 “Aha, aha” is just a noise that is not kind!

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 18:11 – 19:16

The boundaries of each portion were distinctly drawn, and the inheritance of each tribe settled. All contests and selfish claims were prevented by the wise appointment of GOD, who allotted the hill and the valley, the corn and pasture, the brooks and rivers, the towns and cities.

Is the lot of any servant of CHRIST cast in affliction and sorrow? It is the LORD; let him do what seemeth him good.

Are we in prosperity and peace? It is from above.

Be humbled when you compare the gift with your own unworthiness. Forget not Him that gave the good, and always be ready to resign it at his command.

The men of Judah did not oppose taking away the cities within their border, when convinced that they had more than was right. If a true believer has obtained an unintended and improper advantage in anything, he will give it up without murmuring. Love seeketh not her own, and doth not behave unseemly; it will induce those in whom it richly dwells, to part with their own to supply what is lacking to their brethren.

In the division to each tribe of Israel, the prophetic blessings of Jacob were fulfilled. They chose for themselves, or it was divided to them by lot, in the manner and places that he foresaw. So sure a rule to go by is the WORD of prophecy: we see by it what to believe, and it proves beyond all dispute the things that are of GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 4: 6 – 21

1 Corinthians 4:8

Ye are full...are rich.

Some Corinth boasted of their wisdom, superior knowledge and spiritual gifts. Paul shows them that the true life of a faithful believer is the way of the Cross and that suffering must precede glory.

1 Corinthians 4: 9 –13

The apostles- Appointed- to death.

Here Paul lists the trials endured by the apostles. The verb set forth suggests that GOD has appointed the apostles to a life of suffering, to be seen by the world, by angels and the church.

Verses for 16th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 45 & 46

The Story of Psalm 45

The famous English author, C. S. Lewis, wrote that some of the psalms meant two things. He also wrote that Psalm 45 was a good example of this. What did C. S. Lewis mean? He thought that Psalm 45 meant one thing before JESUS came to the earth and something else after He came!

1) Before JESUS came to the earth, it meant this. The king in verses 2-9 was the king of Judah or Israel. He was the *Messiah. The words “did this by pouring *oil over” in verse 7 are “*messiahed” in Hebrew! They poured *oil (from the fruit of a tree we call the olive) over Him when He became king. All the kings of Judah and Israel were GOD’s *messiahs.

The *queen in verses 10-15 was the woman that the king married. Some Bible students think that the *sons of Korah sang Psalm 45 when King Solomon married his *queen. Others think that they sang it every time a king married. The “*sons of Korah” were the people that sang in the *Temple. The *Temple was the house of GOD. King Solomon built the *Temple in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah.

2) After JESUS came to the earth it meant something else. This is a more important meaning for Christians. They think that verses 2-9 describe JESUS, the King of kings. Verses 10-15 describe the Church, all Christians.

A few Christians think that the psalm only means one thing. They think that:

- The king in verses 2-9 is always GOD
- The *queen in verses 10-15 is always GOD’s people.

GOD’s people were the Jews in the Old Testament, and are Christians in the New Testament and after. They think this because all through the Bible marriage is a picture of GOD as husband and His people as His wife.

This shows us that Psalm 45 is not a simple psalm. We must never think that we understand it completely. GOD will always have something new to say to us through it!

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 19:17 – 51

Joshua waited till all the tribes were settled, before he asked any provision for himself. He was content to be unfixed, till he saw them all placed, and herein is an example to all in public places, to prefer the common welfare before private advantage. Those who labour most to do good to others, seek an inheritance in the Canaan above: but it will be soon enough to enter thereon, when they have done all the service to their brethren of which they are capable. Nor can anything more effectually assure them of their title to it, than endeavouring to bring others to desire, to seek, and to obtain it.

Our LORD JESUS came and dwelt on earth, not in pomp but poverty, providing rest for man, yet Himself not having where to lay His head; for CHRIST pleased not Himself. Nor would He enter upon His inheritance, till by His obedience to death He secured the eternal

inheritance for all His people; nor will He account His own glory completed, till every ransomed sinner is put in possession of His heavenly rest.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 5: 1 – 6: 11

1 Corinthians 5:12

Judge them that are within.

Believers must not be involved in superficial or unjust criticism of another believer. However, Paul here does indicate that the church must judge its members according to GOD's WORD and standards.

1 Corinthians 6: 11

Justified- By the Spirit.

Justification involves both the redemptive grace of the LORD JESUS and the work of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Verses for 17th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 47– 49

Praise

The Hebrew word for this is *zamar*, from which we get our word “psalm”. Remember, we pronounce “psalm” as “sarm”. We pronounce “zamar” as “sarmar”. So, psalm means *praise!

What Psalm 47 means

Korah is after Psalm 43 in this set of psalms and *SELAH is in What Psalm 46 means, verses 1 – 3. The other two Hebrew words in this translation are “shofar” and “*maskil”. A *shofar was something that made music. We would call it a “*musical instrument”. It made a loud noise that told soldiers that it was time to fight. In verse 5 servants of GOD, called *priests, blew the *shofars. It was a way of giving GOD *praises. The Jews called some of the psalms “*maskils”. Psalms 42 and 44 are examples. We are not sure what the word means. We think that it means that it teaches us something important.*

The important verse in this psalm is verse 5. It says, “GOD has gone up”. Where has He gone to? Where did He go up from? To understand, we must go back to Psalm 46. There, we said that GOD saved Jerusalem from an enemy, perhaps Assyria. To do this, the Jews believed that GOD came down from *heaven, to Jerusalem. *Heaven is where GOD lives. We do not know where it is. After GOD had beaten the enemy, He went back up to *heaven. So, “GOD has gone up” means that He has gone up from Jerusalem, back into *heaven. It was the people who made the great noise. They were so happy that GOD had saved them that they shouted and sang. They also made a noise by *clapping their hands together. Today we call this “applause”.

Verse 9 is interesting. It tells us that people who are not Jews have joined with the Jews. Together, they *praise and *worship GOD. *Worship means that they love GOD, and so they want to obey Him. It also means that they are a bit afraid of GOD. Some people show this by getting down on their knees in front of GOD. We call this “kneeling”. It does not matter who we are, we can all *worship GOD. We only have to “want to be His servants”.

For centuries, Christians have sung this psalm on Ascension Day. That is the day when Christians remember JESUS going up to *heaven. JESUS did what GOD did in the psalm. He came down to the earth, He saved us from our enemy, and He went back up after He had finished His work. Our enemy is not Assyria, but death. If we believe in JESUS, we will live with JESUS *for ever when we leave this earth. That is why Christians love Psalm 47:6.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 20:1 – 21:8

These cities, as those also on the other side Jordan, stood so that a man might in half a day reach one of them from any part of the country. GOD is ever a Refuge at hand. They were all Levites’ cities. It was kindness to the poor fugitive, that when he might not go up to the house of the LORD, yet he had the servants of GOD with him, to instruct him, and pray for him, and to help to make up the want of public ordinances.

Some observe a significance in the names of these cities with application to CHRIST our Refuge.

Kedesh signifies holy, and our Refuge is the holy JESUS.

Shechem, a shoulder, and the government is upon his shoulder.

Hebron, fellowship, and believers are called into the fellowship of CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

Bezer, a fortification, for He is a strong hold to all those that trust in Him.

Ramoth, high or exalted, for Him hath GOD exalted with His own right hand.
Golan, joy or exultation, for in Him all the saints are justified, and shall glory.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 6:12 – 7:7

1 Corinthians 16:15

The members of Christ.

The apostle, warning against moral laxity, shows the terrible consequences of sexual immorality for the believer. When he joins his body to an immoral woman, it causes him to become one with her, to come under her domination, to desecrate what the cross has made Holy and to sever himself from the kingdom of GOD. In sexual immorality people virtually remove themselves from union with CHRIST by making their bodies members of immoral and ungodly persons.

Verses for 18th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 50 & 51

Psalms 50: 16 – 23

What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?

The LORD delivers a stern warning to religious hypocrites among His people, threatening to tear in pieces those who pretend to be devoted to Him, who claim the covenant salvation and the blessings of His Word and who at the same time ignore His righteous commands and conform to ungodliness of wicked society. They will find no deliverance in the end in fact such people will receive greater damnation.

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart.

All believers need GOD's SPIRIT to create in them a clean heart that hates iniquity and a renewed Spirit that desires to do the will of GOD. Only GOD can make us a new creation and restore us to true godliness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 21: 9 – 45

Joshua 21:45

There failed not ought if any good thing which the LORD had spoken, emphasizes GOD's faithfulness in keeping HIS WORD to the forefathers, for HE had given the promised land to the descendants of Abraham. GOD was faithful in fulfilling HIS promise to the Israelites, yet they had to do their part in faithfully obeying the covenant, or they would fail to possess the Land completely.

Likewise in the new covenant GOD will faithfully fulfil all HIS promises to us as believers, yet we have to do our part in faithful obedience if we are to possess fully GOD's promises and kingdom. If receiving GOD's promises fall short, the failure lies with us, not with our LORD. It is GOD's desire to give HIS people the kingdom.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 7: 8 – 31

1 Corinthians 7:19

Keeping of the commandments of GOD.

How can Paul, who emphasized so strongly salvation by faith, say that what really matters is keeping the commandments of GOD? He can say this because salvation by faith, if genuine, will lead to obeying, loving and serving GOD. Anything less than such obedience falls short of New Testament saving faith.

Verses for 19th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 52 – 54

The Story of Psalm 54

Saul wanted to kill David. David went to Ziph to hide from Saul. Ziph was near where David's family lived. David gave help to the people of Ziph to fight their enemies. The enemies were the Philistines. But the men of Ziph *betrayed David. This means that they told Saul where David was. This was wrong because:

- David had given them help
- David was one of their tribe (a tribe is *like a big family).

A snake is an animal. In the Bible, it is often a picture of Satan. Satan is GOD's great enemy. When JESUS called people "snakes", HE meant that they were friends of Satan. "A snake in the grass" is an enemy that you think is a friend. The men of Ziph were *like this with David.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 22: 1 – 20

Joshua 22:12

Go up to war against them.

The children of Israel were ready to go to war against some of their brothers because they believed they had built an altar in rebellion against the LORD GOD, they were willing to fight against their own people in order to defend the truth and purity of GOD. To demonstrate their love to their fellow Israelites, Joshua and the children of Israel first sent a delegation to try to resolve the problem and achieve reconciliation.

Understanding and reconciliation were achieved without war, and both faithfulness to GOD and love for others were upheld. Truth and love continue under the new covenant. Believers must stand for GOD's truth and holiness without compromise, while at the same time acting in love toward those they must oppose.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 7:32 – 8:13

1 Corinthians 8:2

He knoweth nothing.

Those who base their right to do questionable things on their knowledge and mature understanding show that in reality they do not know as they ought. Our knowledge in this life is always incomplete and imperfect. Thus, our actions must first be based upon love for GOD and others. Those who live by the rule of love are those who are known of HIM.

Verses for 20th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 55 & 56

The Story of Psalm 55

David had a friend. They did a lot of good things together. But one day the friend *betrayed David. David thought that his friend liked him, but he was wrong. His friend worked for David's enemies. This is *like JESUS' friend Judas. Judas told JESUS' enemies where to capture JESUS. Judas *betrayed JESUS as David's friend *betrayed David. But who was David's friend?

- Maybe it was Ahithophel. You will find the story in 2 Samuel 15:31; 16:15-23 and 17:1-23. Old Jewish Bibles tell us that it was Ahithophel, but not everyone agrees.
- Maybe it was Absalom. Absalom was King David's son. So, he was a *prince. "A man just *like me" in verse 13 may mean "a king or a *prince *like me". Again, not everyone agrees. The story of how Absalom tried to kill David and become king himself is in 2 Samuel chapters 15 to 19.
- Maybe we will never know! David had many friends whose names we do not know. Many Christians now think that one of these *betrayed David. They said that they were David's friends, but they helped David's enemies in a secret way.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 22:21 – 23:9

Joshua 22:34

A witness...that the Lord is GOD.

The altar erected on the east side of Jordan was to function as a witness and a memorial for future generations that those tribes were bound to remain faithful to the LORD and to serve only HIM.

Visible ties of faith passed on between generations, such as a special Bible, a gift, a photo, a memorial or a family tradition, can similarly remind Christians and their children of their commitment to GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 9: 1 – 23

1 Corinthians 9:19

I made myself servant unto all.

Paul uses himself as an example of the principle of self-denial for the sake of others. He renounces rights out of sympathetic consideration for the convictions of others, in order not to limit his ministry or hinder the gospel. This practice does not mean that Paul compromises Christian principles or seeks to please others for the purpose of winning their esteem. What he affirms is that he is prepared to conform to the convictions of those whom he is trying to help, provided Christian principles are not violated.

Verses for 21st May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 57 & 59

Psalms 57:1

In the shadow of THY wings.

The shadow of GOD's wings represents HIS love, protection, strength and gracious presence. We take refuge under THOSE wings when we come to HIM in prayer and rely on HIM in faith. In the shadow of HIS wings we are protected from everything that would work contrary to HIS purpose for our lives.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 23:10 – 24:7

Joshua 23:11

Love the Lord.

Joshua exhorted Israel to cleave to the LORD and love HIM diligently, just as HE loved them. Love for the gratitude to GOD provided the inner motivation for them to obey HIS WORD, and remain separate from the ungodly ways of the nations. New Testament believers are called to the same kind of love and commitment.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 9:24 – 10:13

1 Corinthians 10:6

These things were our examples.

GOD's terrible judgement on the disobedient Israelites serves as an example and a warning for those under the new covenant not to desire evil things. Paul warns the Corinthians that if they repeat Israel's unfaithfulness, they too will receive GOD's judgement and fail to enter the promised heavenly country.

Verses for 23rd May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 62 – 65

The Story of Psalm 63

The Church has used this as a morning song for hundreds of years. This is because verse 1 says, “I will look for you early”. The Hebrew word “early” can also mean “in a special way”.

Maybe David wrote this psalm when he wrote Psalm 3. Psalm 3 is another morning song. David wrote it when his son Absalom tried to kill him. David ran away to Edom. Edom is east of Jerusalem where David lived. To get to Edom David went through a *wilderness, or a wild place. There was not much water and it was very dry. It made David think that he was very dry. This was not because he was *thirsty for water but *thirsty for GOD! He could not go to the *Temple in Jerusalem and speak to GOD. David prays that GOD will send somebody to kill his enemies. Then he can go back to the *Temple, or the house of GOD, in Jerusalem.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 24: 8 – 28

Joshua 24:15

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Inherent in the salvation provided by GOD is the issue of personal choice. Each believer must continually choose whom he or she will serve. As with Joshua and the Israelites, serving the LORD is not merely a onetime choice, we must choose time after time to believe, trust, persevere in the faith, and to obey GOD and HIS WORD. The renewal of the right choice by the believer involves the fear of the LORD, loyalty to the truth, obedience from the sincere heart and the renunciation of sin with its associated pleasures. Failure to choose to serve and love the LORD will eventually result in judgement and destruction.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 10: 14 – 33

1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing.

The cup of blessing was the name of the final blessing offered at the end of the common Jewish meal. It was this cup that JESUS blessed at the end of the Last supper when HE sipped and that HE interpreted it in the New Testament as being HIS blood.

The communion of the Blood of CHRIST refers to the believer sharing in the salvation provided by CHRIST's death.

Scripture does not teach that the bread and the fruit of the vine actually become CHRIST's body and blood.

Verses for 24th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 66 & 67

Psalms 67: 1–2

GOD ...bless us ...That THY way may be upon earth.

This psalm reminds us of GOD's plan for HIS people when HE first reminds us of GOD's plan for HIS people when HE first called Abraham. GOD chose this man so that through his descendants, GOD and HIS redemptive love might become known to the nations of the world. HE intended that Israel's reception and enjoyment of HIS grace and blessings would cause the heathen nations to take notice, so that they might Praise HIM accept HIS ways of truth and righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua 24: 29 – 33

Joseph died in Egypt, but gave commandment concerning his bones, that they should not rest in their grave till Israel had rest in the land of promise. Notice also the death and burial of Joshua, and of Eliezer the chief priest. The most useful men, having served their generation, according to the will of GOD, one after another, fall asleep and see corruption. But JESUS, having spent and ended HIS life on earth more effectually than either Joshua or Joseph, rose from the dead, and saw no corruption. And the redeemed of the LORD shall inherit the kingdom HE prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They will say in admiration of the grace of JESUS, unto HIM that loved us, and washed us from our sins in HIS own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto GOD and HIS FATHER, to HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Proverbs 1: 1 – 6

Proverbs 1:2

Wisdom.

As used in this book, wisdom means living and thinking according to GOD's righteous truth and ways, it means to approach all of life from GOD's point of view, believing that everything GOD says is right and true and the only sure standard by which we live.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 11: 1 – 26

1 Corinthians 11:20

The Lord's Supper.

Its significance relates to the past, present and the future.

CHRIST's death is our ultimate motivation against falling into sin and abstaining from all appearance of evil.

The Lord's Supper is a fellowship with CHRIST and participation in the benefits of HIS sacrificial death, as well as a fellowship with the other members of the body of CHRIST.

The Lord's Supper is the foretaste of the future kingdom of GOD.

Verses for 25th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 68 & 69

Psalms 68:5

A father of the fatherless.

The fatherhood of GOD for the believer is emphasized in both Old Testament and New Testament. GOD delights in protecting the weak, disabled, wronged and lonely among His people. If you feel alone in this world you should ask GOD to put you under HIS special care and protection.

Psalms 69:9

The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

The psalmist bears rejection, shame and alienation because of his righteous zeal for GOD's house and kingdom. He has spoken against sin and has pleaded for revival, cleansing and reformation among GOD's people, for this he has suffered at the hands of those who were comfortable with the spiritual status quo.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 1: 7 – 33

Proverbs 1:26

Your calamity.

The book of Proverbs emphasizes that GOD has given absolute standards of right and wrong in HIS WORD. To disregard them will bring tragic results in our lives. One of the greatest truths we can learn in our youth is that we will indeed reap what we sow. The eventual price we pay for sin is anguish, suffering and even disaster.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 11:27 – 12:11

1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 6

Spiritual gifts.

The term that the Bible uses for spiritual Gifts specify their nature, refers to supernatural manifestations that come as gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT operating through believers for the common good.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 26th May 2022

**Ascension of our Lord
Glorified Christ**

OT Dan 7:9–14

Psalm 47

Epist Acts 1:1—11

Luke 24:50–53

Collect: Almighty God we Thank You for the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Your Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant us grace to receive hope and courage by fixing our eyes on the Ascended Christ who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit one God world without end. Amen.

Verses for 27th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 72 & 73

The Story of Psalm 73

This is a psalm by *Asaph, or one that somebody wrote for him or his music group.

The psalmist had a problem. Bad people had plenty of money and things. Good people did not. Why? Would it be better for him to be bad? Then he went into GOD's house. There he understood that bad people would die, but good people would always live with GOD! In this psalm, we have translated "bad people" as "godless". This meant:

- Before 500 BC, people who were not *Israelites
 - After 500 BC, people who did not obey GOD and fought against him; it did not matter who they were
- BC means years Before CHRIST came to live on the earth. About 500 BC was when many *Israelites returned home from the *exile. They came from Babylon. So the *psalmist starts with what he had learned: GOD is good to the people whose hearts are clean.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 3: 1 – 20

Proverbs 3:2

Long life and peace.

Generally speaking, obeying GOD and living by HIS holy principles will result in better health and longer life, and a happier and more prosperous life. However, this general principle must not be taken as absolute guarantee to which there are no exceptions. At times the righteous are afflicted and do not live long lives, conversely it is the wicked who are healthy and prosperous, though their final judgement is sure.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 13:1 – 14:12

1 Corinthians 13:13

The greatest ...is charity.

It is clear from this chapter that GOD exalts CHRIST like character more than ministry, faith or possession of spiritual gifts. The greatest in the Kingdom of GOD will be those who are great in inward godliness and who demonstrate genuine love for GOD and people.

Verses for 28th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 74 & 75

The Story of Psalm 74

The *temple was the house of GOD. It was the place where people came to pray to GOD, and to *worship HIM. (*Worship means that you tell someone how great they are, and that you love them.) The *Israelites made several *temples. The most important one was in Jerusalem. Enemies destroyed it twice.

About 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. He was King of Babylon. He took many of the *Israelites to Babylon. We call this “the *exile”. BC means years Before CHRIST came to the earth.

The second time, it was the Romans, 70 years after JESUS came to the earth. JESUS had said that this would happen.

Psalm 74 is about when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. The *psalmist asks GOD to think again! “Keep your promise” in verse 20 is “remember the *covenant” in *Hebrew. The *covenant was when GOD and the *Israelites agreed. GOD would *protect them if they obeyed him. The trouble was that they did not obey HIM. So GOD let Nebuchadnezzar destroy the *temple. He also took the *Israelites to Babylon. There they had to do what he told them to do. They were in *exile. Really, they were in a prison a long way from home.

Psalm 74 tells us what Nebuchadnezzar did to the *temple. The *Israelites were sorry because Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. They were not sorry that they had *disobeyed GOD. (“*Disobeyed” means “did not obey”.) That is why GOD did not have to keep HIS promise. So HE let Nebuchadnezzar and his army destroy the *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 3:21 – 4:9

Proverbs 4:1—4

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father.

Solomon had learned about GOD’s ways from his father and was now passing instruction on to his sons. GOD wants true godliness and commitment to HIS ways to be learned primarily through the teaching of parents and the examples provided in the home, and not by delegating that responsibility exclusively to church education programs.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 14: 13 – 40

1 Corinthians 14:26

All things ...unto edifying.

The principal purpose of all spiritual gifts is to strengthen the church and the individual. Edifying means to promote spiritual life, maturity and godly character in believers. It is a

work of the HOLY SPIRIT through spiritual gifts by which believers are increasingly spiritually transformed in order that they may not be conformed to this world, but may be built up in sanctification, love for God, concern for others , purity of heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Verses for 30th May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78

What verses 65 – 72 mean?

Now there is a big change. GOD leads His people so that they beat their enemy, the Philistines. HE did three other things:

- HE made Judah the leader of the *tribes, not Ephraim, verses 67-68. Until then, Ephraim was leader, but not a good leader, verse 9.
- HE made HIS home on earth in *Mount Zion in Jerusalem, verses 68-69.
- HE chose David to be king, verses 70-72. David led his people like a shepherd leads his sheep.

Jacob had 12 sons. Each had a large family or tribe. As the tribe of Levi worked in Jerusalem, that left 11 tribes. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. They both took the place of Joseph, so there were still 12 tribes!

Something to do

1. Read the story of the *plagues in Egypt, if you have a Bible. You can find where they are after verse 55 of Psalm 78.
2. Make sure that you tell your children the story of JESUS and HIS love for them.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 4: 10 – 27

Proverbs 4:23

Keep thy heart with all diligence.

The heart is a wellspring of desire and decision. Following GOD and knowing HIS ways involve a resolute decision to remain committed to HIM, seeking first HIS kingdom and HIS righteousness. Failure to keep our hearts results in departure from paths of safety and entrapment in a destructive snare. To watch over our hearts with all diligence results in all our ways being established in HIS favour and grace.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 16: 1 – 24

1 Corinthians 16:22

Maranatha.

The Aramaic expression the early church was constantly praying that CHRIST might return soon. Christian's are those who long for HIS appearing and express this longing in word and deed.

Verses for 31st May 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 40 – 72

After the Israelites were settled in Canaan, the children were like their fathers. GOD gave them HIS testimonies, but they turned back. Presumptuous sins render even Israelites hateful to GOD's holiness, and exposed to HIS justice. Those whom the LORD forsakes become an easy prey to the destroyer. And sooner or later, GOD will disgrace His enemies. HE set a good government over his people; a monarch after his own heart.

With good reason does the psalmist make this finishing, crowning instance of GOD's favour to Israel; for David was a type of CHRIST, the great and good Shepherd, who was humbled first, and then exalted; and of whom it was foretold, that HE should be filled with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. On the uprightness of HIS heart, and the skilfulness of HIS hands, all HIS subjects may rely; and of the increase of HIS government and peace there shall be no end.

Every trial of human nature hitherto, confirms the testimony of Scripture that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and nothing but being created anew by the HOLY GHOST can cure the ungodliness of any.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 5: 1 – 23

Proverbs 5:15

Drink waters out of thine own cistern.

A man's source of affectionate love should be his own wife. Note that sexual delight in marriage is legitimate and GOD given. A spouse should be considered a special gift from GOD and cherished with pleasure, purity and Thanksgiving.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 1: 1 – 14

2 Corinthians 1:11

You also helping together by prayer.

An indisputable Biblical principle is that our prayers for others will release GOD's power and activity in others' lives. Because of this we should be encouraged to intercede for those in need.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
JUNE

Verses for 1st June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1 – 5; 8 – 13 & Psalms 80

GOD is complained to: whither should children go but to a Father able and willing to help them? See what a change sin made in the holy city, when the heathen were suffered to pour in upon them. GOD's own people defiled it by their sins, therefore he suffered their enemies to defile it by their insolence. They desired that GOD would be reconciled. Those who desire GOD's favour as better than life, cannot but dread his wrath as worse than death. In every affliction we should first beseech the LORD to cleanse away the guilt of our sins; then HE will visit us with HIS tender mercies.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 6: 1 – 23

Proverbs 6:20

Son... Father...mother.

The book of Proverbs places supreme value upon the family. A family is made up of a father and a mother, with a child or children. Both parents must share in the spiritual training of their children. Wise children will obey and honour their parents. Marital fidelity and mutual love are exalted.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 1:15 – 2:11

2 Corinthians 1:22

Earnest of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Paul outlines 4 aspects of GOD's work in believers through the HOLY SPIRIT.

- 1) The HOLY SPIRIT establishes believers and helps them persevere in their life of faith.
- 2) The HOLY SPIRIT anoints believers in order to give them power to witness, to continue the ministry of CHRIST, and to know the truth.
- 3) The HOLY SPIRIT is the official seal of GOD's ownership, marking believers as HIS own property and producing godly character within their human personalities.
- 4) The HOLY SPIRIT is an indwelling earnest a guarantee and a first instalment to believers that a greater life with CHRIST will come in the future.

Verses for 2nd June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 81 & 82

Psalms 82:6

I have said, ye are gods.

The term gods probably refers to human authorities and judges in Israel who were designated as God's representatives in administering justice, protecting the weak and helping deliver them from their oppressors. The term in no way means that mere humans are potentially gods, but only that they can become God's representatives with power and authority to bring judgement and carry out justice.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 6: 24 – 7:27

Proverbs 6:32–33

His reproach shall not be wiped away.

GOD's covenant children who commit adultery will experience lingering disgrace and regret, moreover, their reproach will never be removed. Adultery is a grave sin against GOD and against the innocent partner who has been defrauded. Though the guilt of adultery may be forgiven by repentance, its reproach will remain, for its scars are never completely removed, amends can never be adequately made.

Because of the far reaching and fearful consequences of adultery on all involved, we should run from every temptation and shun all associations that might lead to this sin. We should pray to be delivered from temptation and soberly recall the words of Scripture when tempted. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 2: 12 – 3:6

2 Corinthians 3:3

Written ...in fleshy tables of the heart.

Under the new covenant established by CHRIST's blood, the HOLY SPIRIT writes the law of GOD, not upon tablets of stone as at Mount Sinai but upon tables of the heart.

Believers have GOD's law in their hearts, and through the power of the SPIRIT they are able to obey it. This internal law consists of love of GOD and other people.

Verses for 3rd June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 84 & 85

The Story of Psalm 85

Many Bible students think that Psalm 85 comes from about 520 BC. BC means “years Before CHRIST came to the earth”. This was just after the Jews came back from their exile in Babylon.

GOD was angry with His people. They had not obeyed HIM. So HE let the King of Babylon beat them and take them to Babylon. He destroyed Jerusalem. After 70 years, the king of Persia beat the king of Babylon. Cyrus, the King of Persia, sent the Jews back to Jerusalem and the places near it. This is what verses 1-3 are about. But, a few years after they returned to Jerusalem, things were bad. They had not built GOD’s house (the temple) again. There was not much rain so there was not much fruit in the fields. This meant that there was not much food. Also, some enemies attacked them. So they thought that GOD was still angry with them! They asked for HIS help to make things better, verses 4-7. Someone gave them GOD’s answer, verses 8-13.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 8: 1 – 21

Proverbs 8:13

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.

The fear of GOD should cause us to depart from evil and to hate sin that displeases HIM and destroys us and those we love.

The fear of the LORD in Old Testament was something good and wholesome, the fountain head of true wisdom in Old Testament fear of the LORD is both by choice and a gift imparted by the HOLY SPIRIT. True fear of the LORD causes believers to place their trust and faith in HIM alone for salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 3:7 – 4:6

2 Corinthians 3:8

The ministration of the SPIRIT

Paul calls the new covenant the ministration of the SPIRIT, meaning the ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT. Through faith in CHRIST one receives the HOLY SPIRIT, is born again and is promised the baptism in the SPIRIT. All redemptive benefits in CHRIST come by way of the SPIRIT. It is HE who mediates CHRIST’s presence and all the benefits of the cross.

Verses for 4th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 86 – 88

The Story of Psalm 87

This is an important psalm but we do not know who wrote it. It was for the sons of Korah. This is probably the name of the musicians in the temple in Jerusalem. The temple was the house of GOD that Solomon built. Solomon was the son of David. He was the third king of Israel.

The psalm is about Jerusalem. The psalm calls Jerusalem by the name Zion. Really, Zion was the name of the hill on which Solomon built the temple. The Jews thought that GOD lived on this hill. It was HIS home on earth. Because they thought that GOD was holy (or very, very good) they thought that Zion was holy also. So they called the hill of Zion a “mountain of *holiness”.

But the psalm is really the story of two Jerusalems’! Verses 1-3 are about Jerusalem on earth, the capital city of the Jews. Verses 4-6 are about another Jerusalem. We can see this very clearly in the translation from the Greek Bible and Hebrew Bible. (The translation above is from the Hebrew Bible.) 250 years before JESUS came to the earth, the Jews translated their Bible into Greek.

This meant that more people could understand it. In some places, the two Bibles are different. We do not know why. We do believe that both translations teach us what is true.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 8: 22 – 9:18

Proverbs 9:8

Rebuke a wise man.

If we are truly wise people who want to please GOD, we will welcome loving reproof and criticism. Admonition and correction from a friend, family member or pastor are some of the ways GOD uses to mould our character according to HIS holy will. The HOLY SPIRIT will indeed bless the church that receives with humility and obedience the reproof of a loving pastor.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 4:7 – 5:10

2 Corinthians 5:1

If our earthly house.

Paul uses the conditional clause that if our earthly house, if this tabernacle is destroyed, because he knows that CHRIST could return soon, in which case he would not experience death, rather, his body would be immediately transformed. This same double possibility,

exists for believers today. CHRIST has stated we do not know the day or the hour of HIS return, since this event is eminent, we have a powerful motivation for holy living.

Verses for 6th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 90 & 91

Psalm 90

In this oldest of all Psalms, Moses acknowledges the eternity of GOD, the frailty of man, the sinfulness of man, the shortness of life, and prays for GOD's grace on His people. In contrast to GOD, who is eternal, man is frail and will return to dust, according to the curse. When GOD deals with loving kindness, life will be joyous, it will be viewed from HIS perspective and HIS blessing will be in our work.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 10: 1 – 32

Proverbs 10:1

A wise son

One who fears and obeys GOD and makes a successful application of knowledge in everyday dealings, a foolish son one who is insensible and insensitive to moral truth acting without regard to it or to his own destruction.

Proverbs 10:22

Real prosperity is a divine blessing, accompanied by neither anxiety nor trouble.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 5:11 – 6:10

2 Corinthians 5:14

For the love of CHRIST controls us.

CHRIST's love for us controls us keeps us within bounds, therefore all died in CHRIST so that they may be able to live to please Him.

2 Corinthians 5:17

A new creature, a new creation old things have passed away, behold new things have come.

The grace of GOD not only justifies but also makes a new creation, which results in a changed style of life.

Verses for 7th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 92 – 94

The Story of Psalm 92

The Jews (people that were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children) had a story that Adam sang this song the day after GOD made him. The Jews called that day the Sabbath, the 7th day. Few say the 7th day as Saturday. Really, we do not know who the person was that wrote Psalm 92. We call the person that wrote a psalm the psalmist. Maybe it was after GOD had done something good for His people Judah or Israel. Many Bible students think that it was when King Cyrus of Persia beat King Belshazzar of Babylon. Cyrus then sent the Jews home to their own country. For 70 years, the Babylonians had made them live in Babylon. Now they were free.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 11: 1 – 31

Proverbs 11: 24 –25

Scattereth, and yet increaseth.

GOD promises that those who give generously will receive back more than they give. HE blesses those who are kind and generous, whether it be in their financial giving or in giving of themselves. The New Testament teaches that we are stewards of GOD's gifts and must use them for HIS cause and for the benefit of those in need.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 6:11 – 7:7

2 Corinthians 6: 15–16

The temple of GOD with idols.

Paul argues that a born again believer is the temple of GOD, a place of habitation for the HOLY SPIRIT.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Let us cleanse ourselves.

Believers must make a clean break with every form of ungodly compromise and continually resist the sinful desires of the body. We must put to death our sinful desires of the body. By renouncing and embracing the power of the cross and HOLY SPIRIT.

Verses for 8th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 95 & 96

The Story of Psalm 95

Hebrew is the language that the *Jews spoke when they wrote the psalms. Jews are people who were born from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their children. We do not know who wrote Psalm 95, or when.

In verse 2, we read “Come into God’s house”. In *Hebrew this is, “Come to where GOD is”. Because the *Jews thought that they met GOD in HIS house, Bible students think this means the temple. The temple was GOD’s house in Jerusalem. GOD had done something good for His people. They came to thank HIM in the temple. Perhaps it was after they first built the temple. Perhaps it was after they built it again when they returned from Babylon. But the psalm also says that it is not enough just to sing (talk) to GOD. We must also listen to him. Then we will not make the mistake of GOD’s people at Massah and Meribah.

This is the second “Royal Psalm”. Royal is a word that describes kings. The other Royal Psalms are 93 and 96-99.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 12: 1 – 28

Proverbs 12:10

A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.

GOD’s way of righteous living includes kindness even to animals. Animals are useful to humans for companionship, work and food, and they should never be mistreated or used in a cruel manner.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 7:8 – 8:15

2 Corinthians 8:2

The riches of their liberality.

Paul reveals important principles and promises of Christian giving as he exhorts believers to abound in this grace also. We belong to GOD, what we have is held as trust for our LORD. We must make the basic decision in our hearts to serve GOD and not money. We give in order to help those in need to advance GOD’s kingdom, to store up treasures in heaven and to learn to fear the LORD. Giving should be in proportion to our income. Giving is seen as a proof of our love and should be done sacrificially and voluntarily. By giving to GOD we sow not only money but also faith time and service thus reaping greater faith and blessing. When GOD supplies in abundance, it is so that we may multiply our good work. Giving increases our dedication to GOD and activates the work of GOD in our financial affairs.

Verses for 9th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 97 – 99

Psalms 97:10

Ye that love the LORD, hate evil.

Those who claim to love the LORD will be tested by how much they hate evil while living upon this earth. A truly regenerated believer, made one with CHRIST and indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT, will love what GOD loves.

We should be vexed by the wickedness, brutality and ungodliness in the world, and grieved by the lives being destroyed by its evil, furthermore, we should be deeply distressed when sin and immorality are tolerated in the house of GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 13: 1 – 25

Proverbs 13:3

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life.

Careless speech and an unbridled tongue can undermine our influence for righteousness, cause us to sin and effect our relationship with GOD. A perfect person carefully controls his or her speech, we should ask GOD for help in controlling our tongues.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 8:16 – 9:5

The apostle commends the brethren sent to collect their charity, that it might be known who they were, and how safely they might be trusted. It is the duty of all Christians to act prudently; to hinder, as far as we can, all unjust suspicions. It is needful, in the first place, to act uprightly in the sight of GOD, but things honest in the sight of men should also be attended to. A clear character, as well as a pure conscience, is requisite for usefulness. They brought glory to CHRIST as instruments, and had obtained honour from CHRIST to be counted faithful, and employed in HIS service. The good opinion others have of us, should be an argument with us to do well.

Verses for 10th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 100 – 102

Psalm 102

The psalmist here prays to GOD in distress, and finds his confidence in the sovereign purpose of GOD during this situation of un-changeableness, his sleeplessness, his rejection and sorrow.

Two features of the millennial kingdom stand out in this paragraph. Jerusalem will be restored and the entire world will worship HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 14: 1 – 35

Proverbs 14:14

The backslider in heart.

The faithless are those who have turned their hearts away from GOD to go their own selfish way. Such persons will reap the fruit of their decision in heartache and misery, those who remain faithful to GOD will reap the reward of righteousness, both in this life and the next.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 9:6 – 10:11

2 Corinthians 9:6

Shall reap ...sparingly.

Christians can give either generously or sparingly, GOD will reward them accordingly. To Paul giving is not a loss, but a form of saving, it results in substantial benefits for those who give. He is not speaking primarily of the quantity given, but of the quality of our hearts desires and motives. The poor widow gave little, but GOD considered it much because of the proportion she gave and her complete dedication.

Verses for 11th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 103 & 104:1–23

Psalms 104

GOD, thou art very great.

This psalm is a Hymn about GOD's creation of all things and HIS providential care over all HIS works .It emphasizes HIS involvement with all HE has made, for HE dwells in the world and sustains it. What GOD continues to do in the universe reflects HIS glory .Yet GOD's creation is marred because of sin and evil, thus the psalm ends with a prayer for GOD to remove from it all things that are wicked and all those who sin.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 15: 1 – 33

Proverbs 15:6

In the house of the righteous is much treasure.

Though the home of the righteous may lack earthly riches, it does contain spiritual treasure that greatly enrich and sustain the lives of GOD's people. By contrast, the home of the wicked is filled with much trouble and strife.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 10:12 – 11:6

2 Corinthians 11:4

Preacheth....another gospel.

False teachers may state that Biblical revelation is true, but at the same time allege that they possess extra-biblical revelations or knowledge equal in authority to Scripture and valid for the church as a whole. Such false teaching usually draws the Christian faith into syncretism with other religions or philosophies. This results in the following errors. The supposed new revelation is put on the same level of authority as the original apostolic Biblical revelation in CHRIST. False teachers claim to have deeper or exclusive understanding of so called hidden revelations in Scripture.

Verses for 13th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 105: 23 – 45 and 106: 1 – 18 & 42 – 48

Psalms 106:15

But sent leanness into their soul.

We must be aware of desiring and pursuing what is not in the will of GOD. When we insist on satisfying our selfish desires, GOD sometimes lets us have our own way, but with it comes spiritual leanness or physical calamity. GOD may allow us to pursue things contrary to HIS revealed will, such as an unholy vocational ambition an unholy love affair, worldly pleasures, covetous desires or unholy fellowship with unbelievers, but in the end those things have destructive consequences.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 16: 1 – 33

Proverbs 16:1

The answer of the tongue.

We human beings may make plans, but the ability to articulate those plans and carry them out comes from GOD.

Proverbs 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap.

This verse refers to GOD's providence and guidance in the life of the righteous. It does not mean that GOD directly controls and determines every flip of the coin in life, rather it simply states the spiritual principle that a righteous person who commits his or her way to the LORD and acknowledges HIM will be directed by the LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 11: 7 – 20

2 Corinthians 11:13

All believers must beware of these misleading ministers and leaders and not be deceived by their charisma, eloquent oration, education, miracles, numerical success or popular message. All religious leaders must be judged according to their attitude and loyalty to the blood redemption of JESUS CHRIST and to the Gospel as presented by CHRIST and the New Testament writers.

Verses for 14th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 106: 19 – 48 and 107: 1 – 22

The story of Psalm 107

The soldiers of Babylon took the *Jews away from their own country. 70 years later, they came home again. Then they wrote this psalm.

They were *prisoners in Babylon, (verses 10-16). *Prisoners are people who are in a prison or cannot freely move around. They had done what was wrong, (verses 17-22). That is why they were not free. But the *LORD (another name for GOD) brought them home again, (verses 4 – 9). He redeemed them, or saved them from their enemies. The journey was difficult, (verses 23- 32). So they must tell the *LORD how good he was, (verses 33-43). Babylon was a country east of where the *Jews lived.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 17: 1 – 28

Proverbs 17: 27

He that hath knowledge spareth his words.

The wise will restrain their speech and be cautious in what they say. They will not exaggerate the truth or harm others when speaking, rather they will be careful to speak accurately and edify others.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 11:21 – 12:10

2 Corinthians 11:23

The suffering of Paul.

The HOLY SPIRIT, through Paul's words, reveals the anguish and suffering of someone fully committed to CHRIST, HIS WORD and the cause for which CHRIST died. Paul was in fellowship with GOD's feelings and sympathy with the heart of CHRIST. In this chapter we can read about 20 ways Paul shared CHRIST'S Sufferings.

2 Corinthians 12:7

A thorn in the flesh

The word thorn communicates the idea of pain, trouble, sufferings and humiliation or physical infirmities, but not temptation of sin. Paul's thorn kept him dependent in greater measure on divine grace.

Verses for 15th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 107: 23 – 43 and 108

Psalm 108

Psalm 108 is parts of 2 psalms put together. The first 5 verses come from Psalm 57 and the last 8 verses come from Psalm 60. Why did this happen?

Bible students think that Psalm 108 thanks GOD for the end of the *exile. The *exile was when many *Jews became *prisoners-of-war in Babylon. A prisoner-of-war is somebody that is in prison in a war. The prison may be a place, not a building. The *Jews were in Babylon for 70 years. Babylon was their prison. At the end of that time the new government in Babylon let the *Jews go back to their own country. Many did and built the city of Jerusalem again. They also built the *temple again. This was the House of GOD on the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. It may be the *holy place in verse 7.

Instead of writing a new psalm, they put together parts of two psalms that David wrote. In Psalm 57, David thanks GOD for giving him help to fight his enemies.

In Psalm 60, those enemies are Babylon and Edom, the two countries that started the *exile. So David really did write Psalm 108!

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 18: 1 – 24

Proverbs 18: 10 – 11

The name of the LORD.

The name of the LORD represents His person, authority and character. The righteous turn to the LORD for refuge and help in trouble. However, the misguided rich believe money is their source of security during the storms of life.

Proverbs 18: 12

The heart of a man is haughty.

Pride is a spirit of self- importance that includes trusting in ourselves. Boasting and arrogance are sins associated with pride, and they will bring us to destruction. Pride is deceptive. GOD opposes the proud, but gives grace and honour to the humble.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 12: 11 – 21

2 Corinthians 12:21

I shall bewail many which have sinned.

Those within the church who are quarrelling, jealous, angry, divisive, slandering , gossiping, arrogant , and disorderly are a grief to GOD and a reproach to the name of CHRIST. The prospect of having to deal with these kinds of sins as well as individuals who were unrepentant of uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness was a great grief to Paul as well.

Verses for 16th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 109 & 110

Psalms 110: 1 – 7

The LORD said unto my Lord.

This psalm speaks of the lordship of the MESSIAH, His priesthood, HIS destruction of the wicked and HIS reign on earth. It clearly prophesies about JESUS CHRIST this psalm cited 7 times in the New Testament.

Psalms 110: 6

HE shall judge among the heathen.

This verse pictures CHRIST coming to the earth as a warrior to defeat the judge all those who oppose GOD's kingdom and HIS righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 19: 1 – 29

Proverbs 19:14

A prudent wife is from the LORD.

When seeking a marriage partner, prudence is more important than appearance. God's wisdom, guidance and blessing are essential if we want to have a happy marriage. A believer should seek to marry someone who is deeply committed to the Lord JESUS, HIS WORD, and the standards of HIS kingdom. Marriage to a person if godly character is a special blessing of GOD. To enter into marriage without God's guidance is to invite suffering, regret and disaster.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Corinthians 13: 1 – 14

2 Corinthians 13:2

I will not spare.

A minister's love for his people demands firmness as well as affection. There comes a time when patience runs its course and when, for the good of the church, offenders must be disciplined and made accountable for their sin.

Verses for 17th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 111 – 114

Psalms 111: 1 – 10

I will praise the LORD.

This psalm praises the LORD for HIS physical and spiritual blessings and for HIS providential care over those who love and fear HIM. The psalmist has determined to praise GOD not only privately, but also in the congregation. It is Biblical to praise GOD spontaneously.

Psalms 112: 7

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

The psalmist is not moved by fear and anxiety in times of trouble because his trust is in the LORD and not in himself or in external circumstances.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 20: 1 – 30

Proverbs 20:1

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging .This verse strongly warns about inherent dangers often associated with drinking alcohol. The key phrase is, whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Warns about a variety of personal and social evil consequences.

Proverbs 20:27

The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD. The human spirit is the centre of conscience and discernment, providing a window for GOD's light to bring spiritual understanding to our inner life.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Thessalonians 1: 1 – 2: 12

1 Thessalonians 1: 5

In power in the HOLY GHOST.

The apostles preaching of the gospel consisted of four essential elements .The apostles proclaimed the gospel of GOD and CHRIST to others. They preached the WORD of GOD in power of the HOLY SPIRIT. The message was proclaimed in deep conviction. Those who believed in the WORD of GOD and lived it out in their lives they were models of holiness and righteousness.

Verses for 18th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 115 – 117

Psalms 115: 1

Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.

We must never seek glory for ourselves, but rather always desire to manifest GOD's glory and honour HIS name before the world. We must determine to live in such a way that we will not bring shame or reproach upon the name of CHRIST or HIS church.

Psalms 116: 12

What shall I render unto the Lord..?

Gratitude flows from the hearts of all those who have experienced salvation from the LORD, they will express it by their love ,loyalty ,righteous, living , Thanksgiving and a firm resolve to obey the LORD.

Psalms 117:1

All ye nations.

Paul quotes this verse to prove that the Old Testament anticipated GOD's offer of salvation to people of all nations.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 21: 1 – 31

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is in the hand of LORD.

This verse does not mean that everything a national leader desires or does comes directly from the LORD, GOD is certainly the author of the evil perpetrated by the rulers, rather GOD has ultimate authority over rulers.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Thessalonians 2: 13 – 3: 13

1 Thessalonians 3:5

The tempter have tempted you.

This is the second time Paul has referred to the activity of Satan in this letter .Paul personally knew the reality of Satan and evil spirits, as did JESUS CHRIST. The kingdom of GOD advances only by overcoming the powers of darkness by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. Strengthen ourselves by the WORD, Discernment, and power with fellowship of believers' experience. Through our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

Verses for 20th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 25 – 72

Psalms 119: 50

My comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me.

GOD has ordained that HIS WORD made powerful with the SPIRIT, will bring comfort, hope and strength to His faithful as we experience trouble and sorrow. Because GOD's WORD is living and active, it has power to revive and restore us who abide in it and GOD. When in trouble, turn to the LORD and HIS WORD and wait for HIS SPIRIT to impart HIS life and peace to you.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 22: 1 – 29

Proverbs 22: 6

Train up a child in the way he should go.

Parents must commit themselves to the godly training and discipline of their children. The Hebrew word for train means to dedicate, thus it speaks of training with a purpose. Christian training has as its purpose the dedication of our children to GOD and HIS will, accomplished by separating them from the world's evil influences and by instructing them in godly conduct.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Thessalonians 4: 1 – 18

1 Thessalonians 4:4

This is the will of GOD

Although they lived in a society where sexual immorality was commonplace and accepted lifestyle, the apostles did not compromise GOD's holiness and truth, Paul never lowered the holy standard of GOD to accommodate the values or trends of the society where believers lived.

Verses for 21st June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 73 – 120

What we love, we love to think of.

All true wisdom is from GOD.

A good man carries his Bible with him, if not in his hands, yet in his head and in his heart. By meditation on GOD's testimonies we understand more than our teachers, when we understand our own hearts. The written WORD is a more sure guide to heaven, than all the fathers, the teachers, and ancients of the church. We cannot, with any comfort or boldness, attend GOD in holy duties, while under guilt, or in any by-way. It was Divine grace in his heart that enabled the psalmist to receive these instructions. The soul has its tastes as well as the body. Our relish for the WORD OF GOD will be greatest, when that for the world and the flesh is least. The way of sin is a wrong way; and the more understanding we get by the precepts of GOD, the more rooted will be our hatred of sin; and the more ready we are in the Scriptures, the better furnished we are with answers to temptation.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 23: 1 – 21

Proverbs 23:4

Labour not to be rich.

One of the LORD's statement is that it is virtually impossible for a rich person to enter GOD's kingdom. Yet this is but one of many statements HE made about riches and poverty. With regard to the proper attitude toward, and use of our possessions, the righteous are obligated to be faithful. Christians must not hold tightly to possessions as personal wealth or security, but they must relinquish their wealth and place their resources in LORD's hands and use in HIS kingdom, for furtherance of CHRIST's cause on earth, and the salvation and need of others.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Thessalonians 5: 1 – 28

1 Thessalonians 5:2

The day of the LORD.

The day of the LORD normally refers not to a 24hour day but to an extended period of time when the enemies of GOD are overthrown, followed by CHRIST's earthly reign.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing.

Without ceasing does not mean to be constantly uttering formal prayers. Rather, it implies recurrent prayer of all kinds and on all occasions throughout the day, conversations and longings such as happen naturally with those whose minds are focused on HIM.

Verses for 22nd June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 121 – 160

Psalms 119: 151

Thou are near, O LORD.

The psalmist experiences GOD's nearness in times of trouble because he loves the LORD and is devoted to meditating on HIS WORD. The LORD is near to all those who love HIM and HIS WORD. If you have trouble in your life, take your Bible and let GOD's SPIRIT and WORD revive your relationship with HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 23: 22 – 24: 12

Proverbs 23: 32

At the last it biteth like a serpent.

Continued use of fermented wine can bite like a poisonous snake or serpent. This metaphor indicates the effect of Alcohol can be demonic and destructive, resulting in physical ailments blurred vision, a confused mind, twisted judgement and a loose tongue. Consuming even one alcoholic drink leads to some impairment of a person's motor skills and ability to make sound judgments. Continued use opens one's life to intoxication and addiction with all their harmful consequences physically, socially, spiritually and morally.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Thessalonians 1: 1 – 12

2 Thessalonians 1: 5

The righteous judgement of GOD.

The Thessalonians were persevering in faith amid persecution and trials. Their attitude was a manifest token of GOD's righteous judgment, meant GOD judged the Thessalonians to be worthy of HIS grace and the kingdom for which they were suffering. Their unjust suffering was also a sign that the persecutors in opposing GOD's own people would experience GOD's just retribution.

Verses for 23rd June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 120 – 125

Psalms 123: 1

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes.

This psalm describes humble believers who look continually and expectantly to GOD to put an end to the contempt and scorn shown towards them. It expresses the cry of those who are always watching with the desire of Christ's return to save His people from an ungodly and hostile world.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 24: 13 – 34

Proverbs 24: 16

A just man ...riseth up again.

When adversity, trials and setbacks occur in the lives of the righteous, they will bounce back because GOD's grace lifts them up. GOD does not guarantee us trouble free lives, but he does promise us to sustain us no matter what happens. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Thessalonians 2: 1 – 17

2 Thessalonians 2: 10

The love of the truth.

From the very beginning of creation the central issue in the relationship of humanity with GOD has been either to disregard the WORD and the truth of GOD or to love them. That response is also a pivotal issue in the last days of this age. Glorious salvation will be experienced by those who through faith in CHRIST maintain a fervent and sincere love of the truth who believe fully in the integrity of what GOD has said, and who reject all new revelation or teaching that conflicts with that truth.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 24th June 2022

John the Baptist

Collect: Almighty God who sent John the Baptist as witness to the light, teach us to repent sincerely, and speak the truth constantly. Help us never to be silent in the presence of injustice and impurity and enable us to rebuke in love. Give us courage to suffer and to decrease so that Your reign may increase, so grant that living in faithfulness we may be true servants of our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with You together with the Holy Spirit, one God ,world without end. Amen.

Verses for 25th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 132 – 135

Psalms 132:17

There will I make the horn of David to bud.

The expectations of this prayer were never fulfilled through David's descendants who were kings of Israel and Judah. Because the Israelites forsook the LORD, GOD destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C. The longings of this prayer will be fulfilled only in JESUS CHRIST, the greatest Son of David, of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 26: 1 – 28

Proverbs 26:11

A dog returneth to his vomit.

Peter applied this proverb to those who once followed Christ, knew the way of righteousness, and then turned back from GOD and HIS holy commands to live in sin again.

Proverbs 26:12

Wise in his own conceit?

Pride and self-importance cause people to seem wise in their own estimation and therefore arrogantly confident in their own ideas. Wisdom and truth are formed not by human reasoning, however, but by accepting what GOD has said and revealed in all of Scripture in honesty acknowledging the potential for deceit within our hearts, we must not assume that our own standards of right and wrong are GOD's standards rather GOD calls us humbly to bring all our thoughts into submission to the authority of HIS revelation and the ministry of the HOLY SIRT, asking HIM to convict and correct us in the areas where we are wrong.

NEW TESTAMENT

James 1: 1 – 15

James 1:2

Temptations.

The word temptation refers to some form of difficulty or pressure in our lives that GOD uses to try and prove our faith, and to develop on us perseverance and godly character, so that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Our faith can only reach full maturity when faced with trials and opposition. James calls these trials a trying of your faith.

Verses for 27th June 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 139 – 141

Psalms 141:5

Let the righteous smite me.

If we sincerely desire to please our LORD, we will welcome rebuke that convicts us of anything contrary to the holiness of GOD. When a righteous person cries out fervently against sin and compromise in the church, he or she should be supported, not rejected. Our attitude towards such servants of GOD reveals our own spiritual state.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 27: 1 – 27

Proverbs 27:1

A man to his praise

The praise we receive from others tests our hearts, will we respond in humility or pride? An attitude of pride reveals self-deception in our hearts, for we do not realize that what we are and what we have done are largely due to GOD and others. Our actions must never be done for praise or self-glory, but must flow from our commitment to GOD, HIS WORD and HIS kingdom. When we pass the test of praise, it confirms that we are living to please GOD rather than other humans and that our hearts are pure and our spirits one with GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

James 1: 16 – 27

James 1: 21

The engrafted word

Christians begin their new life in CHRIST by being born again with the word of truth. New life in CHRIST demands that we get rid of all moral filth that offends the HOLY SPIRIT, and that we be constant in receiving the WORD of GOD into our hearts. The term engrafted means implanting implying that the WORD must become a part of our very nature. The implanted WORD brings us to our final salvation.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 29th June 2022

Paul and the Twelve Apostles

Collect: Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Paul and twelve glorified You in their death as in their life; grant that Your Church, inspired by their teaching and example and made one by Your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, that is Jesus Christ our Lord , who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit , one God , world without end .Amen.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 30th June 2022

Paul and the Twelve Apostles

Collect: Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Paul and twelve glorified You in their death as in their life; grant that Your Church, inspired by their teaching and example and made one by Your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, that is Jesus Christ our Lord , who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit , one God , world without end. Amen.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
JULY

Verses for 1st July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 1 – 5

Psalms 5:3

My voice shalt thou hear.

Firmly determined to seek GOD with all his heart, David commits himself to three actions. Persistent in prayer, Fellowship with GOD and feeding on HIS WORD. Look up with expectations for answers.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 30:21 – 31:9

Proverbs 31:10 – 31

Who can find a virtuous woman?

These verses describes the ideal wife and mother. Her whole life is centered around a reverent fear of GOD, compassion for those in need and faithfulness and love towards her family. Each family can serve GOD in different kind of ways with the ability and material resources that GOD has given them.

NEW TESTAMENT

James 4:11 – 5:6

James 4:11

Speak no evil of another.

A disciplined and restrained tongue that consciously controls what it says at all times is essential to spiritual victory and maturity. Slander is sinning with our tongues by violating CHRIST's law of love in speaking about another person rather than to that person about an issue or problem. It also usurps GOD's sole right to judge our neighbour.

Verses for 2nd July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 6 – 9

Psalms 6:2

O Lord heal me.

During a time of physical affliction and divine chastisement, which he knows he deserves, the psalmist has lost his sense of the presence of GOD and spiritual peace. He has suffered for a long time and is in intense grief. His prayer is not so much that GOD will remove all rebuke from him as it is that GOD's chastening might be mingled with mercy and not be so severe that he dies.

OLD TESTAMENT

Proverbs 31: 10 – 31

This is the description of a virtuous woman of those days, but the general outlines equally suit every age and nation. She is very careful to recommend herself to her husband's esteem and affection, to know his mind, and is willing that he rule over her.

1. She can be trusted, and he will leave such a wife to manage for him. He is happy in her. And she makes it her constant business to do him good.
2. She is one that takes pains in her duties, and takes pleasure in them. She is careful to fill up time, that none be lost. She rises early. She applies herself to the business proper for her, to women's business. She does what she does, with all her power, and trifles not.
3. She makes what she does turn to good account by prudent management. Many undo themselves by buying, without considering whether they can afford it. She provides well for her house. She lays up for hereafter.
4. She looks well to the ways of her household, that she may oblige all to do their duty to GOD and one another, as well as to her.
5. She is intent upon giving as upon getting, and does it freely and cheerfully.
6. She is discreet and obliging; every word she says, shows she governs herself by the rules of wisdom. She not only takes prudent measures herself, but gives prudent advice to others. The law of love and kindness is written in the heart, and shows itself in the tongue. Her heart is full of another world, even when her hands are most busy about this world.
7. Above all, she fears the LORD. Beauty recommends none to GOD, nor is it any proof of wisdom and goodness, but it has deceived many a man who made his choice of a wife by it. But the fear of GOD reigning in the heart, is the beauty of the soul; it lasts for ever.
8. She has firmness to bear up under crosses and disappointments. She shall reflect with comfort when she comes to be old, that she was not idle or useless when young. She shall rejoice in a world to come. She is a great blessing to her relations. If the fruit be good, the tree must have our good word. But she leaves it to her own works to praise her.

Every one ought to desire this honour that cometh from GOD; and according to this

standard we all ought to regulate our judgments. This description let all women daily study, who desire to be truly beloved and respected, useful and honourable. This passage is to be applied to individuals, but may it also be applied to the church of GOD, which is described as a virtuous spouse. GOD by his grace has formed from among sinful men a church of true believers, to possess all the excellences here described.

NEW TESTAMENT

James 5: 7 – 20

James 5: 18

He prayed again, and rain came down from heaven.

Elijah was a man who had faith that his prayers to GOD would accomplish much, even to the point of GOD's intervention to the course of nature. He believed that prayer by a righteous person does release GOD to change things. We should avoid any teaching that undermines our faith in GOD's willingness to respond to our prayers for His intervention in our lives and that of others. Scripture teaches that GOD deals with His children, not through absolute determination, but by divine providence, whereby He interacts and responds to the prayers of the righteous.

Verses for 4th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 15 – 17

Psalms 15:1

Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle?

This psalm answers the question. What sort of person experiences the intimate presence/ Fellowship of GOD? It implies that we can cause GOD to withdraw HIS presence and from our lives through the acts of unrighteous.

Psalms 16:5

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1: 1 – 19

Genesis 1:3

Let there be light.

The Hebrew word for light is referring to the initial waves of light energy coming upon the earth. Later GOD placed lights in the heaven as permanent generators.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 3: 1 – 20

Luke 3:16

Baptize you with the HOLY GHOST.

CHRIST's baptizing His followers with the HOLY SPIRIT is the new sign by which to identify GOD's people. This was promised in Joel 2:28 and reaffirmed after Christ's resurrection, this prediction was initially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

Verses for 5th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18

The story of Psalm 18

This is a very special psalm. It is so special that you will find it in 2 places in the Bible. It is here in the Book of Psalms. It is also in a part of the Bible that we call the Book of Samuel. Samuel is in 2 parts.

1 Samuel tells the story of David before he became king of Israel.

2 Samuel tells us the story of David after he became king.

1 Samuel also tells us about the lives of Samuel the prophet and Saul the king. Why is Psalm 18 in the Book of Samuel? (2 Samuel 22) Because it is David's own story of his life. Here we have put it in 6 parts. This gives help to everyone that reads it. It is like 6 different psalms. We can study it like that. But we must read the whole psalm to understand the life of David. That is why it is also in 2 Samuel. The title (in brackets) of each part is not in the Hebrew Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1: 20 – 31

Genesis 1:22

GOD blessed them.

GOD blessed living creatures and declared nature and animals good. GOD delighted in HIS work and valued it for itself. Likewise believers should regard nature and its beauty and its animals as good things to be enjoyed and of immense value. Although nature is now marred by sin, it still has great value as an expression of GOD's glory and love for humankind. Believers should pray for the complete liberation of creation from its bondage to sin and decay.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 3: 21 – 38

Luke 3:22

Holy Ghost descended ...upon him.

JESUS, who from the beginning had been conceived and indwelt by the HOLY SPIRIT, is now personally anointed and empowered by the Spirit for HIS ministry. For more on the significance of JESUS baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT.

Verses for 6th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 19 – 21

The story of Psalm 19

We do not know when David wrote Psalm 19. Perhaps it was one morning when he had been out all night with his sheep. He saw the sunrise over Moab. What David saw spoke to him about God. David remembered the stars that he saw at night. GOD made the stars. In the morning David saw the sun. GOD made the sun. All that David saw told him about GOD. He heard no words, there was no language. But David knew that everything was telling him about GOD.

Then David remembered something else. He remembered the WORD OF GOD. We call it the Bible. That told him about GOD as well. David did not have the whole Bible. He only had the start of the Old Testament. But it told him about GOD. And it made David very happy. But it also made David think. It made him say to himself, “Am I a good or bad man?” He prayed that GOD would forgive him. David was, perhaps, sitting on the top of a great rock. That spoke to him about GOD as well! GOD was like a rock to David. So David called GOD “My Rock”. He also called GOD his Redeemer. A Redeemer is someone that pays the price to make a slave free.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 2: 1 – 25

Genesis 2:16

The LORD GOD commanded the man.

From the beginning of history the human race has been bound to GOD through belief in and obedience to HIS WORD as absolute truth. Life through faith and obedience is presented as the governing principle in Adam’s relationship with GOD in Eden. Adam was warned that he would die if he transgressed GOD’s will and partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This threat of death had to be accepted by faith based on what GOD said, since Adam had not yet seen human death.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 4: 1 – 30

Luke 4:18

He hath anointed me.

JESUS gives the purpose of HIS SPIRIT -anointed ministry here. To preach the gospel to the poor, the destitute, the afflicted, the humble, those who tremble at HIS WORD. To heal those who are bruised and oppressed. This healing involves the whole person both physical and spiritual. To open the spiritual eyes of those blinded by the world.

Verses for 7th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 22 – 24

What Psalm 24 means

Verses 1 – 2: This means that GOD owns everything. This is because GOD made everything. First HE made the seas. Then HE made the dry land. In verse 2 the word “it” means the dry land. The waters are seas and rivers.

Verses 3 – 6: In verse 3 the hill of the LORD is Zion. It was a hill in Jerusalem. Solomon built the temple on it. He did this after David died. The holy place was the tent with the ark in it. Later it became the temple.

In verse 4 “clean hands and a pure heart” means righteous. It means GOD has forgiven these people. We explain “forgive” after Psalms 1 or 5 or 15. Our hearts are inside us. Only GOD sees inside us. Only HE knows if we are clean inside.

Verses 7 – 10: When the Jews brought the ark into Jerusalem, they believed that GOD came in with it. GOD was so great that they told the gates, “Lift up your heads”. This means, “GOD is great. He cannot get under you. You must make more room”. The head of the gate or door is its top. The doors were very old. Jerusalem was a city long before David came. Many kings had lived there. They were not kings of the Jews.

The Jews believed that GOD was their king. They believed that HE went everywhere with the ark. They carried the ark through the gates. This was a picture to the Jews. It was a picture of GOD as king of Jerusalem. The psalm calls GOD “the king of glory” 4 times. GOD had special servants. The Jews called them priests. The priests shouted, “Who is the king of glory?” All the people answered, “The LORD!”

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 3: 1 – 24

Genesis 3:24

He drove out the man.

Adam’s perfect relationship to GOD had been lost. He was now driven out of the garden, and a life of dependence on GOD in the midst of trials began. In addition Satan in some sense gained power over the world through the fall of Adam and Eve, for the New Testament speaks of Satan as being the prince of this world. However GOD so loved the human race that HE determined to conquer Satan by reconciling them and the world to HIMSELF at the cost of the life of HIS SON.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 4: 31 – 44

Luke 4:33

An unclean devil.

Luke records that one of JESUS first acts after announcing HIS Messiah ship was to enter

into direct conflict with the demonic. JESUS foremost concern was to destroy the devils work. There can be no realization of the kingdom of GOD without confronting the kingdom of Satan. One unmistakable sign that the kingdom has ceased to be manifested among GOD's people is the failure to confront directly the power of evil by setting sinners free from the bondage of sin and the demonic power.

Verses for 8th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 25 – 28

Psalms 25:4

Shew me thy ways.

Like Moses the psalmist longed intensely to know GOD's ways. It is possible for believers to know something about GOD's act, but never really know GOD or understand HIS ways. We must humbly submit to GOD, commit ourselves to godly living. Since sin is a barrier to knowing GOD and HIS ways, we must forsake sin and be cleansed and forgiven. If I regard iniquity in my heart .The LORD will not hear me. Adversity in our lives is not necessarily a sign of GOD's disfavour.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 4: 1 – 26

Genesis 4:26

Call upon the name of the LORD.

Under the encouragement of Enoch, public prayer and worship began, where calling upon by the name of the LORD refers to public worship. The ungodly family of Cain developed and centered their lives around the secular arts of business, establishing a way of self-reliance. The family of Seth, in contrast called upon the name of the LORD in order to express their dependence on HIM. Thus, two fundamentally different family groups were developing on the earth the godly and ungodly.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 5: 1 – 16

Luke 5:16

Prayers of JESUS.

Luke stresses more than the other Gospel writers the place of prayer in the life and ministry of JESUS. When the HOLY SPIRIT descended upon JESUS at the Jordan, HE was praying, at times HE withdrew from the multitudes and prayed and HE continued all night in prayer before choosing the 12 disciples. HE was alone praying before. HE asked HIS disciples an important question at HIS transfiguration. HE climbed the mountain to pray, the actual transfiguration occurred as HE prayed and HE was praying just before HE taught the disciples the Lord's Prayer. In Gethsemane HE prayed more earnestly on the cross HE prayed. HE prayed for others and the last words HE uttered before HIS death were a prayer. Luke also records that JESUS prayed after HIS resurrection.

Verses for 9th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 29 – 31

Psalms 30:6

In my prosperity.

I shall never be moved. Secure in his prosperity, the psalmist assumed that his wealth and success made him so strong that nothing could destroy his happiness. GOD then withdrew His protective hand and brought serious trouble and helplessness into his life, causing him to experience the need for GOD's continual care and presence. All believers who feel secure in themselves, who rely on temporal things, and who give first place in their lives to anything part from GOD and HIS kingdom are warned by the words of this psalm.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 5: 1 – 32

Genesis 5:22

Enoch walked with GOD, Enoch undoubtedly excelled in godliness.

Notice what the Bible says about him. He walked with GOD, he lived by faith in GOD, trusted in HIS WORD and promises, endeavoured to live a holy life and embraced GOD's ways while standing firm against the ungodliness of his generation. Believers today should ponder the life of Enoch as an example.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 5: 17 – 39

Luke 5:18

Brought in a bed, a man.

The friends of the paralyzed man had strong faith that JESUS could heal him, as seen by their determination to present him to JESUS. We too must believe that CHRIST can meet the needs of those we know, using every opportunity to bring them to JESUS. GOD's SPIRIT will open up such opportunities if we desire to lead others to CHRIST.

Verses for 11th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 34 & 35

The Story of Psalm 34

Saul was King of Israel. He wanted to kill David. David ran away. Saul followed him. David went to Gath, which was a Philistine city. The king of Gath was Abimelech. He was not a friend to David. David became afraid. He should have trusted in the LORD. He did not, but made a plan of his own. He made Abimelech think that he, David, was crazy. For this reason, Abimelech did not kill David. In those days they thought that it was wrong to kill crazy people. Abimelech sent David away. He went to a cave in Adullam, which was a few miles away. 400 people went to the camp that David made in Adullam. They were running away from a difficult life in Judah. Today we would say that they were refugees. The story is in a Part of the Bible that we call I Samuel, chapters 21 and 22. In Psalm 34 David thanked GOD that he was safe.

Psalm 34 is an alphabet psalm. There are 22 verses in it. Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. Verse 1 begins with aleph, verse 2 with beth, and so on. We have put verse 16 before verse 15, because this makes it easier to understand. Because it is an alphabet psalm there are a lot of different ideas in it. Other alphabet psalms are 9, 10, 25, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 6: 1 – 22

Genesis 6:5

The wickedness of man was great.

In Noah's day the character of human sin was blatantly manifested in two primary ways sexual lust and violence. Human depravity has not changed, it is still through lust and violence that evil finds unrestrained expression. Today sexual sins of all kinds and violence are prevalent in human society everywhere.

Genesis 6:6

And it grieved the LORD that HE had made man on the earth.

GOD is revealed in these early chapters of the Bible as a GOD who deals with people personally and is capable of emotion, disappointment and reaction against the wilful sin and rebellion of humankind.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 6: 1 – 16

Luke 6: 2 –10

LORD of the Sabbath.

Though the Pharisees accuse JESUS of breaking the Sabbath, in reality HE broke only their extreme interpretation of it.

JESUS states that Sabbath observance must not degenerate into a ritual to be kept at the cost

of the essential needs of humans. CHRIST is the LORD of the Sabbath. The Sabbath should be used to come away from our daily work and pursuit of material gain and turn to GOD as a pledge that HE is LORD over all of life.

Verses for 12th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 36 & 37

Psalms 36:4

He abhorreth not evil.

The word evil refers to basic evil and human depravity, the ungodly do not hate evil. Hatred of sin is an essential feature of GOD's character, it is a fundamental aspect of CHRIST's ministry and kinship. People may be loving and kind and do good to the poor, yet if they have no indignation against wrong, contempt for the world's immoral ways, zeal for justice or hatred of evil, they have failed to stand with GOD or follow the HOLY SPIRIT Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.

Psalms 37:6

He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.

The righteous who are oppressed by sin in the world are promised, answers to their prayers, vindication of their righteous standards, a heavenly inheritance, the LORD's sustaining help, the LORD's guidance, protection, presence and salvation.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 7: 1 – 8: 14

Genesis 7:23

And only Noah remained alive.

The flood story tells of both judgement and salvation. The flood with its total destruction of all human life outside the ark was necessary in order to blot out the extreme moral corruption of men and women and to give the human race a new chance for fellowship with GOD. The apostle Peter states that Christian baptism corresponds to Noah's salvation through the flood waters.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 6: 17 – 38

Luke 6:22

When men shall hate you.

Followers of JESUS should rejoice and leap for joy when, because of faithfulness to CHRIST and HIS godly standards, they are criticized, scorned and persecuted because of righteousness is one evidence that believers are in true fellowship with the LORD, since JESUS also was ill-treated and hated by the world.

Verses for 13th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 38 & 39

The story of Psalm 38

Many Christians think that this is a psalm that David wrote after the murder of Uriah. Others are Psalms 32, and 51.

The story of the murder of Uriah is in the second Book of Samuel, chapter 11. David saw a woman that he wanted to marry. Her name was Bathsheba. But she had a husband. His name was Uriah. Uriah was a soldier. At that time the army was fighting David's enemies. So, David sent Uriah to fight where it was dangerous. Soon the enemy killed Uriah and then David married Bathsheba.

GOD was not pleased with what David did. GOD sent his servant Nathan to tell David that GOD was not pleased. GOD said that David killed Uriah so that he might marry Uriah's wife. But David was sorry, so GOD forgave him. This means that GOD did not punish David.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 8: 15 – 9:17

Man's heart is evil from his youth.

The LORD states the truth about the corruption and depravity of human nature. The tendency toward evil innate in a person from birth and is expressed early in childhood or youth.

Genesis 9:13

My bow in the cloud.

The rainbow was GOD's sign and ongoing reminder of HIS promise never again destroy an inhabitants on the earth by flood. The rainbow should remind us of GOD's mercy and HIS faithfulness to his people.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 6:39 – 7:10

All these sayings CHRIST often used; it was easy to apply them. We ought to be very careful when we blame others; for we need allowance ourselves. If we are of a giving and a forgiving spirit, we shall ourselves reap the benefit. Though full and exact returns are made in another world, not in this world, yet Providence does what should encourage us in doing good. Those who follow the multitude to do evil, follow in the broad way that leads to destruction. The tree is known by its fruits; may the word of CHRIST be so grafted in our hearts, that we may be fruitful in every good word and work. And what the mouth commonly speaks, generally agrees with what is most in the heart. Those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will profit in a trying time, who think, speak, and act according to the words of CHRIST. Those who take pains in religion, found their hope upon CHRIST, who is the Rock of Ages, and other foundation can no man lay. In death and judgment they are safe, being kept by the power of CHRIST through faith unto salvation, and they shall never perish.

Verses for 14th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41 **Something to do**

1. Read Psalm 40: 13 – 17 and Psalm 70 and find where they are not the same. Do the differences change what it means?
2. Make sure that you build your life on a rock, not on sand. Remember, the Bible tells us that JESUS is a Rock in 1 Corinthians 10: 4. We build lives on HIM by obeying HIS words. Read again the words of JESUS at the beginning of Psalm 40.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 9: 18 – 10: 14

Genesis 10: 1 – 5

The generations of Noah.

The purpose of chapter 10 was to reveal how all the nations and the people of the earth stemmed from Noah and his sons after the flood.

The sons of Japheth. These verses list the descendants of Japheth, who went north and settled around the coastlands of the Black and the Caspian seas. They became the progenitors of the Medes and Greeks as well as the Caucasian races of Europe and Asia.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 7: 11 – 35

Luke 7:13

HE had compassion on her.

JESUS compassion for this widow shows that GOD has a special love and care for widows or for any person who is left alone in the world.

Scripture teaches the following:

GOD is a father to the fatherless and a defender of the widows. They are under HIS special care and protection. By means of the tithe and the abundance of His people, GOD provides for the fatherless and the widows.

GOD blesses those who help and honour them. HE is against those who take advantage of or hurt widows or orphans. Widows are receipt of GOD's tender love. The early church made it a priority to care for widows. One aspect of true faith is to look after orphans and widows in their distress.

Verses for 15th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 42 – 44

Psalms 42:2

My soul thirsteth for GOD.

As water is essential for physical life so GOD and HIS presence are essential for satisfaction and wholeness of life.

True believers will hunger and thirst for GOD and HIS grace, blessing and supernatural activity in their lives.

Psalms 44:22

For thy sake are we killed all the day long?

The HOLY SPIRIT reveals that some suffering comes to GOD's faithful people because they maintain loyalty to HIM in a hostile world. The apostle Paul quotes this verse in Romans 8:36. At the same time, as GOD's people we are assured of victory through JESUS CHRIST.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 10:15 – 11:9

Genesis 11:2

The land of Shinar.

Shinar is the Old Testament name for the territory of ancient Sumar and later Babylonia or Mesopotamia.

Genesis 11:4

Let us build ...and let us make us a name.

The sin of the people in the land of Shinar was the desire to dominate the world and their own destiny apart from GOD through man centered organizational unity, power and great accomplishments. This purpose was based on pride and rebellion against GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 7:36 – 8:3

Luke 4:47

She loved much.

Those who are deeply aware of their own past sinfulness understand how much they have been forgiven and therefore love CHRIST JESUS much. However those who have shallow understanding of their own sinfulness will correspondingly love Him less because they do not comprehend how much they have been forgiven.

Luke 8:3

Ministered unto HIM.

These women who had received healing and special care from JESUS honoured HIM by

faithfully contributing to the support of JESUS and His disciples. Their service and devotion continue to be an example for every woman who believes in HIM. To the extent you minister to HIM.

Verses for 18th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 50 & 51

The Story of Psalm 51

This is a famous psalm. David wrote it after he had done something very wrong. He saw a woman bathing and he wanted to have sex with her. But she was the wife of Uriah. Her name was Bathsheba. Uriah was away in the army, so David sent his servants to bring Bathsheba to his *palace. The *palace was the big house where he lived as king. David and Bathsheba had sex together. Later Bathsheba told David that she was going to have his baby. So David brought Uriah home. He tried to make Uriah have sex with Bathsheba so that Uriah would think that the baby was his. When Uriah would not do it, he sent Uriah to a dangerous place in the *war with the Philistines. The Philistines killed Uriah. Then David married Bathsheba. When the baby was born it only lived for a week.

Then Nathan the *prophet came and told David that he had done wrong. At first, David did not say that he was sorry. This made him feel very bad. So he wrote Psalm 32. Later he wrote this psalm as well. Psalms 32 and 51 are 2 of the 7 Penitential Psalms that the Church often sings during Lent. Lent is the 40 days before Easter. “Penitential” means being sorry for your *sins, asking GOD to *forgive them, and promising not to do them again. The other 5 Penitential Psalms are 6, 38, 102, 130 and 143.

We put a space in the psalm between verses 17 and 18. This is because many Christians think that verses 18 and 19 came later. The Jews wrote them when they came back from *exile in Babylon. This *exile was when the King of Babylon took them away from their own country and made them live in Babylon. The *prophets told the Jews this. GOD let the King of Babylon do it because the Jews had not obeyed GOD. The Jews wanted a psalm that told GOD that they had *sinned.

They chose Psalm 51. They put two verses on the end that said:

- They wanted the walls of Jerusalem built again (the King of Babylon had destroyed them)
- They wanted the *Temple in Jerusalem built again so that they could *sacrifice animals on its *altar (did they not see that David thought that this was not important?)

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 12: 1 – 20

Genesis 12:4

Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken.

The narrative from the beginning emphasizes the truth that obedience to GOD is essential to a saving relationship with HIM. Abram obeyed the WORD of the LORD. His obedience included leaving his home and country and trusting in GOD’s care, guidance and promises.

Genesis 12:7

The LORD appeared unto Abram

This is the first time Scripture explicitly states that GOD appeared to someone.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 8: 22 – 39

Luke 8: 27–33

A certain man which had devils.

A demonized person is one whose personality is subject to demons and their dark, oppressive influence. This is one of the ways Satan keeps people in bondage to sin and destructive behavioural patterns. JESUS came to set captives and to destroy the works of the devil.

Verses for 19th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 52 – 54

Psalms 54: 4

GOD is mine helper

This psalm is an appropriate prayer for the believer facing dangers or imminent disaster. The psalmist calls for help, expecting that GOD will respond in HIS saving, delivering and healing power. Today the LORD sends the HOLY SPIRIT to be our helper on earth and the sustainer of our souls.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 13: 1 – 18

Genesis 13: 10

Lot lifted up his eyes.

Scripture states that the LORD seeth not as man seeth. Lot saw only the well watered valley. GOD saw the people of Sodom who were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. Lot's failure to discern and oppose evil brought death and tragedy to his family. Parents should not place themselves or their children in a Sodom environment, lest they come to spiritual ruin as Lot and his family.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 8: 40 – 56

Luke 8: 50

Fear not believe only.

The daughter of the synagogue ruler had died. JESUS response was to encourage the father's faith, even in this seemingly hopeless situation. Throughout redemptive history believers have placed their trust in GOD even when it seemed as if all was lost. In such times GOD gave the necessary faith and delivered HIS people according to HIS will and purpose.

Verses for 20th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 55 & 56

The Story of Psalm 55

David had a friend. They did a lot of good things together. But one day the friend *betrayed David. David thought that his friend liked him, but he was wrong. His friend worked for David's enemies. This is *like JESUS' friend Judas. Judas told JESUS' enemies where to find and capture JESUS. Judas *betrayed JESUS as David's friend *betrayed David. But who was David's friend?

— Maybe it was Ahithophel. You will find the story in 2 Samuel 15:31; 16:15-23 and 17:1-23. Old Jewish Bibles tell us that it was Ahithophel, but not everyone agrees.

— Maybe it was Absalom. Absalom was King David's son. So, he was a *prince. "A man just *like me" in verse 13 may mean "a king or a *prince *like me". Again, not everyone agrees. The story of how Absalom tried to kill David and become king himself is in 2 Samuel chapters 15 to 19.

— Maybe we will never know! David had many friends whose names we do not know. Many Christians now think that one of these *betrayed David. They said that they were David's friends, but they helped David's enemies in a secret way.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 14: 1 – 24

Genesis 14:13

Abram the Hebrew.

The term Hebrew may have initially related to any people who wandered from place to place crossing over lands as nomads, it came to later specifically to Abraham and His descendants.

Genesis 14:16

Armed with his trained servants.

Abram was not a solitary nomad but a wealthy merchant prince had a total company of about one thousand.

Genesis 14:16

Melchizedek

Melchizedek – meaning king of righteousness king of Salem.

Genesis 14:20

He gave HIM tithes.

Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils he had retrieved in gratitude, for the help and grace of GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 9: 1 – 17

Luke 9:2

Preach the kingdom ...heal the sick.

This is the first time JESUS sent out HIS 12 disciples to represent HIM by the word and deed. The instruction given to the 12, was to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel after HIS resurrection, however JESUS changed the scope to encompass all nations in one direction.

Verses for 21st July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 57 & 59

The Story of Psalm 57

Saul was king of Israel. David was one of his servants. David's job was to make music when Saul was sad. This happened often. People liked David very much. Saul did not like this. He tried to kill David. David ran away. He hid in a *cave. Saul did not find him. Bible students think that David wrote Psalm 57 at this time. They also think that he wrote it so that people could sing it to music that they called "Do not destroy". Psalm 57 is a *miktam. This means that it had a hidden meaning, or had special teaching in it. There are two stories in the Bible about David hiding in a *cave. One is in 1 Samuel 22, the other in 1 Samuel 24. We do not know which one this psalm is about.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 15: 1 – 21

Genesis 15: 13

A land that is not theirs.

GOD told Abram that his descendants would go into Egypt and be oppressed for 400 yrs.

Genesis 15: 18

The LORD made a covenant with Abram.

The making of a covenant is described- It consisted in taking slaughtered animals, cutting them in half, and separating the halves and placing them opposite each other. After this the two parties entering into the agreement would walk between the two halves of the slain animal, symbolizing that if they did not keep the promises of the covenant, they would perish just like the slain animals. The smoking furnace and a burning lamp represents GOD's presence.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 9: 18 – 36

Luke 9: 23

Take up the cross daily.

Accepting JESUS as LORD and Saviour demands not only believing the truth of the gospel, but also committing ourselves to sacrificially follow HIM.

The choice between denying ourselves and living for our own selfish desires must be made daily. That choice will determine our eternal destiny.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 22nd July 2022

MARY MAGDELENE

Collect: O Lord ,of life and joy whose Son Jesus did liberate and did make whole Mary Magdalene and called her to be the pioneer missionary of His resurrection , make our ignorance wise with Your wisdom , make our weariness strong with Your strength so that we may delight in Your love and rejoice in sharing and service through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit , one God ,world without end. Amen.

Verses for 23rd July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 62 – 65

The Story of Psalm 63

The Church has used this as a morning song for hundreds of years. This is because verse 1 says, “I will look for you early”. The Hebrew word “early” can also mean “in a special way”. Maybe David wrote this psalm when he wrote Psalm 3. Psalm 3 is another morning song. David wrote it when his son Absalom tried to kill him. David ran away to Edom. Edom is east of Jerusalem where David lived. To get to Edom David went through a *wilderness, or a wild place. There was not much water and it was very dry. It made David think that he was very dry. This was not because he was *thirsty for water but *thirsty for GOD! He could not go to the *Temple in Jerusalem and speak to GOD. David prays that GOD will send somebody to kill his enemies. Then he can go back to the *Temple, or the house of GOD, in Jerusalem.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 17: 1 – 14

Genesis 17:5

Abram ...Abraham.

Abram means exalted father. Abraham means father of many. A new relationship with GOD often required new name.

Genesis 17:7

To be GOD unto thee.

The very essence and reality of the Abrahamic covenant was GOD giving himself to Abraham and his descendants GOD's promise to be GOD unto thee is the greatest promise in Scripture. It is the first and fundamental promise on which all other promises rest. It means that GOD unreservedly binds Himself to the faithful people to be their GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 9: 57 – 10: 16

Luke 10:2

The harvest truly is great.

JESUS viewed each person as an invaluable everlasting soul who will spend eternity in heaven. The harvest field represents the lost many of whom can be saved if there are workers to proclaim.

Luke 10:3

Lambs among wolves.

Believers who faithfully follow the will of GOD will be threatened by many dangers. They will be like defenceless lambs among wolves. Knowing this we must pray for GOD's presence, protection and provision.

**CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 25th
July 2022**

JAMES, APOSTLE and MARTYR

Collect: O LORD GOD, we seek YOUR help not to aspire for the temporary worldly powers and positions like James the disciple of YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST. Grant us grace and wisdom so that we may seek and aspire for eternal heavenly riches and glory by laying down our lives for your sake like James, the Apostle of YOUR Church, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, world without end. Amen.

Verses for 26th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 70 & 71

What Psalm 71 means

Verse 3: David often said that GOD was his rock and his *fortress.

He meant that GOD was someone that he could trust (rock) and someone that he could hide in (fortress).

Verse 4: “The hands of bad people” means that bad people were holding him. He was not free.

Verses 5 and 16: Master and LORD are two Hebrew words that mean “*Lord*” in *English*. “*Master*” is “Lord on earth”, “*LORD*” is “Lord in heaven”, where GOD lives.

Verse 7: This is a difficult verse to translate. The person that wrote the psalm (the *psalmist) says that people think that he is a warning. “Warning” means “there is danger”. It makes people afraid. Maybe it makes them think about what GOD will do to them because they are bad.

Verse 9: The *psalmist does not want GOD to ‘throw him away’ when he is old. He wants GOD to continue giving him help.

Verse 13: There are new words here. Scorn and disgrace are things that happen to people when other people find out what they have done wrong.

Verses 15, 16, 19 and 24: These all talk about “*righteous”. The word “righteous” means “very, very good”. Only GOD is really *righteous. HE always does what is right. Some Bible students translate the end of verse 15, “even if I cannot write good words”.

Verse 18: “Old and grey” means that the *psalmist’s hair has gone grey now that he is old. “The people still to be born” are his children and his grandchildren. We call them “the next generations”. We must tell them about what GOD has done for us.

Verse 20: “Deep under the earth” means that the *psalmist thought that he would die and people would bury him. But he did not die ... GOD made him safe, so people did not bury him!

Verse 22: The “*Holy One of Israel” is another name for GOD.

Verse 23: We say that when he died JESUS bought us (or “redeemed us”) from everything that is bad. The *psalmist felt the same.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 18: 9 – 21

Genesis 18:19**He will command the childrenkeep the way of the LORD.**

Essential in the calling of Abraham was GOD's purpose that he be a spiritual leader at home and teach his children the way of the LORD. With the call of Abraham, GOD established the father as the one responsible to train his children to keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgement.

NEW TESTAMENT**Luke 10: 38 – 11:13****Luke 10:42****One thing is needful.**

Although active, practical service to GOD is essential and good, our first and most important task is a love and devotion that expresses itself in quiet worship, prayer and fellowship with the LORD. Are we so busy doing the work of the LORD, attending church services and performing good deeds that we forget the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God Himself with all our hearts, souls, strength and minds.

Verses for 27th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 72 & 73

Psalms 73: 1 – 28

GOD is good to Israel.

This psalm deals with a disturbing problem, though GOD is sovereign and just, the wicked often prosper, while those who serve GOD seem to suffer more. The psalmist, who serves GOD faithfully has become discouraged when he compares his afflictions with the apparent ease and happiness of many of the wicked. However, his confidence in GOD and in HIS ways is restored when GOD reveals the tragic end of the wicked and the true blessing of the righteous.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 18: 22 – 19:11

Genesis 19: 1

Lot sat at the gate of Sodom.

Although Lot was distressed by the filthy deeds he saw and heard in beautiful Sodom, he still was willing to tolerate the wickedness of Sodom for its cultural, social and material advantages. This compromise brought tragedy to his people. Likewise, believers today who expose their families to ungodly environment and evil influences for social or material gain are setting themselves up for family tragedies.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 11: 14 – 36

Luke 11:20

Devils....

The kingdom of GOD on earth is in direct proportion to the destruction of the devil's work and the deliverance of sinners from bondage to sin and the demonic. Satan will resist the coming of CHRIST'S kingdom on earth. JESUS demonstrates GOD'S power and authority in driving out demons over powering satan and plundering his possessions.

Verses for 28th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 74 & 75

The story of Psalms 74

The temple was the house of GOD. It was the place where people came to pray to GOD, and to *worship HIM*. (Worship means that you tell GOD how great HE is, and how much you love HIM).

The *Israelites made several *temples. The most important one was in Jerusalem. Enemies destroyed it twice. The second time, it was the Romans, 70 years after JESUS came to the earth. JESUS had said that this would happen.

But about 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar also destroyed the *temple. He was King of Babylon. He took many of the *Israelites to Babylon. We call this “the *exile”. BC means years before CHRIST came to the earth.

Psalms 74 is about when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. The *psalmist asks GOD to think again!

“Keep your promise” in verse 20 is “remember the *covenant” in *Hebrew. The *covenant was when GOD and the *Israelites agreed. GOD would *protect them if they obeyed HIM. The trouble was that they did not obey GOD. So GOD let Nebuchadnezzar destroy the *temple. He also took the *Israelites to Babylon. There they had to do what he told them to do. They were in *exile. They were in a prison a long way from home.

Psalms 74 tells us what Nebuchadnezzar did to the *temple. The *Israelites were sorry because Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. They were not sorry that they had *disobeyed GOD*. (“Disobeyed” means “did not obey”.) That is why GOD did not have to keep HIS promise. So he let Nebuchadnezzar and his army destroy the *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 19: 12 – 38

Genesis 19:26

His wife looked back... and she became a pillar of salt.

Lot's wife did not take the angel's specific command seriously, and she was struck dead. Evidently her heart was still clinging fondly to Sodom. JESUS warns believers “Remember Lot's wife meaning that those whose hearts are attached to the world's present corrupt system will not be spared GOD's wrath and the destruction that is coming upon the ungodly.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 11: 37 – 54

Luke 11:42

Woe unto you...JESUS words constitute HIS most severe denunciation.

HIS words were directed against religious leaders and teachers who had rejected at least a part of the revealed WORD of GOD and replaced it with their own ideas and interpretations. The spirit of JESUS should be noted. Rather than tolerating and accommodating persons who outwardly appeared righteous in their religious performance but were unrighteous in their personal lives, JESUS confronted their hypocrisy and sinfulness. Like John the Baptist and

the Old Testament prophets, JESUS denounced sin and corruption among those in positions of spiritual influence.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 29th July 2022

Martha, Mary and Lazarus of Bethany, Companions of our LORD

Collect: GOD our LORD, whose SON enjoyed the love of HIS friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, in learning, argument and hospitality: may we so rejoice in YOUR love that the world may come to know the depths of YOUR wisdom, the wonder of YOUR compassion, and YOUR power to bring life out of death, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST, our friend and brother, who lives and reigns with YOU, in the unity of the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, now and forever. Amen.

Verses for 30th July 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 1 – 39

Psalms 78: 38

HE being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity.

GOD's patience and mercy are clearly revealed in this psalm. Over and over His people rebelled in unfaithfulness, yet GOD restrained HIS anger. GOD will never abandon HIS children simply because they fail to please HIM perfectly. However, GOD's longsuffering and forgiveness must not be presumed upon in wilful disobedience and rebellion. If we persistently grieve HIM by our sin, HE will eventually judge us in wrath, just as HE judged Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 21:1 – 21

Genesis 21:5

His son Isaac was born.

Isaac, the son of promise, was finally born to Abraham and Sarah .Through Isaac GOD would continue HIS covenant with Abraham. Twenty- five years had passed before GOD's promise to Abraham was fulfilled. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, in HIS own time HE faithfully brings HIS promises to pass.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 12: 22 – 48

Luke 12:34

Your treasure...your heart.

A person's heart i.e. feelings, thinking, desires, values, will and decisions are attracted to the things that are most important to him or to her. If you treasure earthly things, then your heart will be enslaved to such things. If GOD's kingdom, heavenly things, HIS WORD, HIS presence, HIS holiness and your relationship to HIM are your treasure, then your heart will be drawn to the things of HIS kingdom and your life will be directed toward heaven, waiting for the return of your LORD.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
AUGUST

Verses for 1st August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1 – 5, 8 – 13 & Psalms 80

What Psalm 80 means

Study this psalm in three parts: each part ends “Make us return (to you). Make your face shine (on us) and make us safe”. Bible students are not sure if “return” means “return from *exile” in Assyria or Babylon; or “return to GOD from the wrong things we have done”. Our translation chooses the second meaning, but both could be true. “Make your face shine” is how the *Jews said, “Do something good for us”. This is what we call “The *covenant”. If GOD’s people obey him, he will make them safe.

In verse 1 *Joseph means the same as Israel, GOD’s people. Maybe the *psalmist used the name Joseph because he was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The words “shine on” at the start of verse 2 are in verse 1 in the *Hebrew Bible.

As in verses 3, 7 and 19, “shine” here means “do something good”. The good thing the *psalmist wants is for all the people to be united in their own country. “Get up” in the *Hebrew Bible is “wake up”.

In the second part, verses 4 –7, the *psalmist asks GOD how long it will be before:

- GOD stops being angry with them
- GOD stops making them cry buckets full of tears
- GOD stops their enemies fighting them and laughing at them

In verses 4 (and 19) we have the name *LORD GOD of *Sabaoth. Isaiah and Jeremiah often used this name. Each part of the name means something. *LORD means that he will always be alive. GOD means that he is powerful. *Sabaoth means that he has great armies, both on earth and in *heaven.

In the last part of the psalm, the *vine is a picture of GOD’s people. He brought them from Egypt to the *Promised Land of Israel, verse 8.

They lived in it from the Sea in the west to the River in the east, from the mountains in the south to Lebanon in the north, verses 9 –11.

They used to build walls round *vines to keep them safe. But GOD knocked down these walls and let wild animals attack and destroy it, verses 12 –13. The wild animals are a picture of Israel’s enemies.

Then the *psalmist prays that GOD will do something and send help to Israel, verses 14 –19. “Hand” and “right hand” are Bible-pictures of GOD doing something in our world. “The son”, verse 15, and “the man” and “the son of man”, verse 17, are all names for GOD’s people Israel. Some Bible students think that it may be the king of Israel.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 21:22 – 22:8

God did test Abraham.

Abraham’s faith and commitment to GOD were tested to the maximum. GOD commanded him to do something completely contrary to common sense and to his fatherly love and lifelong hope. In the Abraham story, we read of three great tests of his faith. The call to separate himself from his people and country and to go forth, not knowing where he was going the requirement to trust GOD for the promise of the covenant without seeing the

fulfilment of that promise for 25 years. The command that he should offer up Isaac, the promised son. In a manner similar to Abraham, the true faith of all believers will be tested.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 12:49 – 13:9

Luke 13:6 – 9

Fig tree...cut down.

The parable of the fig tree refers primarily to Israel. However, its truth applies also to all individuals who profess to believe in JESUS, yet fail to turn from sin. While GOD gives everyone sufficient opportunity to repent, HE will not tolerate sin forever. A time will come when GOD's grace will be withdrawn and the unrepentant punished without mercy.

PSALMS

Psalms 81 & 82

The Story of Psalm 81

*Harvest time is when we pick fruit and vegetables.

The Jews had three big harvest times:

- April, when they picked *barley (to make bread)
- May, when they picked *wheat (also to make bread)
- October, when they picked grapes (to make wine). Wine is a drink with alcohol in it.

Psalm 81 is a Festival Psalm. The festival was at the time of the grape harvest. They called it “the festival of tents”. Tents were houses made of animal skins. At the festival of tents the Jews lived for a week in *tents. This taught them how they lived when GOD took them out of Egypt, hundreds of years before. It told them how good GOD was to them.

Psalm 81 taught the *Jews that, now GOD had brought them into their own land, they should have no other gods. Then HE would give them help against their enemies, as HE did in Egypt.

Some Bible students think that Psalm 81 came from the north part of Israel. Its date was about 750 years before CHRIST came to the earth.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 22:9 – 24

Genesis 22:14

Jehovah- Jireh.

This name means the LORD will provide.

From GOD’s test of Abraham we learn that GOD sometimes tests the faith of His children.

Any Test must be considered an honour in GOD’s kingdom.

After trial of faith, GOD will confirm, strengthen, establish and reward the believers.

Genesis 22:18

Because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Because of Abraham’s sincere, heartfelt obedience, demonstrated by his willingness to sacrifice his only son, Abraham was told that GOD would continue HIS covenant promise with him.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 13:10 – 30

Luke 13: 18 –21

Parable of the Mustard seed and Parable of the Leaven.

JESUS parables of the mustard seed and the leaven make the same point about what the kingdom of GOD is and looks like. The mustard seed was the smallest seed sown by farmers in Palestine during the days when JESUS lived. Yet in a very short time it grew to be the biggest of all plants that developed from seed. A small amount of leaven will effect a whole mass of dough so as to be sufficient in a short time to feed a large company of people.

Verses for 3rd August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 84 & 85

Psalm 84: 1 – 12

How amiable are thy tabernacles.

This psalm describes believers who are so attached to GOD that they long above everything else to be in GOD's house and presence. Their greatest desire is to experience GOD's nearness, to worship HIM with other faithful believers and to receive HIS blessings.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 23:1 – 20

Genesis 23:20

The field ...for a possession of a burying place.

Scripture reveals that the only piece of land in Canaan that Abraham ever possessed in fulfilment of GOD's promise was a grave. His descendants did not begin to possess the Promised Land until the time of Joshua. This fact points to the life of faith that waits till the end of life for the full reward of one's trust in GOD. Believers, like Abraham, must not set their hearts ultimately on things of this earth, but must desire a heavenly country where GOD has prepared for them a city.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 13:31 – 14:11

Luke 14: 11

Exalteth himself...Abased.

The SAVIOUR wants that those who exalt themselves in this life will be put to shame in the future kingdom of heaven. Much more important than earthly honour is our GOD. Such honour cannot be secured by self-assertiveness, for it comes only through humility and servant hood, and by seeking the honour that cometh from GOD only.

Verses for 4th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 86 – 88

What Psalm 86 means

In verse 2, “one of your people” is a special Bible word. It is someone that has accepted GOD’s love. Some Bibles translate it “*saints*”. “*I lift myself to you*” in verse 4 means “*I give myself to you*”. Some Christians show this by lifting their hands when they pray. In verse 5, the word “forgive” means more to Christians than maybe it did to the *psalmist. To him it meant “excuse”. To Christians it means that GOD gave their *sin to JESUS for them when JESUS died for them. That was when GOD *punished JESUS for our *sin!

“Answer me” in verses 1 and 7 does not mean that the *psalmist will hear GOD speak. It means that GOD will give him help.

The gods of verse 8 are the false gods of the people attacking the *psalmist.

The united heart in verses 11 and 12 means a heart (or person) that serves (obeys) GOD only. He does not try to serve (obey) others gods or somebody or something else. This is what JESUS said in Matthew 6:24, “You cannot serve GOD and Mammon”. Mammon means money or what money can buy.

“When I think of your name” in the *Hebrew Bible is “to be afraid of your name”.

“Kind love” in verses 13 and 15 is a word *like “your people” in verse 2 in the *Hebrew Bible. GOD’s people (or *saints) are the people that have accepted his kind love.

In verse 16 we read that the *psalmist’s mother was also a servant of GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 24:1 – 28

Genesis 24:12

O Lord GOD ...I pray thee.

Abraham’s servant Eliezer was a devout man who trusted GOD like His master did and who sought the LORD through prayer. This narrative indicates that each step of His journey was marked by asking GOD for HIS blessing and guidance. Notice also that after Rebekah responded favourably, he immediately praised GOD. The servant’s prayer and his faith in GOD reveal that Abraham’s obedient faith was not merely private, it was active also in the lives of other members of his household.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 14:12 – 35

Luke 14: 28 – 33

Counteth the cost.

JESUS teaches that whoever desires to follow HIM and be HIS disciple should first decide whether he or she is prepared to pay the cost. The cost of real discipleship is to give up all relationships and possessions, i.e., all that we have must be placed at CHRIST’s service and under HIS guidance.

Verses for 5th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 89

Psalms 89: 30

If his children forsake my law.

GOD's promises did not ensure the reign of David's descendants as kings forever, nor do they address the issue of the personal salvation of these kings. Rather, the promises were given to David to assure him that the unfaithfulness of Israel and her kings would not interfere with GOD's purpose to establish one of his descendants upon an everlasting throne.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 24:29 – 49

Genesis 24:40

The LORD...will send his angel with thee.

This verse reveals one of the ways that GOD protects HIS children and guides them on their way. HE may send angels to operate behind the scenes to make their way successful.

Hebrews 1:14 states that angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 15:1 – 24

Luke 15: 20

His father saw him, and had compassion.

JESUS description of the father's response to the son's return teaches several important truths. GOD has compassion for the Lost because of their sorrowful condition. GOD's love for them is so great that HE never ceases to grieve over them and to wait for their return.

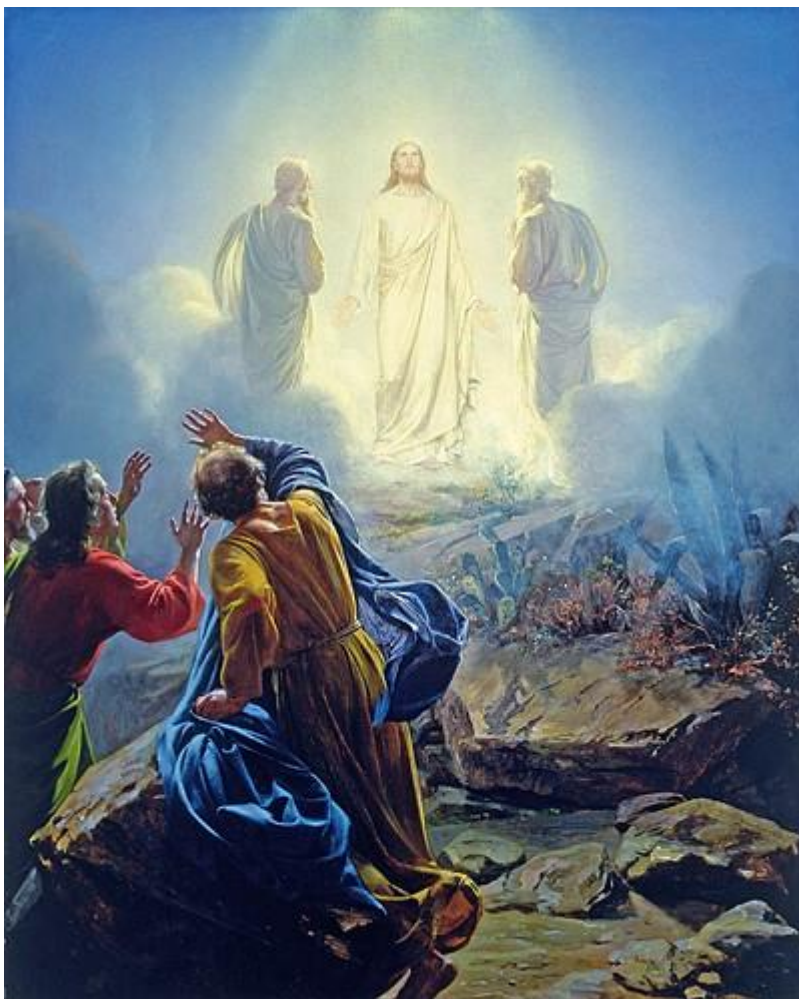
When sinners sincerely turn to GOD, GOD is more than ready to receive them with forgiveness, love compassion, grace and the full rights of children. The benefits of Christ's death, the HOLY SPIRIT's influence and GOD's rich grace are all made available to those who seek GOD. GOD's joy over the return of sinners is immeasurable.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 6th August 2022

THE TRANFIGURATION OF CHRIST

Collect: Eternal GOD, whose SON JESUS CHRIST was wonderfully transfigured before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain, and spoke of the exodus HE would accomplish at Jerusalem: give us strength so to hear HIS voice and bear our cross that in the world to come we may see HIM as HE is; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, world without end. Amen.

THE TRANFIGURATION OF CHRIST



The Transfiguration by Carl Bloch

This biblical event appears in each of the Gospel books as an important moment in the life of JESUS and evidence of HIS divinity.

After JESUS performs a series of miracles and foretells HIS own death, JESUS leads just three of His disciples, Peter, James and John, to a “high mountain.” This is where the Transfiguration takes place in which HIS appearance was radiantly transformed.

The **transfiguration of JESUS** is a story told in the New Testament when JESUS is transfigured and becomes radiant in glory upon a mountain.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 17:1–8, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36) describe it, and the Second Epistle of Peter also refers to it (2 Peter 1: 16-19)

The word “transfigured” is a very interesting word. The Greek word is “metamorphose” and it means to transform or to change.

The word is a verb that means to change into another form.

It also means to change the outside to match the inside.

The prefix “meta” means to change and the “morphe” means form.

In the case of the transfiguration of JESUS CHRIST, it means to match the outside with the reality of the inside. To change the outward so that it matches the inward reality.

JESUS’ divine nature was “veiled” (Hebrews 10:20) in human form and the transfiguration was a glimpse of that glory.

Therefore, the transfiguration of JESUS CHRIST displayed the Shekinah glory of GOD incarnate in the SON. The voice of GOD attesting to the truth of JESUS’ SONSHIP, this was the second time GOD’s voice was heard.

In the gospels, JESUS takes Peter, James, son of Zebedee and his brother John the Apostle with HIM and goes up to a mountain (the Mount of Transfiguration) to pray.

Once on the mountain, Matthew 17:2 states that JESUS “was transfigured before them; HIS face shining as the sun, and HIS garments became white as the light.” At that point the prophet Elijah representing the prophets and Moses representing the Law appeared and JESUS began to talk to them.

Luke states that they spoke of JESUS’ exodus which HE was about to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Luke is also specific in describing JESUS in a state of glory, with Luke 9:32 referring to “they saw HIS glory”.

Just as Elijah and Moses began to depart from the scene, Peter began to ask JESUS if the disciples should make three tents for HIM and the two prophets. But before Peter could finish, a bright cloud appeared, and a voice from the cloud stated: “This is MY beloved SON, with whom I am well pleased; listen to HIM” (Mark 9:7).

The disciples then fell to the ground in fear, but JESUS approached and touched them, telling them not to be afraid. When the disciples looked up, they no longer saw Elijah or Moses.

When JESUS and the three apostles were going back down the mountain, JESUS tells them to not tell anyone “the things they had seen” until the “SON of MAN” had risen from the dead.

The apostles are described as questioning among themselves as to what JESUS meant by “risen from the dead”.

In addition to the principal account given in the synoptic gospels; in 2 Peter 1:16–18, the Apostle Peter describes himself as an eyewitness “of HIS magnificence”.

In Christian teachings, the transfiguration is a pivotal moment, and the setting on the mountain is presented as the point where human nature meets GOD: the meeting place of the temporal and the eternal, with JESUS himself as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.

The transfiguration of JESUS CHRIST was a powerful demonstration of HIS divine nature and manifestation of HIS glory, which JESUS possessed prior to coming to earth in the human body.

The whole purpose of that experience was to reinforce the staggering faith of those apostles. The transfiguration is a sign that JESUS was to fulfil the Law and the prophets. It also assured James, Peter, and John that JESUS was, indeed the MESSIAH.

The transfiguration not only supports the identity of JESUS as the SON of GOD (as in HIS baptism), but the statement “listen to HIM”, identifies HIM as the messenger and mouth-piece of GOD.

The significance of this identification is enhanced by the presence of Elijah and Moses, for it indicates to the apostles that JESUS is the voice of GOD “par excellence”, and instead of Moses or Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, HE should be listened to, surpassing the laws of Moses by virtue of HIS divinity and filial relationship with GOD.

2 Peter 1:16–18, echoes the same message: at the Transfiguration GOD assigns to JESUS a special “honour and glory” and it is the turning point at which GOD exalts JESUS above all other powers in creation, and positions HIM as ruler and judge.

The transfiguration also echoes the teaching by JESUS (as in Matthew 22:32) that GOD is not “the GOD of the dead, but of the living”. Although Moses had died and Elijah had been taken up to heaven centuries before (as in 2 Kings 2:11), they now live in the presence of the SON of GOD, implying that the same return to life applies to all who face death and have faith.

In the Old Testament, Moses died, but in the transfiguration of the LORD JESUS, Moses represent those who dead in CHRIST (the New Testament believers) to meet the LORD in the air during the caught up.

In the Old Testament, Elijah was taken alive, but in the transfiguration of the LORD JESUS, Elijah represents those who alive in CHRIST (we at the present age) also to meet the LORD in the air during the caught up or rapture of the church.

The reason this event takes on such a great importance for the Church is because it has meanings for us on both a spiritual and a practical level.

On the spiritual level, the appearance of Moses and Elijah are significant. Moses is the lawgiver. The laws he passes on to the people, however, are not his, but they came from GOD.

His appearance with JESUS signifies to the Apostles that GOD’s laws were important to JESUS. As JESUS himself says elsewhere in the Gospel, HE did not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it. So JESUS becomes the embodiment of GOD’s laws, which makes it even much more important to follow JESUS.

Elijah was one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. The role of the prophet was to bring GOD’s message to the people as to how GOD wanted them to live. If they had deviated from GOD’s ways, the prophet was to correct the people and tell them to get back on track. If the people were confused or didn’t know how to live the way GOD wanted them to, the prophet was to bring enlightenment and understanding.

Elijah’s presence meant that JESUS was also fulfilling the role of prophet by being GOD’s Word bringing enlightenment, correction and understanding to the people.

So from a spiritual perspective, JESUS himself is the law and the prophet. It is in JESUS that we learn what GOD wants of us, and it is in HIM that we get the spiritual gifts we need to actually do what we learn from JESUS.

A spiritual experience is supposed to change the way we look at life, the way we approach life and the way we react with others. The experience does us no good if just makes us want to stay away from our Christian duties and simply enjoy the good feelings. It also does us no good if we come back to our normal life not having changed at all, just continuing to live the same as before.

Strong spiritual experiences are good, and we should seek them out. But they are also meant to change us so that we can have a positive effect on the world around us. It is important that we don't forget that.



Mount Tabor is traditionally identified as the Mount of Transfiguration.



Bell tower of the Eastern Orthodox monastery on Mount Tabor

Verses for 8th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 95 & 96

What Psalm 95 means

Study the psalm in 2 parts:

_ Verses 1 – 7a, telling GOD that he is great,

_ Verses 7b – 11, telling us to obey GOD.

7a means the first part of the verse; 7b means the last part.

In verse 1, the psalmist (the person that wrote the psalm) asks people to come with him.

Together they will praise the *LORD, (or tell HIM that HE is great). LORD is a special name for GOD. Only people who have promised to love and obey HIM should use it. The promise to love and obey is the Covenant. If they do this, GOD will make them safe. So, LORD is the “Covenant name” for GOD. “Rock” is another name for GOD, as in Psalm 94:22.

In verses 4 and 5 “in HIS hand” and “HIS” means that HE rules over them. So, GOD rules everything on the earth, including the sea.

In verse 6, “fall on our knees” means that we go on our knees in front of HIM. We do this when we worship HIM. “Worship HIM” means “tell HIM that we love HIM and think that HE is very great”.

In verse 7, the animals are sheep. GOD feeds HIS sheep and keeps them safe. But his people are the sheep. We find this in Psalm 23:1: “The *LORD is my shepherd”. A shepherd is a sheep farmer. We also find it in John 10:14, where JESUS says, “I am the good shepherd”. HE also says in John 10:27, “My sheep hear MY voice. I know them and they follow ME”. In all these verses, sheep are a picture of people that love and obey GOD.

The last part of verse 7 starts the second part of the psalm. If we hear GOD speak, we must listen to HIM (verse 8). Here, “you” means the *Jewish people who were at Massah and Meribah. They were the people that Moses led from Egypt to Israel. They had seen what GOD could do, (verse 9b). But they asked for more! At Massah and Meribah (2 names for the same place), they *tested GOD. A test is an exam, something to find out what a person can do. Here is the story from Exodus 17: 1 – 7.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 25: 19 – 34

Genesis 25: 31

Birth right consisted leadership in worship and headship in the family, a double portion of the inheritance and the title to the covenant blessing that GOD had promised to Abraham. That Esau sold his birth right reveals how little value he placed on GOD’s blessings and covenant promises. He foolishly chose to trade future long range blessings for present momentary pleasures. Thus, he despised his birth right. Jacob on the other hand desired the spiritual blessings of the future, and from him came the 12 tribes of Israel.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 16:14 – 31

Luke 16:18 – 31

Rich man...Lazarus.

The rich man's life was consumed in self centered living. He made the wrong choice and suffered eternally. Lazarus lived all his life in poverty but his heart was right with GOD. His name means GOD is my help, and he never gave up his faith in GOD. He died and was immediately taken to paradise.

Verses for 9th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 97 – 99

Psalms 99: 3

Thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

The LORD GOD is so awesome and holy that even HIS name must be treated with the utmost reverence and respect. GOD may never be treated lightly, for HE is enthroned far above humans in strength, justice, purity and greatness. We must both love and fear GOD and beware of adopting the world's casual use of HIS name.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 26: 1 – 11

Genesis 26:5

Because Abraham obeyed.

GOD lifted up Abraham as a model of the obedience of faith. Abraham had made a sincere endeavour to keep the laws and commandments of the LORD. Because of this, GOD blessed him. Isaac and all believers must emulate Abraham's faith and obedience if they hope to participate in GOD's covenant promises and salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 17:1– 19

Luke 17:2

Millstone...tied around his neck.

Causing someone to sin because of our example, attitude or neglect will bring such severe punishment that death before committing this sin would be preferable.

Luke 17:3

If he repent, forgive.

Concerning JESUS statement about forgiving, observe the following. JESUS is concerned that we possess an attitude that desires to forgive and help those who offend us. Forgiveness and reconciliation cannot truly occur until the offending person acknowledges his or her wrong action and sincerely repents. Furthermore, JESUS was not referring to the same offense constantly repeated. We should be willing to persevere in forgiveness if the offender sincerely repents.

Verses for 10th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 100 – 102

Psalms 101: 2

I will walk within my house with a Perfect heart.

Faithful believers will make it a priority to please GOD in their own homes. Family relationships are where true godliness must first be manifested and developed. The very purpose and direction of our hearts must be to seek GOD in prayer, to study HIS Word, to have family devotions, to show love and care to the members of our family, to walk blamelessly and to have eyes that refuse to look at evil.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 26: 12 – 35

Genesis 26: 12

The LORD blessed him.

In the Old Testament, wealth was sometimes given as a reward for faithfulness. In the New Testament, by contrast, wealth is viewed by JESUS as often a competitive master, and a potential hindrance to spiritual life and commitment to GOD.

Genesis 26:35

A grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

Esau was indifferent to the righteous standards of his parents, for he married two women who were not followers of the true GOD. This action also demonstrated his lack of interest in GOD's covenant blessing.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 17:20 – 18:8

Luke 17:21

The kingdom of GOD is within you.

According to JESUS, the present nature of the kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation, it does not come as an earthly political power. Instead it is within the hearts and in the midst of GOD's people, consisting of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST. We demonstrate it by conquering through the power of the SPIRIT, the forces of sin, sickness and satan, not by conquering kings and nations. When JESUS comes to earth the second time, then the kingdom will be seen in its full power and glory as it triumphs over kings and nations.

Verses for 11th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 103 & 104: 1 – 23

Psalms 103: 1 – 2

Bless the LORD, O my soul.

To bless carries the meaning of to praise. This psalm expresses thanksgiving and praise to the LORD for the benefits and blessings that HE bestows on the believing covenant people. We must never forget GOD's goodness to us or fail to be thankful for HIS blessings showered on us through the HOLY SPIRIT.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 27: 1 – 20

Genesis 27: 1

When Isaac was old.

Portrays Isaac and his family pursuing GOD's blessing in an unrighteous way. Isaac's personal preference for Esau, contrary to GOD's will, and deceptive manipulation by Rebekah and Jacob took pre-eminence over the spiritual good of GOD's covenant. Whenever GOD's work is undertaken in unrighteous ways, damage is done to GOD's purpose and to all involved.

Genesis 27: 4

My soul may bless thee.

The birth right blessing and oral declaration of the father were legally binding in ancient Near Eastern law. Isaac appeared to have forgotten or ignored GOD's word that Esau would serve Jacob.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 18: 9 – 30

Luke 18: 25

A rich man...the kingdom.

The disciples, holding the view generally held by Jews, were amazed at these declarations of JESUS about the rich. The prevailing view among the Jews in JESUS day was that to be wealthy was a sign of GOD's special favour and that to be poor was a sign of GOD's displeasure. The Bible identifies greed and the pursuit of wealth as idolatry. Riches are in JESUS perspective an obstacle both to salvation and to discipleship.

Verses for 12th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 104: 24 – 35 & 105: 1 – 22

Psalms 105: 1

Give thanks unto the LORD.

This psalm calls Israel to worship, praise, obey and seek the LORD, because HE has miraculously directed their personal and corporate history in order to create and preserve the nation of Israel as a holy people who observe HIS righteous laws.

Psalms 105:4

Seek the LORD, and HIS strength.

We are invited not only to seek the LORD's presence but the power and strength of HIS grace. We must daily look to GOD for grace constantly to seek HIM earnestly.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 27: 21 – 37

When Esau understood that Jacob had got the blessing, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry. The day is coming, when those that now make light of the blessings of the covenant, and sell their title to spiritual blessings for that which is of no value, will, in vain, ask urgently for them. Isaac, when made sensible of the deceit practised on him, trembled exceedingly. Those who follow the choice of their own affections, rather than the divine will, get themselves into perplexity. But he soon recovers, and confirms the blessing he had given to Jacob, saying, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed. Those who part with their wisdom and grace, their faith and a good conscience, for the honours, wealth, or pleasures of this world, however they feign a zeal for the blessing, have judged themselves unworthy of it, and their doom shall be accordingly. A common blessing was bestowed upon Esau. This he desired. Faint desires of happiness, without right choice of the end, and right use of the means, deceive many unto their own ruin. Multitudes go to hell with their mouths full of good wishes. The great difference is, that there is nothing in Esau's blessing which points at CHRIST; and without that, the fatness of the earth, and the plunder of the field, will stand in little stead. Thus Isaac, by faith, blessed both his sons, according as their lot should be.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 18:31 – 19:10

Luke 19:1–10

Zaccheus.

JESUS was still seeking to save the lost, only few days before HIS crucifixion, this was the purpose of HIS coming. Zaccheus, a tax collector, earned his living by collecting more than he should have from the people. For this reason, the people despised tax collectors. JESUS concern for Zaccheus admonishes us to bring the gospel to the undesirables of society, for all people who are lost and in need of salvation.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 15th August 2022

INDEPENDENCE DAY

PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING

Collect: O GOD, YOU created all people in YOUR image. We thank YOU for the astonishing and rich variety of cultures and people in our country. We thank you for the gift of democracy. Enable us to make right decisions in choosing our leaders, in setting our priorities so that we all reap the fruit of democracy in peace and harmony, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, now and forever. Amen.

Verses for 16th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 109: 1 – 5 & 21 – 31 and 110

Psalms 110: 1 – 7

The LORD said unto my LORD.

This psalm speaks of the LORDSHIP of the MESSIAH, HIS priesthood, HIS destruction of the wicked and HIS reign on earth. It clearly prophesies about JESUS CHRIST and the apostle Peter quoted to emphasize Christ's LORDSHIP to prove that GOD made CHRIST a priest forever.

Psalms 110:6

HE shall judge.

This verse pictures CHRIST coming to the earth as a warrior to defeat and judge all those who oppose GOD's kingdom and HIS righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 29: 1 – 30

During the month that Jacob spent as a guest, he was not idle. Wherever we are, it is good to employ ourselves in some useful business. Laban was desirous that Jacob should continue with him. Inferior relations must not be imposed upon; it is our duty to reward them. Jacob made known to Laban the affection he had for his daughter Rachel. And having no worldly goods with which to endow her, he promises seven years' service. Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labour of love.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 20: 9 – 26

Luke 20:25

Render ...unto Caesar.

Believers under normal circumstances must pay taxes and submit to governmental authority even though our highest loyalty is to GOD. We must obey secular government except when it conflicts with the law of GOD, we must never disobey JESUS command to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's"

Verses for 17th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 111 – 114

Psalms 112:1

Delighteth greatly in HIS commandments.

What matters most in the life of GOD fearing person is that GOD's will be done on earth. Such people love GOD's laws because HIS commandments represent the righteousness the world scorns.

Psalms 112:7

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

The psalmist is not moved by fear and anxiety in times of trouble because his trust is in the LORD and not in himself or in external circumstances.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 29:31 – 30:13

Genesis 30:1– 24

Give me children.

These verses record the forming of the family of Jacob, the founders of the tribes of Israel. The narrative shows that GOD worked to accomplish HIS ultimate purpose in spite of weaknesses, struggles and human faults in Jacob's family.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 20: 27 – 21:4

Luke 20:36

Equal unto the angels.

About the believer's life in the next age, JESUS reveals that it begins with a resurrection from the dead, involves having a glorified body that can never die, but no longer includes earthly relationships such as marriage. The fact that earthly relationships will be different does not mean we will not recognize each other. JESUS, after HIS resurrection was recognised by HIS disciples.

Verses for 18th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 115 – 117

What Psalm 117 means

Verse 1: Usually “*praise the *LORD” is “*hallelujah” in Hebrew. The *Jews spoke Hebrew and wrote the psalms in Hebrew. Here they use a different Hebrew word. “*Praise*” means “*telling GOD that HE is great*”. “LORD” is another word for GOD. It is his *covenant name. A *covenant is when two people, or groups of people, agree. Here GOD agrees to love and give help to His people when they need it. His people agree to love and obey GOD. But who are “His people”? Here it is not only the *Jews. It is all the people in the world, if they will love and obey HIM!

Verse 2: “Very strong” is a Hebrew word that means “will win the war”. GOD loves everybody in the world and he will try to “win the war” for their love and obedience. “Obedience” is another word for “obeying”. “*Praise the *LORD” at the end of the verse is “*hallelujah” this time!

Something to do

1. Pray that your friends and family will start to *praise the *LORD.
2. If you have a Bible, read Romans 15:11. There Paul repeats Psalm 117:1.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 30: 14 – 36

Genesis 30:18

GOD hath given me my hire.

Leah’s declaration that GOD had rewarded her for giving her handmaiden to Jacob reflects her own feeling about the matter, not necessarily GOD’s. The narrative here only tells us what Leah said. GOD tolerated this situation for a time and worked through the kind of marriages into which Jacob entered.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 21: 5 – 36

Luke 21:6

Not be left one stone upon another.

The fulfilment of this prediction occurred in AD 70, when the Roman general Titus and his army destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple after siege of 134 days. The temple was destroyed as a judgement upon Israel for their rejection of GOD’s SON and HIS redemption.

Verses for 19th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 118 & 119: 1 – 24

Something to do

1. Ask GOD to save you. This means HE will give you help in this life. And HE will keep you safe when you die. But remember this: When HE saves you, you make a *covenant with HIM. You agree to love HIM and obey HIM. You agree to be HIS servant. HE agrees to love you and keep you safe.
2. If you have a *New Testament, study what it says about Psalm 118. Read Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7.
3. Study also verses from the *Old Testament. Read Nehemiah 8:14-18; Jeremiah 51:26 and Zechariah 4:7.
4. Psalm 118 was the psalm that some great Christians loved best of all the psalms. Examples are Saint Augustine and Martin Luther. Like them, learn to say some of the verses by *heart. “By *heart” means “without looking at the words”. Then you will remember the words when GOD wants to speak to you through them!

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 30: 37 – 31: 13

The fourteen years being gone, Jacob was willing to depart without any provision, except GOD's promise. But he had in many ways a just claim on Laban's substance, and it was the will of GOD that he should be provided for from it. He referred his cause to GOD, rather than agree for stated wages with Laban, whose selfishness was very great. And it would appear that he acted honestly, when none but those of the colours fixed upon should be found among his cattle. Laban selfishly thought that his cattle would produce few different in colour from their own. Jacob's course after this agreement has been considered an instance of his policy and management. But it was done by intimation from GOD, and as a token of HIS power. The LORD will one way or another plead the cause of the oppressed, and honour those who simply trust HIS providence. Neither could Laban complain of Jacob, for he had nothing more than was freely agreed that he should have; nor was he injured, but greatly benefitted by Jacob's services. May all our mercies be received with thanksgiving and prayer, that coming from HIS bounty, they may lead to HIS praise.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 21: 37 – 22: 13

Luke 22:3

Satan entered into Judas.

The tragic story of Judas, who at one time was in intimate fellowship with JESUS but then forsook his LORD by betraying HIM, serves a warning to all who follow CHRIST. In this life there is always the possibility that we might grow cold towards CHRIST, allow Satan

little by little to lead us into compromise with the world, and then in the end betray the LORD and HIS cause.

Verses for 20th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 25 – 72

The Story of Psalm 119

Solomon was king of Israel nearly 1000 years Before CHRIST came to the earth (B.C.). Solomon built the house of GOD that was in Jerusalem. We call it “the *temple”. About 600 B.C. a nation called Babylon fought the *Jews. A nation is a country with a government. Babylon was 800 kilometres east of Jerusalem. The Babylonians won the fight and they took many *Jews to Babylon. We call this “the *exile”. The Babylonians also destroyed the *temple.

After the *exile many *Jews went back to their own country. About 500 B.C. they built the *temple again. Then they made the Book of Psalms to sing in the new *temple. Some were old psalms by David, Moses and Isaiah. Other psalms were new like Psalm 1.

Psalm 119 was probably one of these new psalms. It is a very special psalm. There are 176 verses (or parts) in it. Some people think that 176 different people wrote one verse each. Other people think that Ezra wrote all Psalm 119. Ezra was a *Jewish leader about 450 B.C. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The *Jews spoke Hebrew, so they wrote Psalm 119 in the Hebrew language. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is aleph. Verses 1-8 all begin with aleph. Beth is the second letter. Verses 9-16 all begin with beth. Verses 17-24 all begin with the 3rd letter and so on. So, there are 22 times 8, or 176 verses in the psalm. We think that they did this to make it easier for them to remember the psalm. It was probably a psalm that *Jewish leaders had to remember. We have not made the verses start with the right letter in this translation. We have put the psalm into 22 groups with 8 verses in each group. There are also 8 special words in the psalm. To the *Jews these 8 words were important. They described what GOD told them to do. They are also important for Christians, because they tell them the ways that GOD speaks to them. The most important way is through the Bible. Christians call the Bible ‘The WORD of GOD’. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. You will probably find that you can study it more easily in groups of 8 verses.

Here are the 8 special words:

1. Word (dabar in Hebrew): it means things like the 10 commandments in Exodus chapter 20. These were the 10 things that GOD told HIS people to do or not to do.
 2. Saying (imrah): this is another way to say Word.
 3. Statutes (chuqqim): these are the rules that the *Jews made early in their history. We translate it *laws in Psalm 119. “History” means the story of what happened.
 4. Judgments (mishpatim): a later word for statutes. We translate it “rules” in Psalm 119.
 5. Law (torah): this means the first 5 books of the Bible. Later it included other books like Isaiah and Jeremiah. We translate it “*teaching” in Psalm 119.
 6. *Commands (mitsvat): what someone with authority tells you to do.
 7. Precepts (piqudim): these give us help when we want to know what to do. We translate it “*guidelines” in Psalm 119.
 8. Testimonies (eduth): these are the things that GOD tells us to do as *Jews or Christians*. We translate it “instructions” in Psalm 119.
- There are other important words in Psalm 119. They include way and path; *heart and follow.

Way and path both mean the same thing in the psalm. They mean: what we do in our lives. Our way can be good or bad. If we obey Psalm 119, our way will be good. JESUS said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). If we obey JESUS, our way will be good. In Acts 9:2, "in the way" is another name for "being a Christian".

*heart does not mean the same thing each time it comes:

_ "a clean *heart" means that GOD has forgiven us

_ "in my *heart" means "in my mind"

_ "all my / their *heart" means "all that I/they can do in the body or mind"

Your *heart in the psalms often means all of you! When GOD *forgives us, HE gives our *sin to JESUS. HE takes it away. Our *sin is the bad things that we do.

"Follow" in verses 4, 14, 15, 56, 63, 87, 100, 133, 168 and 173 means "obey".

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 31: 14 – 35

GOD can put a bridle in the mouth of wicked men, to restrain their malice, though he do not change their hearts. Though they have no love to GOD's people, they will pretend to it, and try to make a merit of necessity. Foolish Laban! To call those things his gods which could be stolen! Enemies may steal our goods, but not our GOD. Here Laban lays to Jacob's charge things that he knew not. Those who commit their cause to GOD, are not forbidden to plead it themselves with meekness and fear. When we read of Rachel's stealing her father's images, what a scene of iniquity opens! The family of Nahor, who left the idolatrous Chaldees; is this family itself become idolatrous? It is even so. The truth seems to be, that they were like some in after-times, who swear by the Lord and by Malcham, Zephaniah 1:5; and like others in our times, who wish to serve both GOD and mammon. Great numbers will acknowledge the true GOD in words, but their hearts and houses are the abodes of spiritual idolatry. When a man gives himself up to covetousness, like Laban, the world is his god; and he has only to reside among gross idolaters in order to become one, or at least a favourer of their abominations.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 22: 14 – 38

Luke 22:24 –30

Accounted the greatest.

True greatness is a matter of the inner life, involving a humble spirit and a pure heart. It is seen in the person who expresses his or her love for CHRIST in sincere humility, in a desire to serve both GOD and fellow humans, and in a willingness to be seen as the least important in the kingdom of heaven.

Verses for 22nd August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 121 – 160

Psalms 119:121

Leave me not to mine oppressors.

Like the psalmist, believers may appeal for GOD's help, based on obedience to GOD's WORD, GOD's promises, GOD's mercy and steadfast love, our commitment to serve HIM and the urgent needs we have in our lives.

Psalms 119:136

Rivers of waters run down mine eyes.

Those who love GOD's WORD will experience grief and sorrow, even anger, when they see GOD's laws rejected and scorned by the ungodly, these feelings will undoubtedly continue until the return of CHRIST.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 31: 36 – 55

Laban could neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob, therefore desires to hear no more of that matter. He is not willing to own himself in fault, as he ought to have done. But he proposes a covenant of friendship between them, to which Jacob readily agrees. A heap of stones was raised, to keep up the memory of the event, writing being then not known or little used. A sacrifice of peace offerings was offered. Peace with GOD puts true comfort into our peace with our friends. They did eat bread together, partaking of the feast upon the sacrifice. In ancient times covenants of friendship were ratified by the parties eating and drinking together. GOD is judge between contending parties, and HE will judge righteously; whoever do wrong, it is at their peril. They gave a new name to the place, "The heap of witness". After this angry parley, they part friends. GOD is often better to us than our fears, and overrules the spirits of men in our favour, beyond what we could have expected; for it is not in vain to trust in HIM.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 22: 39 – 71

Luke 22:62

Peter wept bitterly.

Peter denied the LORD out of weakness, not out of wickedness, for he never ceased to love his Master and to believe in HIM. Peter was spiritually weak and incapable of resisting great temptation since he had not yet, along with the other disciples, received the HOLY SPIRIT and HIS regenerating grace in the full new covenant sense. They received the HOLY SPIRIT's indwelling presence only on the resurrection day.

Verses for 23rd August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 120 – 125

Psalms 120 – 134

Songs of degrees. These 15 Psalms are entitled “Songs of degrees” or Songs of Accents. Some believe that this phrase refers to the steps on the stair like sundial of King Ahaz where the shadow went back ten degrees as guarantee that GOD would give King Hezekiah 15 added years of peaceful reign, these psalms were then compiled to celebrate that promise. Most believe the phrase Songs of Degrees refers to those psalms the Jews would sing together as they went up to Jerusalem as pilgrims to the sacred feasts.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 32: 1 – 21

Genesis 32:1

The angels of GOD met him.

Jacob had obeyed GOD’s instruction by leaving Laban and returning to the land of Canaan, the region where his hostile brother Esau lived. GOD sent angels to assure Jacob of his continued presence and protection.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 23: 1 – 25

Luke 23:1

Pilate.

Pilate was a Roman governor in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. JESUS was brought to him because under Roman law the Jews could not legally carry out the death penalty. Pilate has become a symbol of those who make religious decisions based upon political expediency rather than truth and justice. Believers must not compromise the WORD of GOD, they must stand for what is right, and not for those things that would only serve their own selfish ambitions.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 24th August 2022

BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE AND MARTYR

Collect: GOD, of peace, who through the ministry of YOUR servant apostle Bartholomew strengthened the true faith and brought harmony to YOUR Church: keep us steadfast in YOUR truth and renew us in faith and love, that we may always walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through JESUS CHRIST YOUR SON our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU, in the unity of the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, now and forever. Amen.

Verses for 25th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 132 – 135

Psalms 135: 1–21

Praise ye the LORD.

This call to praise GOD is based on three facts, GOD has brought Israel into a saving covenant relationship with HIM. GOD is a living GOD, active in the affairs of the world and HIS people. GOD is near HIS people, feeling compassion for those who serve HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 33: 12 – 34:12

Genesis 34:1

Dinah ...the daughters of the land.

Jacob settled near the pagan city of Shechem rather than the home of his father Isaac, where GOD had commanded him to go. He later bitterly regretted his choice. Only after the tragic incident involving Dinah did Jacob finally go to Bethel and destroy all the foreign idols in his home.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 23: 50 – 24:12

Luke 24:6

HE.... is risen.

The resurrection of JESUS is confirmed by the following facts, the empty tomb. If the enemies of JESUS had taken HIS body, they surely would have displayed it to prove HE had not risen. The existence, power, joy and devotion of the early church. If JESUS had not risen and appeared to them, they would have never changed from deep despair and loss of hope to unheard joy, courage and hope.

Verses for 26th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 136 & 137: 1 – 6 and 138

What Psalm 138 means

Verse 1: The false gods were the gods of other countries, like Babylon and Assyria. “*Praises” are words that say how great somebody is. Here the *psalmist writes about the *LORD. The *LORD is a special name for GOD. It is the “*covenant” name for GOD. A *covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to HIS people. HIS people agree to love and obey HIM. “With all my *heart” is a Hebrew (and English) way to say, “as well as I possibly can”.

Verse 2: “Your name” means more than just “GOD” or “*LORD”. It means everything that GOD is. The “kind love” is a special Bible word. It means the love that GOD has for HIS people:

- _ will never finish;
- _ will always send help.

Verse 3: “YOU made me brave and strong” is what David would write. Often, when he wanted help, he prayed to the *LORD. The *LORD always answered him.

Verses 4 and 5: We do not know how these kings heard the promises of GOD. But they:
_ thanked HIM (verse 4); and
_ sang about it (verse 5).

GOD has *glory because HE is great. HE is very, very great. So it seems as if HE shines as the sun shines! That is what “glory” means.*

Verse 6: This is about two groups of people. One group is people that need help. GOD is high above us in *heaven. But HE can still see who needs help. HE also sees the *proud people. These people think that they are so good that they do not need help. We do not know where *heaven is. *Heaven is the home of GOD. But GOD can see everybody from *heaven!

Verse 7: “The right hand of GOD” is a Hebrew way to say “what GOD does on the earth”. We could translate it, “by the power of GOD”.

Verse 8: “YOUR kind love will always continue” makes us think of Psalm 136. There, nearly every verse finishes “HIS kind love will always continue”.

The “work of your hands” means the things that GOD does on the earth.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 34: 13 – 31

The Shechemites submitted to the sacred rite, only to serve a turn, to please their prince, and to enrich themselves, and it was just with GOD to bring punishment upon them. As nothing secures us better than true religion, so nothing exposes us more than religion only pretended to. But Simeon and Levi were most unrighteous. Those who act wickedly, under the pretext of religion, are the worst enemies of the truth, and harden the hearts of many to destruction.

The crimes of others form no excuse for us. Alas! How one sin leads on to another, and like flames of fire, spread desolation in every direction! Foolish pleasures lead to seduction; seduction produces wrath; wrath thirsts for revenge; the thirst of revenge has recourse to treachery; treachery issues in murder; and murder is followed by other lawless actions. Were we to trace the history of unlawful commerce between the sexes, we should find it, more than any other sin, ending in blood.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 24:13 – 35

Luke 24:27

HE expounded...the Scriptures.

The MESSIAH and HIS redemptive work through suffering is a central Old Testament theme.

CHRIST may have cited such passages as Gen 3:15; 22:18...

Verses for 27th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 139 – 141

Psalms 141:4

Incline not my heart to any evil thing.

Those who love the LORD should pray that GOD will keep them from desiring, speaking or doing any evil. We must shun all compromise with wicked persons and refuse to be entertained by their dainties seductive pleasures.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 35: 1 – 15

Genesis 35:2

Put away the strange gods.

After the terrible events GOD directed Jacob's family to go to Bethel in order to bring them into closer obedience to HIS WORD. Jacob realizing the depth of spiritual deterioration in his family, commanded all the members of his household to put away the strange gods that are among you. This spiritual renewal in the life of Jacob's family consisted in. Removing from their home everything that offended GOD, committing themselves to personal holiness, renewing vows to GOD in devotion and worship. Because of Jacob's renewal, he again experienced GOD's protection, presence, revelation and blessing.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 24: 36 – 53

Luke 24:49

The promise of my FATHER that will bring power from on high refers to the outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT that began at Pentecost, we find this promise recorded in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The disciples devoted themselves to prayer as they waited for the fulfilment of the promise. The believer today seeking the baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT should do the same.

Verses for 29th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 145 and 146

The story of Psalm 146

Bible students call the last 5 psalms the *Hallelujah Psalms. This is because they all start and end with the Hebrew word “Hallelujah”. The *Jews spoke the Hebrew language and wrote their psalms in Hebrew. “Halel” means “*praise”, or “tell someone that they are very great”. The “u” means “you” ... all of you!

“Jah” is one of GOD’s names. Most Bibles translate it *LORD with 4 capital letters. It has a meaning and a use. The meaning may be that HE will always be alive. The use is as a *covenant name. A *covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to His people. And his people agree to love and obey him. Bible translators do not often translate the word “hallelujah” into another language. Usually we spell it “*hallelujah”, but the Hebrew word is “hallelujah”.

We do not know who wrote Psalms 146-150. And we do not know when they wrote them. Most Bible students think that the *psalmist wrote them for the new *temple in Jerusalem. The *psalmist was the person that wrote the psalms. For half of the psalms David was the *psalmist. But there were many other *psalmists, most of them after David died. Some Bible students think that maybe Ezra or Nehemiah was the *psalmist for Psalms 146-150. The *temple was GOD’s house in Jerusalem. Enemies destroyed it 600 years before JESUS came to the earth. But 70 years after the army of Babylon destroyed it, the *Jews built it again. They made the Book of Psalms at this time to use in the new *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 35:16 – 36:14

Genesis 36: 6 & 7

Esau...riches

In many ways Esau prospered materially yet he did not prosper spiritually. His life was characterised by little regard for spiritual things. Consequently, the nation he founded Edom was ungodly, and it became a special object of GOD’s wrath.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 1: 1 – 14

Acts 1:8

Ye shall receive power.

This is the key verse of in the book of Acts. The primary purpose of the Baptism in the SPIRIT is the receiving of power to witness for CHRIST so that the lost will be won over to HIM and taught to obey all that CHRIST commanded. The end result is that CHRIST may be known.

Verses for 30th August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 147 & 148

The Story of Psalm 147

This psalm tells us something about GOD's love and HIS power. Here, power does not only mean that he Rules everything. It also means that He is very, very strong. It is the second of the 5 *Hallelujah Psalms*, 146-150. "Hallelujah" means "*praise the *LORD". This means "tell the LORD that HE is very great". In verse 1, "praises" are words that say how great somebody is. "*LORD" is the *covenant name for GOD. A covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to HIS people. HIS people agree to love and obey GOD. In verse 5 is another word, "LORD". This is not the same Hebrew word as "*LORD". Hebrew is the language that the *Jews spoke. They wrote the psalms in Hebrew. "*LORD" translates a Hebrew word that means "master" or "someone with authority".

There are three parts in this psalm:

- **Verses 1 – 6:** GOD's power in Israel and Babylon and in the skies above;
- **Verses 7 – 11:** GOD's power on the earth with plants and animals;
- **Verses 12 – 20:** GOD's power in giving HIS people what they need.

In the Greek Bible, (verses 1-11) make Psalm 146 and verses 12-20 Psalm 147. This Greek Bible makes Psalms 9 and 10 into one psalm. All the numbers from 10 to 146 are one less than in our Bibles. The *Jews translated their Hebrew Bible into Greek about 200 years before JESUS came to the earth.

We do not know who wrote Psalm 147. But many Bible students think that it was after the *exile. The note on verses 2 and 3 explains the *exile. The *Jews used Psalm 147 in the new *temple (house of God) in Jerusalem. Maybe Nehemiah or one of his friends wrote Psalm 147.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 36: 15 – 43

The registers in this chapter show the faithfulness of GOD to HIS promise to Abraham. Esau is here called Edom, that name which kept up the remembrance of his selling his birth-right for a meal of pottage. Esau continued the same profane despiser of heavenly things. In outward prosperity and honour, the children of the covenant are often behind, and those that are out of the covenant get the start. We may suppose it a trial to the faith of GOD's Israel, to hear of the pomp and power of the kings of Edom, while they were bond-slaves in Egypt; but those that look for great things from GOD, must be content to wait for them; GOD's time is the best time. Mount Seir is called the land of their possession. Canaan was at this time only the land of promise. Seir was in the possession of the Edomites. The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope, Luke 16:25; while the children of God have their all in hope, and next to nothing in hand. But, all things considered, it is beyond compare better to have Canaan in promise, than mount Seir in possession

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 1: 15 – 2:13

Acts 2:4

Filled with the Holy Ghost.

What is the significance of the filling with the HOLY SPIRIT on Pentecost? It meant the beginning of the fulfilment of the promise of GOD. To pour out HIS SPIRIT upon all HIS people in end times.

The disciples were endued with power from on high. Enabling them to witness for CHRIST and to be people through whom the HOLY SPIRIT could bring great conviction to the lost relation to sin.

Verses for 31st August 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 149 & 150

The Story of Psalm 150

Christians and *Jews say that this is a very special psalm. Someone wrote it to finish the Book of Psalms. This was perhaps after the *exile. The *exile was 600 years before JESUS came to the earth. Babylon was a country 800 kilometres east of Jerusalem. Today we call it Iraq. The army of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. They also destroyed the *temple in Jerusalem. The *temple was GOD's house in Jerusalem. The army of Babylon took many *Jews to Babylon. They made them live there. This was the *exile.

The *Jews went back to their own land 70 years later. They built Jerusalem and the *temple again. Then the *Jews made the Book of Psalms. It was to sing in the new *temple. They used psalms by Moses, by David, by Isaiah, by the sons of Korah and by many other people. But Bible students think that they wrote two new psalms for their book. They were Psalm 1 and Psalm 150. Maybe they wrote other psalms also, perhaps Psalms 146 – 149.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 37: 1 – 24

Genesis 37:3

A coat of many colours.

The coat of many colours that Joseph received from his father presented a marked contrast to the plainer tunics worn by his brothers. It represented a position of special favouritism and honour with his father.

Genesis 37:5

A dream

GOD sometimes reveals HIS will to us through prophetic dreams .Today, under the new covenant, GOD may still speak to us through dreams, although HIS primary revelation and guidance come through Scripture and the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 2: 14 – 35

Acts 2:18

In those days.

Peter, quoting Joel, says that GOD will pour out HIS SPIRIT in those days. The outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT and the accompanying supernatural signs cannot be limited to just the one day of Pentecost. The power and blessing of the HOLY SPIRIT is for every Christian to have and experience throughout the Church age.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
SEPTEMBER

Verses for 1st September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 1, 3, 4 & 5

What Psalm 1 means

Verse 1: This tells us how to become really happy. We will:

- _ not do what the godless say
- _ not go where sinners are
- _ not scorn what GOD teaches

Verse 2: This tells us more about the really happy man. The word “repeats” here means “talks to himself but not very loud”. He remembers words from the Bible.

Verse 3: These are some of the words that he might say from the Bible, from the Books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Joshua. They tell us that he:

- _ drinks the water that GOD offers
- _ brings fruit to GOD
- _ is strong in times of trouble
- _ will do well in the eyes of GOD

The water that GOD gives us is new life. The fruit is the good things that we do. This is because we have the new life of GOD in us.

(Read John 4:10-14 and Galatians 5:22).

Verse 4: The godless do not keep GOD’s rules. They become bad people. GOD will blow them away like chaff one day.

Verse 5: The judgment is when GOD says who is righteous and who is not.

“Not stand in the judgment” means “GOD will say that they are not righteous”. After we die there will be a judgment for all of us.

Verse 6: “The LORD knows” means that GOD is always near to HIS people.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 37:25 – 38:11

Genesis 37:28

They brought Joseph into Egypt.

Though Joseph was treated cruelly by his brothers and sold into slavery, yet in all this, GOD used the evil action of humans to work out HIS will in Joseph’s life.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 2: 36 – 47

Acts 2:38

Repent, and be baptized.

Repentance, forgiveness of sins and baptism are the prior conditions for receiving the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Acts 2:39

Unto you ... your children....To all.

The promise of the baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT was not just for those present on the day of Pentecost, but for all who would believe in CHRIST throughout this age unto you, to your children the next generation.

Acts 3:6

In the name of Jesus...Walk.

The healing of the crippled beggar was done by the power of CHRIST working through the apostles.

Verses for 2nd September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 6 – 9

Psalms 7:1

In thee do I put my trust.

Those who have sincerely committed themselves to GOD may with all confidence take refuge in the LORD and commit their life situations to HIM in the midst of unjust or troublesome times, we may place ourselves under the protection of GOD and appeal to HIM on the basis of our faithfulness and righteousness.

Psalms 7:10

Which saveth the upright in heart.

The HOLY SPIRIT teaches that the righteous can expect GOD to deliver and help them in times of affliction. What a blessed thing it is to pray for GOD's help with a repentant heart, but it is even better when we pray to GOD with a clear conscience and with the knowledge that we have wronged no one and have sought sincerely to love GOD with all our heart.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 38: 12 – 30

The profligate conduct of Judah and his family.

This chapter gives an account of Judah and his family, and such an account it is, that it seems a wonder that of all Jacob's sons, our LORD should spring out of Judah, John 8:41. What awful examples the LORD proclaims in HIS punishments, of HIS utter displeasure at sin! Let us seek grace from GOD to avoid every appearance of sin. And let that state of humbleness to which JESUS submitted, when HE came to put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF, in appointing such characters as those here recorded, to be HIS ancestors, endear the Redeemer to our hearts.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 3: 1 – 16

Acts 3:6

In the name of Jesus ...walk.

The healing of the crippled beggar was done by the power of CHRIST working through HIS apostles. JESUS said to HIS followers concerning those who would believe in HIM. In my name ...they shall recover.

The church continued JESUS healing ministry in obedience to HIS will.

Verses for 3rd September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 10 – 14

Psalms 11:5

Him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Because the LORD loveth righteousness.

GOD hates those who participate in violence or enjoy being entertained by it. Thus believers must exercise caution concerning the entertainment media and examine themselves to determine whether they take pleasure in and enjoy the portrayal of violence and bloodshed.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 39: 1 – 23

Genesis 39:21

The LORD was with Joseph.

Four times in Chapter 39 it is said, the LORD was with Joseph. Because Joseph honoured GOD, GOD honoured him. Those who fear GOD and acknowledge HIM in all their ways have the promise that GOD will direct their paths.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 3: 17 – 4: 12

Acts 3:19

Times of refreshing.

Throughout this present age and until CHRIST's return, GOD will send times of refreshing (the outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT) only on the condition of repentance.

Verses for 5th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18

Psalms 18:2

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.

The metaphors of this verse can be applied to the believer's perpetual struggles against the physical and spiritual forces of this age.

GOD's care for us is described by six symbols.

- 1) My rock— safety and security in GOD's immovable strength.
- 2) My fortress —a place of refuge and safety where the enemy cannot penetrate.
- 3) Deliverer— a living protector
- 4) My buckler— a type of shield, symbolizing that GOD comes between us and harm.
- 5) Horn of my salvation— strength and victorious power to deliver and save us.
- 6) My high tower — a high place among the rocks safe from plunder and destruction.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 40: 1 – 15

It was not so much the prison that made the butler and baker sad, as their dreams. GOD has more ways than one to sadden the spirits. Joseph had compassion towards them. Let us be concerned for the sadness of our brethren's countenances. It is often a relief to those that are in trouble to be noticed. Also learn to look into the causes of our own sorrow. Is there a good reason? Is there not comfort sufficient to balance it, whatever it is? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Joseph was careful to ascribe the glory to GOD.

The chief butler's dream foretold his advancement. The chief baker's dream his death. It was not Joseph's fault that he brought the baker no better tidings. And thus ministers are but interpreters; they cannot make the thing otherwise than it is: if they deal faithfully, and their message prove displeasing, it is not their fault.

Joseph does not reflect upon his brethren that sold him; nor does he reflect on the wrong done him by his mistress and his master, but mildly states his own innocence. When we are called on to clear ourselves, we should carefully avoid, as much as may be, speaking ill of others. Let us be content to prove ourselves innocent, and not upbraid others with their guilt.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 4: 13 – 31

Acts 4:29

Grant unto thy servants boldness.

The disciples needed renewed courage to witness and speak for CHRIST. Throughout our Christian life, we too need to pray in order to overcome our fear of embarrassment, rejection, criticism or persecution. GOD's grace, through fillings of HOLY SPIRIT, will help us speak about JESUS with boldness.

Verses for 6th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 19 – 21

The story of Psalm 19

We do not know when David wrote Psalm 19. Perhaps it was one morning when he had been out all night with his sheep. He saw the sunrise over Moab. What David saw spoke to him about GOD. David remembered the stars that he saw at night. GOD made the stars. In the morning David saw the sun. GOD made the sun. All that David saw told him about GOD. He heard no words, there was no language. But David knew that everything was telling him about GOD.

Then David remembered something else. He remembered the WORD of GOD. We call it the Bible. That told him about GOD as well. David did not have the whole Bible. He only had the start of the Old Testament. But it told him about GOD. And it made David very happy. But it also made David think. It made him say to himself, “Am I a good or bad man?” He prayed that GOD would forgive him. David was, perhaps, sitting on the top of a great rock. That spoke to him about GOD as well! GOD was like a rock to David. So David called GOD “My Rock”. He also called GOD his Redeemer. A Redeemer is someone that pays the price to make a slave free.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 40: 16 – 41: 7

Genesis 41:2

At the end of two full years, Pharaoh dreamed.

Chapter 41 shows GOD working in the lives of Pharaoh and Joseph in order to control the destinies of the nations to provide a place for HIS chosen people. All nations are subject to GOD’s interventions and direct control.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 4: 32 – 5: 11

Acts 4:33

With great power.

Great power is the distinguishing characteristic of apostolic preaching and witness.

1) Apostolic witness was based upon GOD’s WORD and the conviction that it was given by the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT.

2) The disciples were conscious that they had been sent and commissioned by JESUS CHRIST Himself, the resurrected Lord

3) The HOLY SPIRIT through the disciples, brought great conviction on those who heard the gospel concerning personal sin.

4) Great power included the anointing of the Spirit on the apostles for miraculous signs and wonders so that believers were more added to the LORD multitudes both men and women.

Verses for 7th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 22 – 24

Psalms 24:4

Clean hands, and pure heart.

David emphasizes that those who want to worship and serve GOD and receive HIS blessings must be pursuing a pure heart and righteous life. Clean hands are hands free from external acts of sin. A pure heart refers to inward holiness, right motives and goals. Only the pure in heart will see GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 41: 8 – 36

Genesis 41:16

GOD shall give Pharaoh an answer.

Joseph insisted that his GOD would give the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream. His outspoken faith in the LORD GOD could have cost him his life in the presence of an Egyptian king who was himself considered to be god.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 5: 12 – 32

Acts 5:29

Obey GOD rather than men.

The great question before every believer is it not, Is it expedient, safe or popular among other humans? But, what is right in the sight of God.

Acts 5:32

HOLY GHOSTto them that obey HIM.

If there is no real obedience to CHRIST or sincere seeking the righteousness of HIS kingdom, then any claim to possess the fullness of the HOLY SPIRIT is invalid. Pentecost without the Lordship of CHRIST is impossible, for the SPIRIT in all HIS power is given only to those living in obedience to the faith.

Verses for 8th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 25 – 28

Psalms 25:12

Him shall HE teach.

The main theme of this psalm is how GOD in HIS wisdom guides the faithful believer. GOD's plans can be communicated to us by extraordinary means, such as dreams, visions and prophecy. However, the usual way HE guides us and imparts wisdom through the Holy Scriptures and through the HOLY SPIRIT dwelling in us.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 41: 37 – 57

Joseph gave good advice to Pharaoh.

Fair warning should always be followed by good counsel. GOD has in HIS WORD told us of a day of trial before us, when we shall need all the grace we can have. Now, therefore, provide accordingly. Pharaoh gave Joseph an honourable testimony. He is a man in whom the SPIRIT of GOD is; and such men ought to be valued. Pharaoh puts upon Joseph marks of honour. He gave him such a name as which spoke the value he had for him, Zaphnath-Paaneah, "a revealer of secrets". This preference of Joseph, encourages all to trust in GOD. Some translate Joseph's new name, "the saviour of the world". The brightest glories, even of the upper world, are put upon CHRIST, the highest trust lodged in HIS hand, and all power given to HIM, both in heaven and earth.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 5: 33 – 6:7

Acts 6:3

Full of HOLY GHOST and wisdom

Expresses a continuing quality of spiritual life in a believer that results from experiencing the SPIRIT's fullness and that enables them to minister in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT and to speak under prophetic inspiration as the SPIRIT gives utterance.

Verses for 9th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 29 – 31

Psalms 30: 6

In prosperity....I shall never be moved.

Secure in his prosperity, the psalmist assumed that his wealth and success made him so strong that nothing could destroy his happiness. GOD then withdrew HIS protective hand and brought serious trouble and helplessness into his life, causing him to experience the need for GOD's continual care and presence. All believers who feel secure in themselves, who rely on temporal things, and who gave GOD and HIS kingdom anything but first place in their lives are warned by the words of this psalm.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 42: 1 – 28

Genesis 42:21

We are verily guilty

The brothers were brought to realization of their guilt for their unmerciful treatment of Joseph 20 years earlier. They saw that GOD was justly punishing them for their crime. Often when we have concealed sin in our lives, GOD will work in order to open our consciences to our guilt. We can either harden our hearts or humble ourselves before GOD, confess our sin and resolve to act righteously.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 6:8 – 7:16

Acts 6:8

Stephen....faith and power.

The HOLY SPIRIT empowered Stephen to perform great wonders and miracles among the people and gave him great wisdom to preach the gospel in such a way that his opponents could not refute his arguments.

Verses for 10th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 32 & 33

Psalms 33:6

By the WORD of the LORD...the breath of HIS mouth.

Ruach can also mean spirit, the breath of GOD is thus equivalent to the activity of GOD's SPIRIT. This verse contains an important Biblical truth, the union of the power of GOD's WORD with the power of GOD's SPIRIT. Always releases the creative power of GOD on behalf of His people.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 42:29 – 43:14

Genesis 43:9

Let me bear the blame.

Like Reuben, Judah willingly accepted responsibility for his brother Benjamin. He offered to accept lasting disgrace and blame should Benjamin not come back safely.

Genesis 43:14

If I be bereaved.

When Israel saw that he could do nothing to change his terrible circumstances, the only thing he could do was place his sons into the hands of GOD, pray for mercy and prepare himself for the worst. He was willing to accept GOD's will even if it meant bereavement and suffering. As things turned out, however he ended his life rejoicing in GOD and trusting the ONE who had guided him all his life.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 7: 17 – 43

Acts 7:38

As the scripture hath said.

JESUS referred to the scripture because it was the very WORD of HIS FATHER for HIS life and teaching. Scripture is also the supreme authority for Christians, for GOD alone has the right to determine our standards of conduct.

The inspired Scriptures are the believer's ultimate authority.

Verses for 12th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 36 and 37

What Psalm 37: 12 – 20 means

This part of the psalm is really all about godless people. For Jews, 3 000 years ago, the important word was in verse 18: inheritance. The Jews might not see godless people destroyed, but their children probably would. Later, the Jews began to believe in a new heaven and a new earth. Christians also believe this. They believe that one day JESUS will come back to the earth. Then there will be a new heaven (sky) and a new earth. That is when they will receive their inheritance. Godless people will not receive an inheritance. But there are also promises here for Christians before the new heaven and earth come. Until that day GOD will give them help. He will keep them safe and give them food. Many Christians know that this is true, even in the worst times. “His day” in verse 13 is the time when GOD will tell godless people that they have done many wrong things. The “his” means both GOD and the godless person, man or woman. “The days” in verse 18 means “the life” of the righteous person, man or woman. GOD knows their days, or how long they will live. In verse 20 the psalmist is probably thinking of a beautiful field. One day the grass will disappear like smoke from a fire. The godless will be like this.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 43: 15 – 34

Jacob’s sons went down the second time into Egypt to buy corn. If we should ever know what a famine of the word means, let us not think it much to travel as far for spiritual food, as they did for bodily food. Joseph’s steward had orders from his master to take them to his house. Even this frightened them. Those that are guilty make the worst of everything. But the steward encouraged them. It appears, from what he said, that by his good master he was brought to the knowledge of the true GOD, the GOD of the Hebrews. Religious servants should take all fit occasions to speak of GOD and HIS providence, with reverence and seriousness.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 7:44 – 8:8

Acts 7:55

Saw.... JESUS standing.

The Bible normally speaks of JESUS as seated at the right hand of GOD. But here JESUS stood in order to welcome HIS first martyr to HIMSELF. Stephen had confessed CHRIST before fellow humans and defended the faith. Now CHRIST in honour of HIS servant, confesses him before HIS heavenly Father. For all faithful believers near death, the SAVIOUR stands ready to receive you as your intercessor and advocate.

Verses for 13th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 38 & 39

Psalms 38: 1—22

Rebuke me not.

This psalm is an anguished prayer for GOD to withdraw chastisement for sin. David is consumed with a sense of GOD's displeasure. His body is racked by disease and failing strength, and he knows that his suffering is the result of his own foolish sin. He accepts his punishment, confesses his sin, and looks to GOD for help and salvation. All who have sinned and who suffer from guilt, remorse and a sense of GOD's judgement will be able to identify with this prayer.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 44: 1 – 20

Genesis 44:13

Rent their clothes.

This was a clear sign of great grief and distress. The brothers could have gone on without Benjamin, but their determination to return and face the consequences with him revealed that their character had indeed changed and that they were truly concerned about their brother and father.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 8: 9 – 25

Acts 8:12

They believed....the name of JESUS CHRIST.

The Samaritans fully met the conditions for salvation and were Christians before the SPIRIT came upon them. They believed and were baptized. Two facts make it clear that the faith of the Samaritans was genuine saving faith. Both Philip and the apostles considered the faith of Samaritans valid.

Verses for 14th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41

Psalms 40:8

I delight to do thy will.

The coming of CHRIST into the world to bring redemption, HIS obedience to the HEAVENLY FATHER and HIS preaching of righteousness are emphasized. The motto of JESUS whole life was, Lo, I come to do THY will, O GOD.

It is by CHRIST's obedience unto death that we have been sanctified in order that the Law of GOD may be put into our hearts. Thus every believer must also affirm these words of CHRIST in his or her own life- "Lo I come to do thy will O God".

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 44:21 – 45:15

Genesis 45:7

To preserve you a posterity.

GOD worked through Joseph to preserve the covenant people through whom would come, the CHRIST. It should be noted that even though CHRIST would come through Judah's descendant and not through Joseph, yet GOD used Joseph to keep the line of CHRIST alive. Joseph, therefore was a spiritual ancestor of CHRIST, something far more important than being a physical ancestor.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 8:26 – 9:9

Acts 9:3 – 19

The conversion of Paul.

Paul had a personal encounter with JESUS as the risen LORD, obeyed JESUS words to HIM, responded to JESUS's call to be a minister and witness for HIM to the Gentiles about the gospel, and gave himself to prayer and fasting for three days. Paul is called Brother Saul by Ananias when they met. Ananias believed that Saul had already had a saving encounter with the LORD JESUS.

Verses for 15th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 42 – 44

What Psalm 42: 1 – 5 means

Verses 1 – 2: The *hart, or male deer, is *thirsty. It is in a desert place where there is no water. It cries while it looks for water. The *psalmist says that he is *like the *hart. The *psalmist is the person that wrote the psalm. His enemy has taken him through a desert where he saw the *thirsty animal. The *psalmist is *thirsty too. But he is not *thirsty for water, but for GOD. His body is not *thirsty, but his *soul inside him is *thirsty. He is a hostage so that he cannot go to the *temple and see GOD. In the psalm, “not seeing GOD” means “not *worshiping GOD”. He did not really see GOD, he only saw the place where he believed that GOD lived.

Verses 3 – 4: His enemies laugh at him and ask, “Where is your GOD?” They are saying, “GOD is not with you now”. The *psalmist remembers how he *worshiped GOD in the *temple. There were crowds of people there. They all *worshiped GOD with singing and dancing. It was *like a great party or festival. But now he thought that his enemies were right: he had left GOD in Jerusalem.

Verse 5: The *psalmist tells his *soul that although he is sad and *restless he will still hope in GOD. Our *soul is that part of us that makes us feel happy or sad. It will still live when our bodies die. JESUS repeated some of these words the week before HE died. They are at the top of the psalm. They are not quite the same because JESUS repeated words from the Greek Old Testament, not the Hebrew Old Testament. People made this about 200 years before JESUS came to the earth. Many Jews lived in Egypt where they spoke Greek, not Hebrew. So they translated their Bible (our Old Testament) into Greek. This is the Bible that most of the New Testament quotations are in. A quotation is when someone repeats words from another book. The words are not always the same in the Greek and Hebrew Bibles. Both sets of words are true!

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 45:16 – 46:20

Genesis 46:3

I am GOD ...fear not.

GOD once again promised to be with Jacob and his family, reiterating the promise that Jacob’s descendants would become a great nation and that they would return to the land of Canaan. We all need GOD’s reassurances of His favour, love and presence as we experience the difficulties that are part of life in this fallen world.

It is right that we pursue intimacy with GOD, loving HIS presence, desiring the reaffirmation of HIS love and guidance in our lives.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 9:10 – 31

Acts 9:11**For behold, he prayeth.**

After Paul encounters JESUS and accepts HIM as LORD and MESSIAH, he fasts and prays for guidance with an attitude of deep commitment to GOD. A saving encounter with JESUS should always result in a spiritual hunger and longing to know more about JESUS and to pursue HIM in prayer and fasting for more revelation and wholeness.

Verses for 16th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 45 & 46

Psalm 45 in the New Testament

In the New Testament, there is a book that we call “The Letter to the Hebrews”. We do not know who wrote it. This is what it says in Hebrews 1:8-9:

Verse 8: But about the SON (it says), “Your *throne, GOD, is *for ever and ever.

HIS*sceptre is a *sceptre of *righteousness.

Verse 9: YOU have loved things that are *righteous and YOU have *hated things that are *wicked. So GOD, your GOD, has put YOU above the people that are with YOU. (He did this) by pouring *oil over YOU, which made you happy”.

This is a very important part of the Bible. It is important because it tells us that early Christians thought that Psalm 45 was about JESUS! So, it does not matter that it may have been about the King of Judah. It is now about JESUS!

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 46: 8 – 34

Genesis 46:34

Every shepherd is an abomination.

The primary occupation of Jacob’s family was tending livestock. Traditionally the Egyptians had a strong disdain for shepherds. This animosity helped the Israelites to remain separated from the Egyptians and their ways.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 9: 32 – 10:8

Acts 10:4

Thy prayers ...a memorial before GOD.

GOD considers our prayers a sacrifice ascending to HIM, reminding HIM of our perseverance in calling upon HIM in faith and devotion.

Verses for 17th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 47 – 49

Psalms 49: 1 – 20

Hear this.

This psalm stresses both the futility of trusting in riches and the transitory nature of all that this earth has to offer. The psalmist declares that the person whose life consists in the abundance of possessions or in worldly pleasures or fame rather than seeking GOD and HIS kingdom, will perish, on the other hand, those who live for GOD will be redeemed from the grave.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 47: 1 – 20

Genesis 47:9

My pilgrimage.

Jacob referred to his life and that of his fathers as pilgrimage. As a stranger and a pilgrim in the land, he trusted GOD for possession of the Promised Land. Thus it was by faith that he lived. Along with Abraham and Isaac, he died without receiving the promises, his ultimate goal was a better country, a heavenly one. All believers are likewise pilgrims and strangers on earth, living by faith and looking for a heavenly city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 10: 9 – 33

Acts 10:19

The SPIRIT said unto him.

The HOLY SPIRIT desires the salvation of all people. Since the apostles received the SPIRIT, they too wanted all people to be saved intellectually, however they did not understand that salvation was no longer restricted to Israel, but was now for all nations.

Verses for 19th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 52 – 54

Psalms 54:4

God is mine helper.

This psalm is an appropriate prayer for the believer facing dangers or imminent disaster. The psalmist calls for help, expecting that GOD will respond in HIS saving delivering and healing power. Today the LORD sends the HOLY SPIRIT to be our helper on earth and the sustainer of our souls.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 47: 21 – 31

Genesis 47:9

My pilgrimage.

Jacob referred to his life and that of his fathers as pilgrimage. As a stranger and a pilgrim in the land, he trusted GOD for possession of the Promised Land. Thus it was by faith that he lived. Along with Abraham and Isaac, he died without receiving the promises, his ultimate goal was a better country, a heavenly one. All believers are likewise pilgrims and strangers on earth, living by faith and looking for a heavenly city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 10:34 – 11:18

Acts 11:15

HOLY GHOST fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

The outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT at Pentecost had set a pattern for the reception of the SPIRIT thereafter. The baptism in the SPIRIT would be determined by the visible transformation of the individual, the infusion of joy, SPIRIT – inspired utterances and boldness in witness. Thus when Peter pointed out to the apostles and brothers in Jerusalem that Cornelius household had spoken in tongues when the HOLY SPIRIT was poured out on them, they were convinced that God was granting salvation in Christ to the Gentiles.

Verses for 20th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 55 & 56

Psalms 55:22

Cast thy burden upon the LORD.

When facing trials too great to bear, GOD invites us to cast our burdens and cares upon HIM. HE then bears the weight of them with us and sustains us in every situation. The HOLY SPIRIT has repeated this invitation throughout redemptive history JESUS gave this invitation in Matt 11:28 – 30 .The apostle Peter stated that believers should humble themselves before GOD, casting all your care upon HIM for HE careth for you.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 48: 1 – 16

Genesis 48:15

Which fed me all my life long.

Jacob left his children with an example of persevering faith in GOD and a testimony that GOD had fed him (literally, shepherded him) his entire life, delivering him from all harm. The book of Hebrews points to Jacob's act of blessing Ephraim and Manasseh as the ultimate proof of his sincere faith in GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 11:19 – 12:12

Acts 11:26

The disciples were called Christians.

The idea of our intimate relation to CHRIST, and the thought that we receive HIM as our LORD and the source of eternal salvation. To claim the name Christian means that CHRIST and HIS WORD revealed in Scripture have become our supreme authority and our source of future hope.

Verses for 21st September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 57 & 59: 1 – 4, 9 – 17

The Story of Psalm 57

Saul was king of Israel. David was one of his servants. David's job was to make music when Saul was sad. This happened often. People liked David very much. Saul did not like this. He tried to kill David. David ran away. He hid in a *cave. Saul did not find him. Bible students think that David wrote Psalm 57 at this time. They also think that he wrote it so that people could sing it to music that they called "Do not destroy". Psalm 57 is a *miktam. This means that it had a hidden meaning, or had special teaching in it. There are two stories in the Bible about David hiding in a *cave. One is in 1 Samuel 22, the other in 1 Samuel 24. We do not know which one this psalm is about.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 48:17 – 49:7

Genesis 49:1

Jacob called unto his sons.

As Jacob's life drew to an end, he gathered together his sons and prophesied about their lives and their future in GOD's purpose of redemption. The blessings and curses of this chapter are conditional on the descendants' relationship with GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 12:13 – 13:12

Acts 13:2

For the work.... I have called them.

Paul and Barnabas were called to spread the gospel to the nations and were commissioned to go by the leadership team, the church and the HOLY SPIRIT. The nature of this work is described Paul and Barnabas were called to preach the gospel, bringing men and women into a saving relationship with CHRIST Scripture.

Verses for 22nd September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 60, 61 & 119: 161 – 176

What Psalm 60 means

The psalm is in three parts. Verses 1 – 5 are the words of David. He asks GOD for an answer. Verses 6 – 8 are GOD's answer. Verses 9 – 12 are again the words of David. Remember that the words before verse 1 are also part of the psalm. When the Jews say Psalm 60 in their *synagogues they always say the words at the top also. A *synagogue is where Jews meet, *like a Christian church. Above explains some of the verses. Here we try to explain some of the other difficult parts.

Verse 1: Though the Edomites broke the walls, the Jews decided that GOD had sent them to do it. Edom was a country south-east of Jerusalem.

Verse 3: It was hard because they did not know why they were in trouble. When this happens to us, we must still ask GOD for help, as David did in verses 5 and 11.

Verse 4: A *banner is a large piece of material with words or pictures on it. Soldiers would gather under their *banner so that they would all be together. This verse is difficult for Bible students to understand. We are not sure what it means.

Verse 5: The right hand of GOD is how the Israelites described GOD doing something on earth.

Verses 6 – 8: The *holy place is where GOD is. Perhaps it meant the *temple in Jerusalem, or GOD's home in *heaven. The first 6 places are all parts of Israel. They all belong to GOD. He will decide what to do with them. They will have important jobs, *like Ephraim and Judah. "Cover my head" probably means "be *like a soldier" and "judge" means "decide what to do". Moab, Edom and Philistia were all enemies of Israel. They also belong to GOD, but they will have dirty jobs to do. GOD sees himself as a man. He needs somewhere to wash, and someone to pick his clothes up for him. Israel has the good things to do, but her enemies have bad things to do.

Verse 9: David is the speaker again. The strong city was the capital of Edom, Petra. David put Joab as leader of the army that went to fight Edom. David stayed with the other part of the army in Syria.

Verse 10: "Will you really not go with our armies?" means "I do hope that you WILL go with our armies".

Verse 11: David learned a lesson that we must all learn. "Help from men is of no value". It is of value if GOD sends the men or women to give help, but GOD must send them. GOD works through men and women to help his people. In the words of verse 5, he uses his right hand to answer us. His right hand could be anybody!

Verse 12: "Walk all over our enemies" is "trample over our enemies" in Hebrew. "Trample" means putting our feet down hard when we walk.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 49: 8 – 21

Genesis 49:10

Until Shiloh come.

The blessing conferred on Judah indicates that he was given the rights of the first born, and

thus the blessing promised to Abraham. The essence of this promise was that all nations would be blessed through him by the seed of the woman.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 13: 13 – 37

Acts 13:31

His witnesses unto the people.

A witness is one who testifies by act or word to the truth. Christian witnesses are those who confirm and testify the saving work of JESUS CHRIST by word, deed, life and if necessary, even death, it involves seven principles. Is obligation of all believers, missionary minded, meaning of CHRIST's life, convictions against sin, suffer, separation from world, Prophetic empowered by the SPIRIT.

Verses for 23rd September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 62 – 65

The Story of Psalm 65

Many Bible students think that this is a *harvest psalm. *Harvest is when people pick the fruits and vegetables that they need for food. The Jews had three *harvests:

1. Passover (March-April). This was the first *harvest, when they brought in *grain called barley. They made bread from barley.
2. Pentecost (May-June). This was the second *harvest, when they brought in *grain called wheat. They also made bread from it.
3. Tabernacles (September-October). This was the last *harvest, when they picked the grapes. They made wine from the grapes.

Wine is a drink with alcohol in it.

These *harvests remind us of the bread and wine that JESUS said were his body and blood. Paul also reminds us that because JESUS died at Passover he was the first *harvest of the new people of GOD! (“The first fruits of them that slept”, 1 Corinthians 15:20.)

If Psalm 65 is a *harvest psalm, then it is for use at Passover. There would be no *grain still in the fields at the second and third *harvests.

But we can look at the psalm in a different way. We can say that:

- Verses 1 – 4 tell us that GOD saves us
- Verses 5 – 8 tell us that GOD is powerful
- Verses 9 – 13 tell us that GOD gives us plenty of good things.

When kings and their soldiers went through a country, they often took everything away with them. When GOD as king goes through a country, he leaves more than he takes!

When David wrote this psalm, he had not built the *temple. His son Solomon did that. So, verse 4 is about the *tent that David used as a *temple, or someone else changed the psalm after Solomon built the *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 49: 22 – 33

Jacob blessed every one according to the blessings, GOD in after-times intended to bestow upon them. He spoke about his burial-place, from a principle of faith in the promise of GOD, that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed in due time. When he had finished both his blessing and his charge, and so had finished his testimony, he addressed himself to his dying work. He gathered up his feet into the bed, not only as one patiently submitting to the stroke, but as one cheerfully composing himself to rest, now that he was weary. He freely gave up his spirit into the hand of GOD, the Father of spirits. If GOD’s people be our people, death will gather us to them. Under the care of the Shepherd of Israel, we shall lack nothing for body or soul. We shall remain unmoved until our work is finished; then, breathing out our souls into HIS hands for whose salvation we have waited, we shall depart in peace, and leave a blessing for our children after us.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 13: 38 – 52

Acts 13:52

Filledwith the HOLY GHOST.

The Greek verb translated filled is in the imperfect tense, expressing continued action in past time. The disciples were being continually filled and empowered day by day. The SPIRIT's fullness is not merely a onetime initial experience, but a life of renewed fillings for GOD given needs and tasks.

Verses for 24th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 66 & 67

What Psalm 67 means

Before verse 1 it says that the music leader must use *stringed instruments. These are to make music. A psalm is a song with music from instruments as well as voices.

Verse 1: There are three words or groups of words in this verse that are very important. They are:

→ **Be gracious:** this means “be kind when you do not have to be kind”. GOD should *punish (hurt) us because we do not obey his rules (sin)*. But because HE is gracious, HE does not do this. HE gives us time to say that we are sorry. If we do this, then HE *forgives us. This means that HE gives our *sin to JESUS. When JESUS died on Calvary, HE took our *sin away. GOD *punished JESUS for our *sin. GOD will not *punish us if we ask HIM to *forgive us. JESUS never did anything wrong. HE was not a *sinner. But GOD *punished HIM for our *sin.

→ **Bless us:** this means “give good things to us”. In the Old Testament, the things are “harvest things”. When you plant a seed, it grows into something. A seed in a woman grows into a baby. The right sort of seed in the ground grows into something that you can eat. When GOD *blesses someone, it means that they have a lot of children and plenty to eat. The fruits that grow in the ground we call the “harvest”. So, this verse asks GOD to give us children and food ... and plenty of other things also!

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 50: 1 – 26

Jacob’s body was attended, not only by his own family, but by the great men of Egypt. Now that they were better acquainted with the Hebrews, they began to respect them. Professors of religion should endeavour by wisdom and love to remove the prejudices many have against them. Standers-by took notice of it as a grievous mourning. The death of good men is a loss to any place, and ought to be greatly lamented.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 14: 1 – 18

All things are possible to those that believe. When we have faith, that most precious gift of GOD, we shall be delivered from the spiritual helplessness in which we were born, and from the dominion of sinful habits since formed; we shall be made able to stand upright and walk cheerfully in the ways of the LORD. When CHRIST, the SON of GOD, appeared in the likeness of men, and did many miracles, men were so far from doing sacrifice to HIM that they made HIM a sacrifice to their pride and malice; but Paul and Barnabas, upon their working one miracle, were treated as gods. The same power of the god of this world, which closes the carnal mind against truth, makes errors and mistakes find easy admission. We do not learn that they rent their clothes when the people spoke of stoning them; but when people

spoke of worshipping them; they could not bear it, being more concerned for GOD's honour than their own. GOD's truth needs not the services of man's falsehood. The servants of GOD might easily obtain undue honours if they would wink at men's errors and vices; but they must dread and detest such respect more than any reproach. When the apostles preached to the Jews, who hated idolatry, they had only to preach the grace of GOD in CHRIST; but when they had to do with the Gentiles, they must set right their mistakes in natural religion. Compare their conduct and declaration with the false opinions of those who think the worship of a GOD, under any name, or in any manner, is equally acceptable to the LORD ALMIGHTY. The most powerful arguments, the most earnest and affectionate addresses, even with miracles, are scarcely enough to keep men from absurdities and abominations; much less can they, without special grace, turn the hearts of sinners to GOD and to holiness.

Verses for 26th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 70 & 71

The story of Psalm 70

If you read Psalm 40: 13 – 17 you will find that it is *like Psalm 70. There are very few differences. Why do these words come twice in our Bible? If you look at Psalm 35: 4, 21, 26 and 27 you will find that most of Psalm 70 is there also. It really comes three times! Perhaps the word “remember” at the top gives us help. David thought that it was important to remember the words of Psalm 70, because he was often in danger. Perhaps he used them when he was not thanking GOD for an answer to his *prayer (as in Psalm 40). There are two other examples of psalms coming twice or three times: Psalms 14 and 53; and Psalms 57, 60 and 108.

In the New Testament also we find words repeated. Many of the stories of JESUS come more than once. The Feeding of 5000 People comes 4 times! *Saint Paul also said, “To write the same things to you ... is safe” (Philippians 3:1). When things come more than once it means that GOD wants us to remember them in a special way.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 1: 1 – 21

Ezekiel 1:1

The thirtieth year.

This designation most likely refers to Ezekiel’s age. At that time he was living among the exiles in Babylon, having been brought there in 597 B.C. nine years after Daniel had arrived and 11 years before Jerusalem was destroyed. Ezekiel was called to be a prophet during the captivity, proclaiming GOD’s message to the exiles at the same time that Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem. Ezekiel ministered for at least 27 years, the Babylonian captivity, foretold the fall of Jerusalem, brought the exiled people back to GOD and give them hope through GOD’s promise of restoration.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 14:19 – 15:11

Acts 15:8

GOD, which knoweth the hearts.

GOD’s knowledge of the hearts of the Gentiles refers to HIS seeing saving faith within them, GOD testified to the genuineness of their faith. By cleansing their hearts with the inward work of regeneration by the HOLY SPIRIT by baptising them in the SPIRIT immediately afterwards, with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 27th September 2022

Church of South India Formation Day Unity in Worship

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sacrificed, we thank you for the gift of the Church of South India. Grant that the Church may see the vision more clearly and embody the unity in faith and witness more courageously in the pluralistic context. May the worship of the Triune God cleanse our prejudices of caste, colour gender and language and we may be united by your love that surpasses all our understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

Verses for 28th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 70 & 71

The story of Psalm 74

The *temple was the house of GOD. It was the place where people came to pray to GOD, and to *worship HIM. (*Worship means that you tell someone how great they are, and that you love them.) The *Israelites made several *temples. The most important one was in Jerusalem. Enemies destroyed it twice. The second time, it was the Romans, 70 years after JESUS came to the earth. JESUS had said that this would happen. Look at the beginning of this psalm for what JESUS said. But about 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar also destroyed the *temple. He was King of Babylon. He took many of the *Israelites to Babylon. We call this “the *exile”. BC means years Before CHRIST came to the earth.

Psalm 74 is about when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. The *psalmist asks GOD to think again!

“Keep your promise” in verse 20 is “remember the *covenant” in *Hebrew. The *covenant was when GOD and the *Israelites agreed. GOD would *protect them if they obeyed HIM. The trouble was that they did not obey HIM. So GOD let Nebuchadnezzar destroy the *temple. He also took the *Israelites to Babylon. There they had to do what he told them to do. They were in *exile. They were in a prison a long way from home.

Psalm 74 tells us what Nebuchadnezzar did to the *temple. The *Israelites were sorry because Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the *temple. They were not sorry that they had *disobeyed GOD. (“*Disobeyed” means “did not obey”.) That is why GOD did not have to keep HIS promise. So HE let Nebuchadnezzar and his army destroy the *temple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 3: 1 – 21

Ezekiel 3:3

In my mouth as honey.

Although Ezekiel was to bring a message of destruction and lamentation, GOD caused it to be as sweet as honey to the prophet himself. The WORD of GOD, simply because it HIS WORD, will be loved and valued by all who are committed to GOD and HIS cause.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 16: 1 – 18

Acts 16:6

Forbidden of the HOLY GHOST.

Every initiative in evangelism and missionary activity, especially in the missionaries journeys recorded in Acts, is the result of the leading of the HOLY SPIRIT. The guidance may have taken the form of a prophetic revelation, inward prompting, external circumstances or visions. Under the impulse of the SPIRIT believers moved forward to take the gospel to the unsaved. When checked by the SPIRIT from going in one direction, they would go in

another, trusting in the HOLY SPIRIT to either approve or disapprove of their travelling plans.

Verses for 29th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 76 & 77

The story of Psalm 76

Sennacherib was the King of Assyria. Assyria was a very strong country to the north and east of Judah. About 700 years before JESUS came to the earth, Sennacherib attacked Judah. But GOD fought for Judah. Sennacherib did not win the war. Many of his soldiers died. The story is in Isaiah chapters 36 and 37; and also in 2 Kings 18 and 19.

Psalm 76 (like 46, 47, 48 and 75) is about what happened in this war. It tells us that GOD did not let the enemy destroy Jerusalem. In the psalm, there are two other names for Jerusalem: Salem and Zion, verse 2.

“Salem” means “*peace” (or no fighting); Zion is the name of the hill where the *Israelites built their *temple. The *temple was the place where they met to *praise GOD.

The name “A Song of Zion” was one that the *Israelites used for this psalm. We have also called it “The *Lion’s *Den”. Why? Because the words “house” and “home” in verse 2 in *Hebrew are the words for a *lion’s home. We translate them as “*den”. Also, in verse 4, the words “you robbed your enemy” are “you caught your *prey”. “*Prey” is a word we use for what an animal catches to eat. The *lion is a big animal. It catches and eats many smaller animals. It will even eat people! So, the psalm makes GOD *like a *lion. His *den (or home) is Jerusalem. He goes out to the mountains to catch his *prey. But the *prey are the soldiers of Sennacherib.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 3: 22 – 4: 8

Ezekiel 3:26

Thou shalt be dumb.

Ezekiel was restrained from speaking to the people except when he received a direct message from the LORD. Because the people had refused to hear and obey what the prophets were saying. GOD deprived them of HIS prophetic WORD by imposing silence on Ezekiel.

Denying His people the divine oracle was a powerful manifestation of GOD’s judgement on them for their persistent wickedness. Ezekiel’s muteness lasted approximately seven and one half years, until the fall of Jerusalem.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 16: 19 – 40

Acts 16: 30

What must I do to be saved?

This is the most important question one can ask. The apostles response is, Believe on the LORD JESUS. To believe in the LORD JESUS is to focus our faith and commitment on CHRIST. It means turning to HIM as a living person who is our Redeemer from sin, our

Saviour from damnation and the LORD of our lives. It means believing that HE is the SON OF GOD sent by the FATHER and that all HE said is true and authoritative for our lives .It means believing that HE forgives our sins, makes us HIS children, gives us the HOLY SPIRIT, and is present with us always to help guide, comfort and lead us to heaven.

Verses for 30th September 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 1 – 39

What verses 9 – 17 mean?

The questions, or problems, from past times (verses 2, 8 –9) continue here. GOD did great things (or *wonderful things or *miracles) for His people, but they did not obey HIM. Why? Because, like us, they wanted to do what they liked, not what GOD wanted! They did not keep the *covenant of GOD, verse 10.

A *covenant is when two groups of people agree what to do. Here one group is GOD, the other is His people. GOD agreed to give them help, and they agreed to obey HIS laws, or rules, verse 7. In this psalm “laws” maybe it means only the rules in the first 5 books of the Bible.

In verse 9, we have a picture of this. Ephraim (a big group of people in Israel) had everything they needed to fight a war ... but they ran away! GOD gave His people everything that they needed ... but they did not obey HIS *laws. In this part of the psalm we read about three *miracles that GOD did for His people:

_ Verses 12 – 13: HE led them from Egypt to a country that would be theirs. To do this HE made a road through the sea. The water was like a wall on both sides of them. This was a *miracle because only GOD can make a road through a sea. GOD did this, but His people still did not obey HIS *laws or keep the *covenant. Verse 14: HE showed them the way through the *desert. HE did this with a special cloud in the day and the light of a fire in the sky at night. Again, they did not keep the *covenant!

__ Verses 15 – 16: It was dry in the *desert, and they had nothing to drink. They thought that they would die, but GOD gave them water. But even then “they continued to *sin against HIM and fought against the *Most High”, verse 17. We “*sin” when we do not obey GOD. So there are examples of the problem from *history. It is a problem that we still have.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 4:9 – 5:4

The bread which was Ezekiel’s support, was to be made of coarse grain and pulse mixed together, seldom used except in times of urgent scarcity, and of this he was only to take a small quantity. Thus was figured the extremity to which the Jews were to be reduced during the siege and captivity. Ezekiel pleads, LORD, from my youth I have been brought up delicately, and never used to anything like this; but that he had been brought up conscientiously, and never had eaten anything forbidden by the law.

It will be comfortable when we are brought to suffer hardships, if our hearts can witness that we have always been careful to keep even from the appearance of evil. See what woeful work sin makes, and acknowledge the righteousness of GOD herein. Their plenty having been abused to luxury and excess, they were justly punished by famine. When men serve not GOD with cheerfulness in the abundance of all things, GOD will make them serve their enemies in the want of all things.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 17: 1 – 15

Acts 17:11

Searched the Scriptures daily.

The action of those in Berea is a model for all who listen to preachers and teachers expound the Scriptures. No interpretation or doctrine ought to be accepted passively. Rather, it must be examined carefully by personal study of the Scriptures. The word translated search Gk anakrino to sift up and down, make careful and exact research. Bible preaching should make Bible students out of the hearers. The truth of every doctrine should be examined according to the WORD of GOD.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
OCTOBER

Verses for 1st October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1 – 5 & 8 – 13 and 80

The Story of Psalm 80

Some Bible students think that someone wrote this psalm 700 years before JESUS came to the earth.

There were 4 kings of all Israel, Saul, David, Solomon and Rehoboam. While Rehoboam was king, the country became two *kingdoms. The north was Israel, the south was Judah. There were 10 groups (or *tribes) of people in the north, and 2 in the south. Ephraim and Manasseh and Simeon were *tribes in the *kingdom in the north. The *tribes in the south were Judah and Benjamin. Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin always went together when the *Jews walked from Egypt to the *Promised Land. (The *Promised Land was where they came to live. We call it Israel.) But in 720 BC, Assyria beat the *kingdom in the north, and took the 10 *tribes away.

In this psalm, the *psalmist prays that the *tribes may become united again. Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of Joseph. Both Joseph and Benjamin were sons of Rachel. Rachel was the wife of Jacob. His other name was Israel. The Bible uses all three names for God's people ... Israel, *Jacob and *Joseph!

Other Bible students think that this psalm came after the *exile. The *exile was when the king of the country of Babylon took the people in the south *kingdom away. This happened in 587 B.C. (B.C. means "years Before CHRIST came to the earth".) These students think that the *psalmist is praying for all the *tribes to become united again in the *Promised Land.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 5: 5 – 6:10

Ezekiel 6:9

I am broken.

GOD was genuinely grieved and hurt by the spiritual adultery of His people, their unfaithfulness broke HIS heart.

They shall loathe themselves. GOD's punishment would cause some to recognise the seriousness of their sin, to experience true sorrow for their transgression and consequently to return to GOD. Note that repentance is not merely a change of mind, but also a change of attitude and heart, it involves a godly sorrow and regret because of personal sin.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 17: 16 – 34

Acts 17: 18

Philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the stoics.

As Paul mingled with Athenians in the marketplace as a witness for CHRIST, sophisticated and scornful intellectuals confronted him. Here we have a sermon to heathens, who worshipped false gods, and were without the true GOD in the world; and to them the scope of

the discourse was different from what the apostle preached to the Jews. In the latter case, his business was to lead his hearers by prophecies and miracles to the knowledge of the REDEEMER, and faith in HIM; in the former, it was to lead them, by the common works of providence, to know the Creator, and worship HIM. The apostle spoke of an altar he had seen, with the inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." This fact is stated by many writers. After multiplying their idols to the utmost, some at Athens thought there was another god of whom they had no knowledge. And are there not many now called Christians, who are zealous in their devotions, yet the great object of their worship is to them an unknown GOD? Observe what glorious things Paul here says of that GOD whom he served, and would have them to serve. The LORD had long borne with idolatry, but the times of this ignorance were now ending, and by His servants he now commanded all men everywhere to repent of their idolatry. Each sect of the learned men would feel themselves powerfully affected by the apostle's discourse, which tended to show the emptiness or falsity of their doctrines.

Verses for 3rd October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 84 & 85

Psalm 84: 1 & 2

How amiable are thy tabernacles.

This psalm describes believers who are so attached to GOD that they long above everything else to be in GOD's house and presence. Their greatest desire is to experience GOD's nearness, to worship HIM with other faithful believers and to receive HIS blessings.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 6: 11 – 7:13

Ezekiel 6:11

Smite with thine hand.

Those loyal to GOD and dedicated to serving HIM would grieve and lament because of the sinful practices occurring in the world, even among those who professed the name of the LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 18: 1 – 22

Acts 18:10

For I am with thee.

These words to Paul do not refer to CHRIST's general presence everywhere HIS omnipresence. Rather they refer to HIS special nearness to His faithful children. CHRIST's nearness means that HE is personally here to communicate HIS will, love and fellowship to us. HE is present to act in every situation of our lives to bless, help, protect and guide.

Verses for 4th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 86 – 88

The story of Psalm 86

The *psalmist had trouble. Bad people were attacking him. We do not know why or when.

He prayed to GOD about it. This psalm is his *prayer, or the words that he prayed.

But this *prayer is special*. The psalmist did not use his own words. He used the words of David! He also used words that Moses wrote in the Book of Exodus. He took some bits from Psalms 25–28, some pieces from Psalms 54–58 and some from other psalms and other parts of the Bible. And he made a new psalm from them!

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 7:14 – 8:9

Ezekiel 7:19

Their silver and their gold.

When GOD's coming wrath falls upon this world, the wealth and the abundant possessions of the unrighteous will not be able to deliver them. GOD's people must be careful not to strive selfishly for excessive material gain, if we do, we will find that worldly goods do not satisfy, and we will become subject to the severe judgement of GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 18:23 – 19:10

Acts 18:25

Knowing only the baptism of John.

At this time Apollos understanding of the gospel was limited. He had accepted John's baptism and believed in JESUS as the crucified and resurrected MESSIAH. What he had not learned was that JESUS Himself was now baptizing believers in the HOLY SPIRIT. The Ephesian disciples were in much of the same situation.

Verses for 5th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 89: 1 – 52

Thy faithfulness.

This psalm is a prayer dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem and the fallen dynasty of David, and with GOD's promise that David's line would endure forever. The author questions whether GOD has failed to keep HIS pledge. What the psalmist did not know that even though GOD had punished Israel for her sins, HE could keep HIS promise through JESUS CHRIST who was of the line of David, and whose kingdom will never end.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 8: 10 – 9:11

Ezekiel 8:14

Tammuz.

Tammuz was the Babylonian god of vegetation. When plant life died in the fall, the people mourned what they thought was his death. Judah's women had forsaken the LORD GOD turning to gods such as these for help and blessing.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 19: 11 – 29

Acts 19:19

Curious arts.

The public burning of occult books show that new believers were taught immediately to turn away from occult practices. Witchcraft, black magic, sorcery, spiritism, astrology, fortune telling, tarot cards are idolatrous associated with demons and must be repented of and abandoned in order to follow JESUS CHRIST as LORD. One cannot continue as a true believer in CHRIST and at the same time deal with spirits.

Verses for 6th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 90 & 91

The story of Psalm 90

These are words that Moses prayed. That does not mean that Moses wrote the psalm. Some Bible students think that he did. Other students think that later writers used words and ideas from “the books of Moses”. These are the first 5 books of the Bible. This psalm makes Bible students think of Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 32. The psalm uses “words that Moses said”, from these books.

The psalm is in 4 parts. The first 3 parts are in verses 1—12. They could be about anybody in the world. They are true for all of us. But the last part, verses 13—17, is about GOD’s people, the Jews. Something bad had happened to them. They are praying that GOD will be good to them. We do not know what this bad thing was. Some Bible students think that it was when the Babylonians beat them and took them to Babylon. We call this “the exile”. But it could be anything after the time of Moses.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 10: 1 – 22

Ezekiel 10: 4

The glory of the LORD went up.

The focus of chapter 10 and 11 is the departure of GOD’s glory and presence from the temple and the city. GOD’s glory first left the most holy place and moved to the entrance of the temple, the glory then departed from the temple and rested on the cherubim. The Cherubim moved the glory of GOD to the east gate of the temple and then departed from the temple altogether. Finally the divine glory left the city of Jerusalem and rested on the Mount of Olives.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 19:30 – 20:12

Acts 20: 7 — 12

Though the disciples read, and meditated, and prayed, and sung apart, and thereby kept up communion with GOD, yet they came together to worship GOD, and so kept up their communion with one another. They came together on the first day of the week, the LORD’s Day. It is to be religiously observed by all Disciples of CHRIST. In the breaking of the bread, not only the breaking of CHRIST’s body for us, to be a sacrifice for our sins, is remembered, but the breaking of CHRIST’s body to us, to be food and a feast for our souls, is signified. In the early times it was the custom to receive the Lord’s Supper every LORD’s day, thus celebrating the memorial of CHRIST’s death. In this assembly Paul preached. The preaching of the gospel ought to go with the sacraments. They were willing to hear, he saw they were so, and continued his speech till midnight. Sleeping when hearing the word, is an evil thing, a sign of low esteem of the WORD of GOD. We must do what we can to prevent being sleepy; not put ourselves to sleep, but get our hearts affected with the WORD we hear, so as to drive

sleep far away. Infirmity requires tenderness; but contempt requires severity. It interrupted the apostle's preaching; but was made to confirm his preaching. Eutychus was brought to life again. And as they knew not when they should have Paul's company again, they made the best use of it they could, and reckoned a night's sleep well lost for that purpose. How seldom are hours of repose broken for the purposes of devotion! But how often for mere amusement or sinful revelry! So hard is it for spiritual life to thrive in the heart of man! So naturally do carnal practices flourish there!

Verses for 7th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 92 – 94

Psalms 92:1

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises. Praise and Thanksgiving to GOD are basic elements in the believer's life. We must thank the LORD morning and Evening for salvation through HIS SON, JESUS, for HIS loving kindness and grace, and for HIS faithful guidance and care. We should express our gratitude for the WORD of GOD and for HIS spiritual gifts.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 11: 1 – 25

Ezekiel 11:19

A new spirit within you.

This was initially fulfilled at the time of the resurrection of CHRIST and the outpouring of the HOLY SPIRIT on Pentecost. Ezekiel prophesied that the people would be empowered by the HOLY SPIRIT to live in accordance with the will and law of GOD. GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, with all HIS gifts and activity, is available today to all who place their faith in JESUS CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 20: 13 – 38

Acts 20:20

I kept back nothing

Paul preached whatever he believed was useful or needful for salvation of his hearers. Ministers of the gospel must be faithful to declare the whole truth of GOD. They must not seek to satisfy the people's desires or gratify their tastes nor should they seek to promote their own popularity. Even if they must speak words of rebuke, teach doctrines that challenge natural prejudices or preach Biblical standards that oppose the desires of the sinful nature, faithful preachers will deliver the whole truth for the sake of the flock.

Verses for 8th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 95 & 96

Psalms 96:2 & 3

Declare HIS glory among the heathen.

Those of us who have received GOD's salvation and experienced HIS wonderful deeds must be eager to tell others that HE can deliver and save them. The command to declare HIS glory among the nations looks forward to the great commission that JESUS gave, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 12: 1 – 20

Ezekiel 12: 3–7

Prepare thee stuff for removing.

Ezekiel was to play out the role of a captive heading to another place while leaving everything behind except the absolute essentials needed for the journey. This action portrayed that another wave of exiles from Jerusalem would be brought to Babylon, it also discouraged the exiles from unrealistically expecting to return soon to Jerusalem.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 21: 1 – 26

Acts 21:20

Believe...zealous of the law.

James and Paul both knew that Jewish ceremonies could not bring salvation. But they did recognize that some parts of the law and Jewish custom could be followed as an expression of the believer's faith in and love for CHRIST. The Jewish believers had genuinely accepted CHRIST and been regenerated by and filled with the SPIRIT, but they were still zealous for the law and Jewish customs in the context of their loyalty to GOD.

Verses for 10th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 100 – 102

Psalms 101:3

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. Today it is common for people to be entertained by using their eyes to view violence, sexual immorality, sensuality, pornography, acts of perversion and evil of all kinds as means to gratify the lust and desires of the flesh. Through books, magazines, cinemas, videos and internet, every imaginable form of evil is dramatized and made easily available for young and old consumers alike. Like the psalmist GOD's people must guard their hearts and eyes from viewing or entertained by things GOD Himself regards as vile. GOD calls the righteous to hate and shun evil, and to guard their lives and families by setting nothing before their eyes that would displease or grieve the HOLY SPIRIT. As true believers we must not partake of the knowledge of evil.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 12: 21 – 13:7

Ezekiel 12: 21–28

The days are prolonged. The Jewish exiles refused to believe that Ezekiel's messages were true. So far nothing had happened and thus they continued to expect that a time of peace was at hand. GOD declared, however that judgement was imminent.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 21: 27 – 40

In the temple, where Paul should have been protected as in a place of safety, he was violently set upon. They falsely charged him with ill doctrine and ill practice against the Mosaic ceremonies. It is no new thing for those who mean honestly and act regularly, to have things laid to their charge which they know not and never thought of. It is common for the wise and good to have that charged against them by malicious people, with which they thought to have obliged them. GOD often makes those a protection to his people, who have no affection to them, but only have compassion for sufferers, and regard to the public peace. And here see what false, mistaken notions of good people and good ministers, many run away with. But GOD seasonably interposes for the safety of His servants, from wicked and unreasonable men; and gives them opportunities to speak for themselves, to plead for the Redeemer, and to spread abroad HIS glorious gospel.

Verses for 11th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 103 & 104: 1 – 24

Psalm 103

Something to do

1. Read verses 1-5 with 'me, my and I' instead of 'you and your'.
2. Learn to say verse 2 by heart. (By heart means without looking at the words.)
3. Here are some lines from a famous Christian song. They use ideas from Psalm 103. Can you find which verses they use? The meanings of some of the words are in brackets ().

*Praise, my *soul, the King of *Heaven*, *To HIS feet your tribute* (praises) bring,
Ransomed (*redeemed), healed (made well), restored (GOD's friend again), *forgiven,
Who like you HIS *praise should sing?

Father-like HE tends (helps) and spares (is kind to) us,
Well our feeble (weak) frame (body) HE knows,
In HIS hands HE gently bears (carries) us,
Rescues us (makes us safe) from all our foes (enemies).

*Angels, help us to adore (love) HIM,
You behold (can see) HIM face to face,
Sun and moon bow down before HIM,
Dwellers (people who live) all in time and space.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 13: 8 – 23

Ezekiel 13:10

Seduced my people, saying Peace.

The false prophets seduced the people into a false sense of security by proclaiming GOD's peace and salvation to them while they continued rebellion against HIS laws, for this GOD would cut them off from the nation of Israel and from HIS salvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 22: 1 – 16

The apostle addressed the enraged multitude, in the customary style of respect and good-will. Paul relates the history of his early life very particularly; he notices that his conversion was wholly the act of GOD. Condemned sinners are struck blind by the power of darkness, and it is a lasting blindness, like that of the unbelieving Jews. Convinced sinners are struck blind as Paul was, not by darkness, but by light. They are for a time brought to be at a loss within themselves, but it is in order to their being enlightened. A simple relation of the LORD's

dealings with us, in bringing us, from opposing, to profess and promote HIS gospel, when delivered in a right spirit and manner, will sometimes make more impression than laboured speeches, even though it amounts not to the full proof of the truth, such as was shown in the change wrought in the apostle.

Verses for 12th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 104: 24 – 35 & 105: 1 – 22

Psalms 105:4

Seek the LORD, and HIS strength.

We are invited not only to seek the LORD's presence but also the power and strength of HIS grace. We all need GOD's empowering grace in order to persevere in salvation, live a life pleasing unto GOD, and witness in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. We must daily look to the LORD for HIS grace, or we will face spiritual weakness and defeat., thus we must stir ourselves up constantly to seek HIM earnestly with our whole hearts and to expect signs of HIS presence and power in our lives.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 14: 1 – 23

Ezekiel 14: 14

Noah, Daniel and Job.

The judgement coming upon Jerusalem was so certain that even these three men of GOD known for their righteousness could not deliver anyone by their prayers or intercession.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 22: 17 – 23: 11

Acts 23:1

In all good conscience before GOD.

The conscience is an inner function of our spiritual faculty that speaks to us about the rightness or wrongness of our actions. A good conscience gives the verdict that we have not offended GOD or disobeyed HIM knowingly. Paul's claim is sincere.

Verses for 13th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 105: 23 – 45 & 106: 1 – 18, 42 – 48

Psalms 106:15

But sent leanness into their soul.

We must beware of desiring and pursuing what is not in the will of GOD .When we insist on satisfying our selfish desires, GOD sometimes lets us have our own way, but with it comes spiritual leanness or physical calamity. GOD may allow us to pursue things contrary to HIS revealed will, such as an unholy vocational ambition, an unholy love affair, worldly pleasures, covetous desires or ungodly fellowship with unbelievers, but in the end those things have destructive consequences.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 15: 1 – 16:14

Ezekiel 15: 2 – 8

The vine.

The people of Jerusalem are compared to a vine that does not bear fruit and is therefore useless. The fruit of righteousness and faithfulness to the LORD could not be found in them, thus they would be burned in the fire. JESUS likewise taught that all believers who fail to abide faithfully in HIM and to bear fruit will be cut off and cast into the fire.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 23: 12 – 24

False religious principles, adopted by carnal men, urge on to such wickedness, as human nature would hardly be supposed capable of. Yet the LORD readily disappoints the best concerted schemes of iniquity. Paul knew that the Divine providence acts by reasonable and prudent means; and that, if he neglected to use the means in his power, he could not expect GOD's providence to work on his behalf. He who will not help himself according to his means and power, has neither reason nor revelation to assure him that he shall receive help from GOD. Believing in the LORD, we and ours shall be kept from every evil work, and kept to his kingdom. HEAVENLY FATHER, give us by thy HOLY SPIRIT, for CHRIST's sake, this precious faith.

Verses for 14th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 106:19 – 48 & 107: 1– 22

Psalms 107:13

HE saved them out of their distresses.

Note that even when we have ourselves to blame for our troubles GOD desires to deliver us, thus even if we are experiencing great distress, knowing that GOD may be judging us, we can still put our hope in HIS mercy and cry out to HIM in faith for HIS forgiveness and help.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 16: 15 – 34

National sins bring national judgments. Though sinners escape one judgment, another is waiting for them. When GOD's professing people rebel against HIM, they may justly expect all HIS judgments.

The faith, obedience, and prayers of Noah prevailed to the saving of his house, but not of the old world. Job's sacrifice and prayer on behalf of his friends were accepted, and Daniel had prevailed for saving his companions and the wise men of Babylon.

But a people that had filled the measure of their sins, was not to expect to escape for the sake of any righteous men living among them; not even of the most eminent saints, who could be accepted in their own case only through the sufferings and righteousness of CHRIST.

Yet even when GOD makes the greatest desolations by HIS judgments, HE saves some to be monuments of HIS mercy. In firm belief that we shall approve the whole of GOD's dealings with ourselves, and with all mankind, let us silence all rebellious murmurs and objections.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 23:25 – 24:9

GOD has instruments for every work. The natural abilities and moral virtues of the heathens often have been employed to protect His persecuted servants. Even the men of the world can discern between the conscientious conduct of upright believers, and the zeal of false professors, though they disregard or understand not their doctrinal principles. All hearts are in GOD's hand, and those are blessed who put their trust in HIM, and commit their ways unto HIM.

(Read Acts 24:1 – 9)

See here the unhappiness of great men, and a great unhappiness it is, to have their services praised beyond measure, and never to be faithfully told of their faults; hereby they are hardened and encouraged in evil, like Felix.

GOD's prophets were charged with being troublers of the land, and even our LORD JESUS CHRIST that HE perverted the nation; the very same charges were brought against Paul. The selfish and evil passions of men urge them forward, and the graces and power of speech, too often have been used to mislead and prejudice men against the truth. How different will the

characters of Paul and Felix appear at the day of judgement, from what they are represented in the speech of Tertullus!

Let not Christians value the applause, or be troubled at the reviling's of ungodly men, who represent the vilest of the human race almost as gods, and the excellent of the earth as pestilences and movers of sedition.

Verses for 15th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 107: 23 – 43 & 108

The Story of Psalm 108

Psalm 108 is parts of 2 Psalms put together. The first 5 verses come from Psalm 57 and the last 8 verses come from Psalm 60.

Why did this happen?

Bible students think that Psalm 108 thanks GOD for the end of the exile. The exile was when many Jews became prisoners of war in Babylon. A prisoner-of war is somebody that is in prison in a war. The prison may be a place, not a building. The Jews were in Babylon for 70 years. Babylon was their prison. At the end of that time the new government in Babylon let the Jews go back to their own country. Many did and built the city of Jerusalem again. They also built the temple again. This was the house of GOD on the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. It may be the holy place in verse 7.

Instead of writing a new Psalm, they put together parts of two Psalms that David wrote. In Psalm 57, David thanks GOD for giving him help to fight his enemies. In Psalm 60, those enemies are Babylon and Edom, the two countries that started the exile. So David really did write Psalm 108.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 16: 35 – 52

Ezekiel 16: 37 – 42

I will gather all thy lovers

Jerusalem had engaged in spiritual harlotry with other nations and their gods, now GOD would use these very nations to punish her. They would bring such devastating destruction that further punishment would not be needed.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 24: 10 – 27

Acts 24: 16

A conscience void of offence

A clear conscience is listed in Scripture as one of our essential weapons for a successful spiritual life and ministry. A good conscience involves an inner freedom of Spirit that comes when we know that GOD is not offended by our thoughts and actions. When a good conscience is corrupted, one's faith, prayer life, communion with GOD and life of good deeds are seriously damaged, if people reject a good conscience that will result in the shipwreck of their faith.

Verses for 17th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 111 – 114

Psalms 112:1

Delighteth greatly in HIS commandments.

What matters most in the life of a GOD fearing person is that GOD's will be done on earth. Such people love GOD's laws because HIS commandments represent the righteousness the world scorns.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 16: 53 – 17:10

Ezekiel 16:60

I will remember my covenant.

After GOD's judgement upon Jerusalem and the whole house of Israel, HE would remember HIS promise to Abraham and restore them the land of Canaan and to have fellowship with HIM. This new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah and Ezekiel would involve the atoning sacrifice death of JESUS CHRIST on the cross.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 25: 1 – 22

Acts 25:8

Neither against the Law.

Paul knows of no offence that he has committed against the Jews or the Law of Moses. Paul indeed kept the moral law of the Old Testament. He knew that the law's moral standards never change, any more than GOD Himself does. To him, the law is holy, good and spiritual, expressing GOD's character and requirement for a righteous life. Yet Paul did not keep the law as a set of codes or standards by which to make himself righteous. A righteous life requires the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. Only after we are regenerated through the grace of CHRIST can we successfully obey GOD's ethical and moral law and JESUS application of it internally to the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 18th October 2022

Luke, Evangelist and Physician.

Collect: O God , we remember today that You called Luke the doctor to be the writer of the Gospel, the missionary of Your reign. Give us honesty ,sincerity and openness of mind for the careful investigation and evaluation of our context and our lives, so that we may become instruments of inspiration, healing and wholeness, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirt one God, now and ever.Amen.

Verses for 19th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 118 & 119: 1 – 24

Psalms 118: 22 & 23

The stone which the builders refused.

JESUS applied these verses to Himself because HE was thrown aside by HIS own people but afterwards became the principal stone of GOD's new house, the church.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 18: 1 – 22

Ezekiel 18: 5 – 9

If a man be just.

The verses describe a person who has a right relationship with the LORD and who manifests that commitment to the LORD by loving righteousness and justice. It is this individual who will be eternally in communion and favour with the LORD. Paul emphasized this same truth when he referred to them, who by patient continuance, in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality. This lifestyle is now made possible by grace through faith in CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 26: 12 – 32

Acts 26:18

Paul's Divine Commission.

This verse is a classic statement of what the LORD JESUS desires from the preaching of the gospel to the lost.

1. Open their eyes.
Satan blinds the unsaved to the reality to their loss and perishing condition and to the truth of the gospel. Only preaching JESUS CHRIST in the power of the HOLY SPIRIT can open their understanding.
2. Turn them from the ...power unto satan to GOD.
Satan is the ruler of the world and all those without CHRIST are under his control and enslaved to his power. Satan's spirit works in all sinners, in the children of disobedience. The proclamation of the gospel in the power of the SPIRIT will rescue men and women from the power of satan and bring them to kingdom of CHRIST.

Verses for 20th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 119: 25 – 72

Psalms 119: 50

My comfort in my affliction: for thy WORD hath quickened me.

GOD has ordained that HIS WORD made powerful by the SPIRIT, will bring comfort, hope and strength to HIS faithful as we experience trouble and sorrow. Because GOD's WORD is living and active, it has power to revive and restore us who abide in it and in GOD. When in trouble turn to the LORD and HIS WORD and wait for HIS SPIRIT to impart HIS life and peace to you.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 18: 23 – 19:9

Ezekiel18: 24

When the righteous turneth away.

The righteous who trust in the LORD and follow HIS way must not think they are eternally secure if they later become unfaithful and rebellious against GOD. Such people also will die, just like the one who has always lived in sin. Paul warns believers if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 27: 1 – 20

(Read Acts 27:1-11)

It was determined by the counsel of GOD, before it was determined by the counsel of Festus that Paul should go to Rome; for GOD had work for him to do there. The course they steered, and the places they touched at, are here set down. And GOD here encourages those who suffer for HIM, to trust in HIM; for HE can put it into the hearts of those to befriend them, from whom they least expect it. Sailors must make the best of the wind: and so must we all in our passage over the ocean of this world. When the winds are contrary, yet we must be getting forward as well as we can. Many who are not driven backward by cross providences, do not get forward by favourable providences. And many real Christians complain as to the concerns of their souls, that they have much ado to keep their ground. Every fair haven is not a safe haven. Many show respect to good ministers, who will not take their advice. But the event will convince sinners of the vanity of their hopes, and the folly of their conduct.

Verses for 21st October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 119: 73 – 120

Psalms 119: 98

THY commandments hast made me wiser. Throughout devotion to GOD's WORD we learn to see life as GOD sees it, value what HE values and love what HE loves .We attune ourselves to the thoughts of GOD.

Psalms 119: 113

I hate vain thoughts, but THY law do I love.

We really cannot love GOD's WORD without hating evil and maintaining a holy and reverent fear of GOD and HIS judgments.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 19: 10 – 20:10

Ezekiel 20:9

For my name's sake.

GOD did not totally destroy the Israelites in the wilderness after the exodus because HE wanted to uphold the honour of HIS name. HE made Himself known to them by bringing them out of Egypt, so that HE could fulfil HIS promise of universal blessing through HIS chosen people.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 27: 21 – 36

Acts 27:25

Be of good cheer.

Paul is a prisoner in the ship, nevertheless, he is a free man in CHRIST, living free from fear in GOD's presence, while those who sail with him are paralyzed with terror because of this danger at sea. In this life, only the sincere and faithful believer experiencing GOD's nearness can face life's dangers with courage and assurance in CHRIST.

Verses for 22nd October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 119: 121 – 160

Psalms 119: 151

Thou art near, O LORD.

The psalmist experiences GOD's nearness in times of trouble because he loves the LORD and is devoted to meditating on HIS WORD. The LORD is near to all who love HIM and HIS WORD if you have trouble in your life, take your Bible and let GOD's SPIRIT and WORD revive your relationship with HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 20: 11 – 32

Ezekiel 20:11

My Sabbaths.

Israel's observance of the weekly and annual Sabbaths was intended to remind her that she had been set apart as a holy nation in order to manifest GOD's righteousness and Glory before the world.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 27: 37 – 28: 10

Acts 28:5

He....felt no harm.

Paul's experience remarkably illustrates JESUS promise Mark 16:18 take up serpents. Picking up snakes or drinking poison is not to be made a religious ritual or made into a trial by ordeal in order to prove one's spirituality. These are promises given to believers who encounter such dangers while faithfully fulfilling the Great Commission given to us by JESUS Himself. It is a sin to test GOD by initiating unnecessary danger or trials.

Verses for 24th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 126 – 131

Psalm 126

This Psalm is generally thought to have been written by Ezra, or another good person who returned from the captivity in Babylon. This psalm is titled A Song of Ascents. It is the seventh in the series of 15 songs for pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. This song likely was composed after the exile, in wondrous gratitude for GOD's restoration, and in prayer for a furtherance of that work.

With power and beauty, the psalmist described the sense of happiness, grateful astonishment at the power and goodness of GOD in bringing back His people from the captivity of Zion. It seemed too good, too great to be true, but it was true.

In verses 1 to 3 – the psalmist wanted all those who returned out of captivity to be thankful and as in verses 4 to 6- encouraged those yet in captivity.

It is good to observe how GOD's deliverances of the church are for us, that we may rejoice in them. The sinner convinced of his guilt and danger, when by looking to a crucified SAVIOUR he receives peace to his conscience, and power to break off his sins.

Suffering saints are often in tears; they share the calamities of human life, and commonly have a greater share than others. But they sow in tears; they do the duty of an afflicted state. Weeping must not hinder sowing; we must get good from times of affliction. And they that sow, in the tears of godly sorrow, to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting; and that will be a joyful harvest indeed. Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be for ever comforted. When we mourn for our sins, or suffer for Christ's sake, we are sowing in tears, to reap in joy. And remember that God is not mocked; for whatever a man soweth that shall he reap.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 20: 33 – 49

The wicked Israelites, notwithstanding they follow the sinful ways of other nations, shall not mingle with them in their prosperity, but shall be separated from them for destruction. There is no shaking off GOD's dominion; and those who will not yield to the power of HIS grace, shall sink under the power of HIS wrath. But not one of GOD's jewels shall be lost in the lumber of this world. HE will bring the Jews to the land of Israel again; and will give them true repentance. They will be overcome with HIS kindness: the more we know of GOD's holiness, the more we see the hateful nature of sin. Those who remain unaffected amidst means of grace, and would live without CHRIST, like the world around them, may be sure it is the way to destruction.

NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 28: 11 – 31

Paul spoke of the kingdom of GOD, and gave an exhaustive study of how the Old Testament spoke of JESUS from morning till evening. Paul undoubtedly taught what JESUS taught:

That in JESUS GOD brought a spiritual kingdom that would take root in men's hearts before it took over the governments of this world. Most of the Jewish people of JESUS' day and of Paul's day looked for a political kingdom, not a spiritual kingdom. In response to this remarkable, day-long teaching from Paul, some believed and trusted JESUS. Paul was happy that some received the gospel.

Many hear and reject simply because they don't want to turn to GOD and be healed of their sin.

The preacher of the gospel really preaches two messages. To those who respond to the gospel with faith, HE is a messenger of life. But to those who reject JESUS, the preacher adds to their condemnation.

When we as a church body don't seek the HOLY SPIRIT through prayer, we don't work right. When we do pray, and we ask the SPIRIT to lead, then the SPIRIT empowers what GOD wants to happen.

Trusting in JESUS, relying on the power of the HOLY SPIRIT and the guidance of the FATHER, the WORD of GOD will continue to spread without hindrance and continue to change lives for the glory of GOD.

One small step at a time and over time, GOD can take us all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, if it's HIS will. It's not about the destination, but the journey. That's how we can approach our faith, and be obedient to the gospel message. This applies whether you're a Christian, or not yet a Christian, whether you believe, or don't yet believe. If you don't yet believe, just take small, prayerful, steps.

If you're a believer, take small, prayerful steps to know the HOLY SPIRIT, to know CHRIST, and to share HIM with others. JESUS died and rose again so that the whole world might hear the good news about HIM. Let's take HIS message to the Ends of the Earth.

Verses for 25th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 132 – 135

Psalms 133

Believers should work to have good and peaceable relationships with all others. When there is unity among GOD's people, it is not only good and pleasant in itself, but it also leads to so many other good things. Since we will have life forevermore with the people of GOD, we should work hard to enjoy unity with them now.

Psalms 134

This is the last of the series of fifteen psalms with the title A Song of Ascents. It is a call to the priests and Levites of the temple to continue their service of praise, with the answer of a blessing back to the people.

This psalm shows us that praise should be added to all our work. The lifting up of the hands was a gesture in prayer, it was an intimation of their expectation of receiving blessings from the LORD, and it was also an acknowledgment of their having received the same. GOD's people should give HIM their thanks, honour, praise, and glory. So the thought is that if we bless GOD in our worship, as we must, then GOD will also bless us abundantly in our daily lives.

This is the only ultimate goal of any Christian: to bless GOD and to be blessed by HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 21: 1 – 17

Ezekiel 21: 1 – 5

It's a terrible thing to have GOD speak against a land, especially one so favoured as HE gave to Israel. Yet GOD was not only against the land; more pointedly HE was against the people. When GOD's judgment came against the nation, it would not be against specific individuals. It would come against the people in general and both righteous and wicked would find themselves under HIS sword. As regards final judgment, the righteous will not be destroyed along with the wicked. The magnitude and severity of GOD's judgment would be a revelation to the watching world. They would know that only GOD Himself could be behind such a great judgment.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 1: 1 – 12

1 Peter 1 & 2

Peter wrote this letter to the elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. This is the Christian Church that has been persecuted to the point of becoming dispersed across Europe and Asia. These are people who gave up everything to follow JESUS.

Peter was the one that saw JESUS walking on water and asked to join HIM. He's the one that

cut off an ear of one of the guards that came to arrest JESUS. He's the one that denied JESUS three times in the night before HIS crucifixion. Peter's also the one that JESUS told to feed HIS sheep. He followed JESUS well. Peter took the Gospel to the Gentiles. And in the end, Peter was also crucified for following JESUS.

1 Peter 3 – 5

When Peter considered the salvation of GOD, his immediate response was to simply praise HIM. All HIS goodness to us begins with mercy. "No other attribute could have helped us had mercy been refused. As we are by nature, justice condemns us, holiness frowns upon us, power crushes us, truth confirms the threatening of the law, and wrath fulfils it. It is from the mercy of our GOD that all our hopes begin." Peter's idea is that when a person is saved, they are made a new creation. We are born again to a living hope because we have eternal life in a SAVIOUR who has conquered death Himself. The hope lives because it is set upon an inheritance incorruptible that can never fade away because it is reserved in heaven.

Our only hope for salvation is JESUS CHRIST. GOD is perfect. And HE created everything to be perfect with HIM. But we chose sin. We chose to rebel. And our sin deserves a consequence/ a punishment. That punishment is death. But JESUS came for us. GOD Himself came for us while we were still sinners. HE died for us. Took our place. HE took our punishment. Died and HE rose again. And HE is coming again.

GOD's Word says that if you confess with your mouth JESUS as LORD and believe in your heart GOD raised HIM from the dead, you will be saved. Be saved today. Believe that JESUS alone can save you from your sins and follow HIM. Be born again to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

In our salvation GOD gives us an inheritance. HE adopts us into HIS family and then gives us the future of a child of GOD. Our inheritance is to be restored in our relationship with GOD. It is joy in HIM forever. Our inheritance is CHRIST.

And that is an inheritance that won't perish. It won't be defiled. It won't fade. It's kept in heaven. GOD's power gives and guards our faith, which will show its fruit in the end. It is by faith we are saved and it is GOD's power that provides and that guards that faith. That should be a great confidence to us! Our faith is from GOD. Not ourselves. Not only confidence but that should give us joy.

Verses for 26th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 136, 137: 1 – 6 & 138

Psalm 138

David began this song with a bold declaration – that he would hold nothing back in his praise to GOD. It would be done with all his being, with his whole heart. ““With the whole heart’ leaves no room for mixed motives of divided devotion.” Praise belongs to the LORD alone and not to the gods of the nations, whose kings will have to submit to the LORD. Even when David was not at the temple, he recognized it as GOD’s appointed place for worship and sacrifice. HE would worship according to GOD’s direction.

David’s praise was not empty adoration. It had reasons behind it, which were a basis for it. He thought of the great loving kindness of GOD toward him, and GOD’s firmly established truth. Meditation on those gifts from GOD gave David a basis for his spirit of praise. David considered the main way GOD’s truth is communicated to us – through HIS WORD. GOD has such a high estimation of HIS WORD that HE has magnified it above HIS very name, HIS character. David also had very practical reasons to praise and thank GOD. The LORD had answered and rescued him many times. When David’s strength failed, GOD made him bold with strength in his soul.

It is important to praise GOD for who HE is, even more than for what HE has done for us. The effect of praise is to be that of the revelation of GOD to others, who if they come to know HIM, will also praise HIM. David understood that GOD is great in glory and on high, yet HE holds the lowly, the humble, in high regard. On the other hand, GOD keeps HIS distance from the proud.

Understanding GOD’s greatness and kindness builds our faith. David knew that GOD had a plan concerning him, and this GOD of greatness and goodness would absolutely perfect that plan.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 21: 18 – 32

GOD explained to Ezekiel that the sword of the king of Babylon – his army used as the instrument of GOD’s judgment – stood at a crossroads, deciding to next go to either Rabbah of the Ammonites or to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem.

Ezekiel pictured Nebuchadnezzar at the parting of the road, using all the methods pagans used to get guidance from their gods.

At the parting of the roads, Nebuchadnezzar decided to go to Jerusalem. He would come against the city with his battering rams and bring a great slaughter.

Open pitched battles were fought only if an army thought it could match the enemy sword for sword. Otherwise the troops would retreat within their defensive walls, a strategy that could succeed especially if the invading forces were far from home and lacked efficient supply lines. This would be Jerusalem’s only hope in the face of the Babylonians.

Though Nebuchadnezzar sought the pagan gods with their superstitions of divination, YAHWEH was actually guiding him. As much as the people of Judah and Jerusalem may have prayed the king of Babylon would not come against them, GOD would guide him to

them to bring their iniquity to remembrance.

Zedekiah was the last of a long line descended from David to reign in some sense over Jerusalem and Israel. He and his reign would be overthrown, and no descendant of David would sit on the throne until HE comes whose right it is – that is, until GOD's MESSIAH, the true Son of David comes. This was wonderfully and obviously fulfilled in JESUS CHRIST and still waits for its ultimate fulfilment.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 1: 13 – 25

Living the way GOD wants us to means that we must gird up the loins of our mind. The idea in this phrase is to prepare for action, much like the phrase “rolling up your sleeves.” Then we must also be sober, which means the ability to take a serious look at life.

Peter has told us a lot about GOD's grace. He greeted us with grace (1 Peter 1:2). He told us of the grace that came to us in JESUS, predicted by the prophets of old (1 Peter 1:10). Now he goes further, writing of the grace that is to be brought to you when JESUS comes back. The only way we will be able to stand before JESUS on that day is because of the unmerited favour HE gives and will give to us.

Grace isn't just for the past, when we first gave our lives to JESUS. It isn't only for the present, where we live each moment standing in HIS grace (Romans 5:2). It is also for the future, when grace will be brought to us. GOD has only just begun to show us the riches of HIS grace. “Grace is the unmerited love of GOD, stooping to save and bless; the source of all those bright and holy gifts which come from HIS infinite heart.”

Fulfilling GOD's call to holiness requires that we, as obedient children, break off with the lifestyle of the world.

The high call for godly living makes sense in light of the price that was paid for our redemption. The precious blood of JESUS did not save us so that we could then live as if we were garbage.

Peter described the frame of mind which seeks to be justified by law as aimless conduct. It seems to have an aim – gaining merit before GOD by works – but it is in fact aimless because it cannot succeed.

Peter here spoke in reference to the completely sinless character of JESUS. If He were not without blemish and without spot, HE would not have been qualified to be our Redeemer. The work of JESUS was not a plan developed late in the course of redemption. It was foreordained before the foundation of the world, though it was made evident in these last times. The entire plan of redemption is for those who believe in GOD, though even their belief is through HIM. Those who believe in GOD are not disappointed because their faith and hope has been substantiated by JESUS' resurrection from the dead.

Holy living is incomplete if it is not accompanied by love. To be a Christian means to have a sincere love of the brethren, but we are encouraged to exercise that love fervently.

Such love is only possible (and only to be expected) of those who have been born again by the eternal WORD OF GOD.

Through the WORD OF GOD which lives and abides forever: We are born again. But it doesn't only give us new life. It also tells us to love one another. If the WORD OF GOD is as Isaiah 40:8 says it is – the WORD OF THE LORD which endures forever, then we are both obligated by it and empowered by it, to live out the kind of love and holiness Peter speaks of.

Verses for 27th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 139 – 141

Psalm 141

This psalm has the title A Psalm of David. It shows David as a man of tender conscience, who asked God to deal with his own sin and weakness before addressing the wicked men who fought against him. It shows that David was even more concerned about evil inside himself than he was about evil from others.

When a child cries out to a parent, the parent hears not only the words but the voice of the cry. The LORD can hear the voice of His people when they cry out to Him, and it moves Him to action.

David used the smoke and smell of incense as a representation of his prayer to God. His posture of prayer (the lifting up of my hands) was a gift to God even as the evening sacrifice was a gift to God. Revelation 5:8 says that the prayers of God's people are like incense, and Hebrews 13:15 describes praise as a sacrifice unto God.

David didn't want the same mouth that prayed as if it were incense to be used for lies or any evil thing. He asked God to keep watch over the door of my lips, so that he would not say evil or foolish things.

David knew that it was more than his lips that needed protection; his heart could also be affected by some evil thing, resulting in wicked works. This was David's way of praying what Jesus later taught, do not lead us into temptation (Matthew 6:13).

David didn't want to walk in the ways of men who work iniquity, so he didn't want to eat at their table either. This may have been a literal situation for David, but the principle of not enjoying all the luxuries that the wicked partake of is always relevant to God's people.

David rejected the delicacies of the wicked, but embraced the correction that came from the righteous. He recognized that it would be a kindness to him. The rebuke of a good man could be as healing and helpful to David as excellent oil upon his head. Like a kind anointing from a friend, he would not refuse such rebuke or correction – even if it were as severe as a strike upon him.

David prayed for God's work against the deeds of the wicked. Perhaps David used this word picture to describe how ruined he felt he and his righteous companions were at the deeds of the wicked. Those so ruined could only cry out to God for help. The enemies of David were determined to destroy him, and so they set many snares, traps, and nets for him. David's prayer was that they would fall into their own nets, even as he would escape safely.

David deliberately set his eyes upon the Lord. Because God Himself was his refuge. The hope and assurance here expressed by the Psalmist were not vain. He escaped all the snares that were laid for him on every side.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 22: 1 – 22

God told Ezekiel to pronounce judgment upon Jerusalem as it was guilty of many sins, and large among them was injustice leading to death and violence. Perhaps Jerusalem was not as bloody as many pagan cities, but they had the word, prophets, and priests of God. They were

rightly held to a much higher standard. At this point in her history, Jerusalem was no longer the holy city, the beautiful city, or God's special city. She was the bloody city, for violence, oppression, idolatry, unfaithfulness, immoral practices and her many crimes that showed disregard for human life.

The coming judgment upon Jerusalem was their own fault. God was gracious and patient with them over many generations, but eventually they had come to the end of your years. Jerusalem could expect no sympathy from the surrounding nations, both near and far. They would be a reproach to the nations and a mockery to all countries.

God rebuked the sinful city. Then He focused His rebuke on the actual sinners in the city, beginning with the princes of Israel. Instead of using their power in ways that would honour God and serve His people, the princes of Israel used their power in violent, self-serving ways. Instead of caring for families (father and mother) and the vulnerable of society, they used and despised them. The sins of the princes of Israel were not only against their community; they were also against God Himself. They sinned against God's glory when they sacrificed and feasted to idols on the mountains. The violation of the weekly Sabbaths to sacred days (and years). A further area of sin among the princes of Israel was their sexual immorality and perversion. The final area of sin exposed among the princes of Israel was their financial exploitation against their own community. They lent money in unjust ways and made profit from your neighbours by extortion.

God said He would oppose these corrupt leaders of Jerusalem. He hated their dishonest profit and the bloodshed that came from their dishonest courts.

Once Israel was regarded as God's precious possession. Through their sin and rebellion, God now regarded them as dross – the worthless impurities that come from the refining of metal. God promised to not only conquer Judah and Jerusalem but to scatter them in exile. When they sat defiled in the sight of the nations, then they would understand Yahweh and how He revealed Himself in judgment.

God promised to make Jerusalem like a great furnace. Not only would the armies of Babylon burn the city, but it would be a melting of Israel itself. God would blow on the refining fire to make it hotter. This severe announcement of judgment had within it a glimmer of hope. When the refiner melts the silver (or other precious metal) it isn't to destroy it, but to purify it. As terrible as the burning of Jerusalem and exile would be, it would purify Israel even through the judgment.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 2: 1 – 10

Verses 1- 3

Five kinds of sinful attitudes and practices must be abandoned: all kinds of malice (desire to hurt another person) and deceit (desire to trick another person), pretence and jealousy, and all sins of the tongue. These all belong to the old way of life, and have no place in the congregation and in the Christian life.

The goal of all nourishment is growth. Peter emphasizes that, in a certain sense, believers are responsible for their own spiritual growth. Although it is true that God's grace is sovereign and that the Holy Spirit works growth in ways that are hidden from view, still believers must crave to be fed and feed themselves upon God's Word just as babies crave for milk.

The picture of children craving food for spiritual growth characterizes believers' intimate

dependence upon Father for a well-nourished and developing faith-life. Eating and growing are basic to pilgrim survival and spiritual service.

Verses 6-8

With the passing away of the old covenant rituals, New Testament sacrifices coincide with living for God. These include the sacrifices of praise, mercy and gratitude. The final Lamb has been slaughtered, and His coming again to life ensures the continuing effectiveness of His offering in cleansing the offerings of His people, making them acceptable to God. God sets His select and precious Cornerstone in Zion. As valuable as Christ is to God, so valuable is everyone who in faith builds upon Him.

Verses 9-10

No Christian can ever exist by himself, but is a member of a family; similarly, no Christian serves God by himself, but belongs to a priesthood, a body of co-labourers.

As His holy nation the church is living demonstration of what God's mercy accomplishes. As a royal priesthood the church offers her living sacrifices to God before a watching world: united to Christ, the priesthood ministers' spiritual sacrifices of loving obedience. Pilgrims nourished in the Lord and His Word put their faith to work, in deeds of mercy and gratitude. God's people, the church of Jesus Christ, exist by virtue of His gracious mercy, shown personally and completely in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The church is a holy nation, God's own possession, set apart, and differentiated from all other people: holy.

Finally, believers together are called God's own special people. As Owner, God bestowed upon Israel, and now bestows upon the church, special covenantal and redemptive privileges. These privileges obligate her, in turn, to proclaim among men the praises of the God who calls believers out of darkness into His marvellous light. The church's identity provides her with incentive to spread the gospel. Nowhere is darkness more discernible than in the light; nowhere is death more visible than in the presence of life.

Verses for 28th October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 142 – 144

Psalm 142

Psalm 142 is titled A Contemplation of David. A Prayer when he was in the cave.

The Hebrew word for Contemplation (maskil) could be better translated as instruction. “He calls this prayer Maschil, ‘a Psalm of instruction,’ because of the good lessons he had himself learned in the cave, learned on his knees, and so learned that he desired to teach others.”

The state of David in the cave of Adullam was a state of utter destitution. Persecuted by his own countrymen, dismissed by Achish, and not yet joined by his own relations, or any other attendants, he took refuge in the cave, and was there alone.

David knew about the pagan gods worshipped by the surrounding Gentiles, but he determined that he would never cry out to them – only to the LORD. As a man of deep spiritual experience, David knew that there were many ways to cry out to the LORD – in thought, in feeling, in action. Here David cried out to GOD with his voice, feeling that silent feelings were not enough for his present need.

The outpouring of complaint is not meant to tell Jehovah what HE does not know. It is for the complainer’s relief, not for GOD’s information. Those words teach us that in prayer we should not try to keep anything back from GOD, but should show HIM all that is in our hearts, and that in HIS presence in our closet, with the door shut, but not before men. It is not merely words that you have to utter, you have to lay all your trouble before GOD. As a child tells its mother its grief’s, tell the LORD all your grief’s, your complaints, your miseries, your fears. Tell them all out, and great relief will come to your spirit.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 22: 23 – 23: 10

Ezekiel 23: 1- 10

Ezekiel 23 presents two symbolic sisters, representing the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, how Judah followed in the sinful steps of Israel. Israel was unfaithful to Yahweh from the very start, worshipping idols in Egypt, was like giving their bodies to those gods.

GOD gave these two symbolic sisters names. The elder was Oholah, which means Her Own Tabernacle, with the sense that she rejected God’s temple and the service that attended it. The younger was Oholibah, which means My Tabernacle is in her, with the sense that she was home to God’s temple and its service. Oholah represented Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Oholibah represented Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Before the Assyrians conquered Israel she followed her attraction to their gods, their power, their protection, and their ways. There was nothing holy or even spiritual in Israel’s attraction to the Assyrians and their gods. It was purely on a fleshly, materialistic basis.

Because Israel gave herself to foreign gods and morals, and rejected GOD, GOD allowed them to be conquered by those foreign nations.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 2: 11 – 25

1 Peter 2: 11 & 12

The desires in our hearts and souls that are waging war against us, those desires would of course include the desires for sex and money, ambition, the desire for power and influence, or the desire to be popular and well liked, or the desire for ease and a quiet life, that have devastated the witness of so many Christians.

Peter reminds us that we were called out of darkness and hence we no longer belong to this present world, and we don't fit in here, we should stand out through our witness and testimonies and bring people to CHRIST.

1 Peter 2: 13- 20

Peter is telling us to submit to civil government, to the authority of the state. Even if the government isn't a very good one, even if it isn't the government we would have chosen to have, even if we didn't vote for the Prime Minister or the President, and we think he is unworthy of that role, we are still to submit to respect and submit to the authority of the government. GOD has a good purpose for political authority. It is there do justice- not just restorative justice, but retributive justice, Peter says it is there to punish evildoers. And the government is also there to promote virtue by praising and rewarding those who do good. So Christians shouldn't be revolutionaries or have the reputation of being rebels. History shows that revolutions rarely lead to good. Instead, Christians should be known as good, peaceful, law-abiding citizens.

Peter says submit freely, not because you are forced to by the law, but because you are GOD's slaves, you belong to HIM, not to the government or your masters, and this is HIS will for you. Peter also says that this will silence what foolish people say or think. But Peter also says that we must obey GOD rather than men and hence submit to the authorities but do not fear them.

If GOD calls someone to follow CHRIST, he calls him to suffer, there is no way around it. Struggling to do all the good we can, is a very effective evangelism strategy.

Verses for 31st October 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 149 & 150

The Story of Psalm 150

Christians and *Jews say that this is a very special psalm. Someone wrote it to finish the Book of Psalms. This was perhaps after the *exile. The *exile was 600 years before JESUS came to the earth. Babylon was a country 800 kilometres east of Jerusalem. Today we call it Iraq. The army of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. They also destroyed the *temple in Jerusalem. The *temple was GOD's house in Jerusalem. The army of Babylon took many *Jews to Babylon. They made them live there. This was the *exile.

The *Jews went back to their own land 70 years later. They built Jerusalem and the *temple again. Then the *Jews made the Book of Psalms. It was to sing in the new *temple. They used psalms by Moses, by David, by Isaiah, by the sons of Korah and by many other people. But Bible students think that they wrote two new psalms for their book. They were Psalm 1 and Psalm 150. Maybe they wrote other psalms also, perhaps Psalms 146 – 149.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 23:36 – 24:14

Ezekiel 24:2

Write thee the name of the day.

The day was Jan 15th 588 B.C. Ezekiel received his message on the same day that the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began. The attack lasted nearly two years and brought total destruction to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 24:13

Thou shalt not be purged ...till.

Because Jerusalem refused to let GOD cleanse her from her impurity, she had to face HIS wrath. Likewise, all people who reject GOD's Son will face the wrath of GOD at the end of time. Only by GOD's righteous judgement, will the world be cleansed of sin.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 3: 13 – 22

1 Peter 3:15

Sanctify the LORD GOD in your hearts.

Peter calls for an inner reverence for and commitment to CHRIST as LORD that is always ready to explain one's faith in HIM to others. Thus we must know CHRIST and GOD's WORD in order to rightly witness and lead others to HIM.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
NOVEMBER

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 1st November 2022

All Saints Day

Collect: Eternal God , make us this day to remember the unseen cloud of witnesses who have gone before us to be with You and yet continue to inspire us by their courage ,sacrifice, witness and communion. Following the examples of our saints help us to stand firm in our faith and be courageous and bold to walk in the new ways You show us so that in Your good time we may share with them the blessedness of Your nearer presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God , now and ever. Amen.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 2nd November 2022

ALL SOULS DAY

COLLECT: Eternal GOD , make us this day, to remember the unseen cloud of witnesses, who encompass us. We thank YOU for their witness in life and in death.

Help us to walk worthily of those, in whose unseen presence, life is lived.

Grant us grace that, in this life we may never forget those who have gone before us, whose life is hidden in YOU so that, in the life to come we may share their blessedness, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who lives and reigns with YOU and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, now and ever. Amen.

Verses for 3rd November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 10 – 14

Psalms 11: 1 – 7

In the Lord put I my trust.

This psalm rebukes those who counsel flight or compromise when biblical principles are at stake. Faithful believers will take refuge in the LORD and remain committed to righteousness even if the moral and spiritual foundations are destroyed in both society and the church, the result will be that the LORD's countenance doth behold the upright.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 26:15 – 27:12

Ezekiel 26:2

Tyre.

Tyre, the capital of Phoenicia, was located 60 miles northwest of Nazareth on the Mediterranean coast. Part of the city was an island and part was coastland at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains. Tyre rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem because it believed it would gain financially from trade advantages now that Judah was out of the picture. Tyre's desire for wealth with no thought of the suffering it caused others brought GOD's judgement. The city was subjugated by many nations, the Babylonians, next the Persians, and then the Greeks led by Alexander the Great.

NEW TESTAMENT

1 Peter 5:6 – 2 Peter 1:4

2 Peter 1:4

Partakers of the divine nature.

As believers we partake in the very nature of GOD. Our sharing in GOD's very nature is another description of the new birth by which we receive the life of GOD. We share GOD's nature in order to conform to GOD and HIS holiness.

Verses for 4th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 15 – 17

Psalms 16: 5

The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.

The inheritance and cup are the LORD Himself. An important aspect of our inheritance as New Testament believers is the following. If a man love ME, he will keep MY words, and my FATHER will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Communion with GOD is the sure source of blessings and happiness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 27: 13 – 36

A lamentation for Tyrus.

Tyre had a great fleet of merchant ships, this chapter pictures her as a great and beautiful ship bringing merchandise and treasures to many nations. Yet GOD in HIS judgement would break the ship to pieces, and many would lament its destruction Compare this chapter with Revelation 18 where GOD destroys the commercial centre of the world.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 1: 5 – 15

2 Peter 1:19

A more sure word of prophecy.

Peter contrasts humanistic ideas with GOD's WORD. He goes on to attest to the Divine origin of Scripture and affirms that all prophecy originated from GOD, not from humans .This assures GOD is infallible. Scripture is in its entirety is true and reliable in all its parts.

Verses for 5th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 18

The Story of Psalm 18

This is a very special psalm. It is so special that you will find it in 2 places in the Bible. It is here in the Book of Psalms. It is also in a part of the Bible that we call the Book of Samuel. Samuel is in 2 parts. 1 Samuel tells the story of David before he became king of Israel. 2 Samuel tells us the story of David after he became king. 1 Samuel also tells us about the lives of Samuel the prophet and Saul the king. Why is Psalm 18 in the Book of Samuel? (2 Samuel 22). Because it is David's own story of his life. Here we have put it in 6 parts. This gives help to everyone that reads it. It is like 6 different psalms. We can study it like that. But we must read the whole psalm to understand the life of David. That is why it is also in 2 Samuel. The title (in brackets) of each part is not in the Hebrew Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 28: 1 – 19

Ezekiel 28: 1–10

The prince of Tyrus.

The king of Tyre's fundamental sin was pride, which led him to exalt himself as a deity. For this he would face the judgement of the LORD GOD and he brought down to the pit like all mortals. Many today especially those caught up in new age thinking actually believe that we are gods or at least have become gods, such deceivers and their victims will receive the same condemnation as the ruler of Tyre.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 1:16 – 2:3

2 Peter 1:21

Holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.

What Peter affirms here about prophecy is also true about all Scripture men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST. Believers must maintain a strong uncompromising view of Holy Scripture as inspired and given directly by GOD. There are several reasons for this. It is the only way to be true to what JESUS CHRIST, the apostles and the Bible itself teach about Scripture.

Verses for 7th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 22 – 24

Psalms 24: 4

Clean hands and a pure heart.

David emphasizes that those who want to worship and serve GOD and receive HIS blessing must be pursuing a pure heart and a righteous life. Clean hands are hands free from external acts of sin. A pure heart refers to inward holiness, right motives and goals, only the pure in heart will see GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 28:20 – 29:11

Ezekiel 28: 25

Gathered the house of Israel.

Ezekiel frequently emphasizes the promise to restore Israel. This restoration will not fully take place until GOD executes judgement upon all the nations on the end times. By regathering Israel to serve HIM in righteousness, GOD will demonstrate that HE is indeed a holy GOD who will accomplish all HIS purposes in this world.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 2: 4 – 17

2 Peter 2: 15

The way of Balaam.

This phrase refers to a love for personal honour and material gain at the expense of GOD's people. Peter emphasizes that sexual immorality, love of honour and greed for money characterize false teachers and preachers.

Verses for 8th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 25 – 28

What Psalm 26 means

Verses 1 – 3:

We can walk with GOD when HE makes us new, whole people. Only GOD can make us whole. When we are right with GOD then we can start being right with people. We become right with GOD, or honest to GOD, when we become Christians. We ask GOD to excuse us and we promise to become His servants. Then we are whole people on the inside to GOD and on the outside to people.

In Psalm 26:3 David wrote about GOD's good ways. These are the rules that GOD gives to us in the Bible. If we do not obey these rules we can start again. We ask GOD to forgive us and HE does. Look after Psalms 1 and 5.

Verses 4 – 7:

A part of the Bible is called Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 21:6-7 we read about people washing their hands. This was to show that they had not done murder. We find the same idea in verse 6. Here it is not murder, but anything that is wrong. In verse 6 we also read about the altar of the LORD. There were two altars. On the big one they killed animals. They burnt their bodies as a gift to GOD. On the small one they burnt incense. It made a nice smell. The small one was inside the house of GOD.

Verses 8 – 12:

The house of GOD was a tent. A tent was a small building made of animal skins. The Jews carried it with them. When David was king he took it into Jerusalem. In verse 8 David says that he loves the place where they put this tent. He did this because he believed that GOD was there as well as in HIS home in heaven. In verse 9 David means that when he dies he does not want to be with sinners. He wants to be free, as David wrote in verse 11. This means free after he dies. He wants to be with GOD in heaven, not with sinners. The flat place in verse 12 is a safe place.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 29:12 – 30:12

The besiegers of Tyre obtained little plunder. But when GOD employs ambitious or covetous men, he will recompense them according to the desires of their hearts; for every man shall have his reward. GOD had mercy in store for the house of Israel soon after. The history of nation's best explains ancient prophecies. All events fulfil the Scriptures. Thus, in the deepest scenes of adversity, the LORD sows the seed of our future prosperity. Happy are those who desire HIS favour, grace, and image; they will delight in HIS service, and not covet any earthly recompense; and the blessings they have chosen shall be sure to them for ever.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 2:18 – 3:7

2 Peter 2: 19**They promise them liberty.**

The spirit of lawlessness that promises freedom from godly restraint will be especially prevalent in society and in some church circles in the last days before CHRIST comes again. GOD's moral absolutes will be considered outdated and mere legalistic restraint to one's autonomy, personal freedom, self-fulfilment and happiness. As people set themselves up as their own ultimate authority, they become slaves of moral corruption.

Verses for 9th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 29 – 31

Psalms 30: 6

In my prosperity... I shall never be moved.

Secure in his prosperity, the psalmist assumed that his wealth and success made him so strong that nothing could destroy his happiness. GOD then withdrew HIS protective hand and brought serious trouble and helplessness into his life, causing him to experience the need for GOD's continual care and presence. All believers who give GOD and HIS kingdom anything but first place in their lives are warned by the words of this psalm.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 30: 13 – 31:9

Ezekiel 31: 3

The Assyrians.

Ezekiel compares Egypt's situation to Assyria's days of glory and its fall. Once a world power, Assyria had been destroyed by Babylon, the same nation that would defeat Egypt.

NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 3: 8 – 18

2 Peter 3: 9

Not willing that any should perish.

The delay of CHRIST's return is related to the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world. GOD wants everyone to hear the gospel and does not desire anyone to perish eternally. The truth does not mean that all will be saved, all those who reject GOD's grace and salvation will sadly be lost eternally.

Verses for 10th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 32 & 33

Psalms 32: 2

Imputeth not iniquity.

Romans 4: 6 – 8 quotes to show that GOD treats sincerely repentant sinners as righteous, not because righteousness is something they earn through works , but rather receive as a gift when they confess their sins and believe in the LORD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 31: 10 – 32: 6

Ezekiel 31: 11

For his wickedness.

GOD's judgement are not arbitrary, they are always in accordance with the wickedness. Ezekiel of individuals or nations. At the present time, GOD desires not to exercise judgement but to offer forgiveness to all who turn to HIM through HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jude 1: 1 – 8

Jude 1: 2

Mercy.....be multiplied.

As we draw near to GOD, HIS mercy, peace and love can be doubled, tripled and even quadrupled to us.

Contend — describes the battle that the faithful believer must fight in the defence of faith it means literally to struggle, suffer, and be under great stress or a fight. We must exert ourselves to the utmost in the defence of GOD's Word and the New Testament faith, even though it may be costly and agonizing. We must deny ourselves and if need be accept martyrdom for the sake of the gospel.

Verses for 11th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 34 & 35

The Story of Psalm 35

David may have written this:

- Either when Saul was trying to catch him
- Or when David's son Absalom was fighting him

Saul was king of Israel before David. Absalom was David's son, who wanted to be king in David's place. In the psalm David asks GOD to fight for him. He asks GOD to take Saul (or Absalom) away from the earth. To us the language is not very nice, but they would not think this 3 000 years ago. It is the language of war.

War is when countries fight each other. David sees GOD as a soldier, fighting for him with shields and spears. This is what we call a "human picture" of GOD. We believe that GOD sends people or angels to do his work for him. In the psalm the angel is probably one that the Jews called Michael.

The important thing to learn from this psalm is this: David does not try to kill his enemies himself. He wants GOD to do it in GOD's way. When we have enemies we must ask GOD to do something. We must not try to hurt them ourselves. Look at Psalm 5.

What Psalm 35 means

Parts of the psalm

What David did wrong?

What David's enemies did?

What David will do when GOD sends help?

Verses 1 – 10

Verse 7 nothing

Verse 4 they wanted to kill him

Verses 9 – 10 be very happy

Verses 11 – 18

Verses 12 – 14 nothing

Verses 12, 15 –16 they mocked him, and did evil things to him

Verse 18 thank and praise GOD

Verses 19 – 28

Verse 19 nothing

Verses 20 –21 they say lies

Verse 28 Praise GOD all day

Some of the ideas are a bit strange to us, but they are how the Jews thought.

Verse 10: "all my bones" means "all of me".

Verse 13: we are not sure what "my prayer comes back" means; there are 2 ways to explain it: either God did, or did not, answer David.

Verse 17: "the thing that I love most" is probably "my life".

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 32: 7 – 32

Ezekiel 32: 17–32

Divers nations are mentioned as gone down to the grave before Egypt, who are ready to give her a scornful reception; these nations had been lately ruined and wasted. But though Judah and Jerusalem were about this time ruined and laid waste, yet they are not mentioned here. Though they suffered the same affliction, and by the same hand, yet the kind design for which they were afflicted, and the mercy GOD reserved for them, altered its nature. It was not to them a going down to the pit, as it was to the heathen. Pharaoh shall see, and be comforted; but the comfort wicked ones have after death, is poor comfort, not real, but only in fancy. The view this prophecy gives of ruined states shows something of this present world, and the empire of death in it. Come and see the calamitous state of human life. As if men did not die fast enough, they are ingenious at finding out ways to destroy one another. Also of the other world; though the destruction of nations as such, seems chiefly intended, here is plain allusion to the everlasting ruin of impenitent sinners. How are men deceived by Satan! What are the objects they pursue through scenes of bloodshed, and their many sins? Surely man disquiets himself in vain, whether he pursues wealth, fame, power, or pleasure. The hour cometh, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of CHRIST, and shall come forth; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jude 1: 9 – 15

Jude 1: 9

Michael...contending with the devil.

If the archangel Michael refused to slander Satan but relied on GOD to rebuke him, how much more should we as humans refrain from presumption in attacking spiritual powers and authorities.

Verses for 12th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 36 & 37

Psalms 36: 4

He abhorreth not evil.

The word evil refers to basic evil and human depravity, the ungodly do not hate evil. Hatred of sin is an essential feature of GOD's character, it is a fundamental aspect of CHRIST's ministry and kingship, people may be loving and kind, and do good to the poor, yet if they have no indignation against wrong, contempt for the world's immoral ways, zeal for justice or hatred of evil, they have failed to stand with GOD or follow the HOLY SPIRIT.

Galatians 5: 16 – 24. Ye that love the LORD, hate evil.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 33: 1 – 20

Ezekiel 33: 7

I have set thee a watchman.

GOD emphasizes again that Ezekiel was to be a faithful prophet to the people, warning them to turn from sin and to accept GOD's salvation. Today the church and its ministers must witness to all nations about salvation in JESUS CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jude 1: 16 – 25

Jude 1: 20

Building up yourselves.

Believers must defend and propagate the faith and resist false teaching in four ways.

By Building ourselves up in the Holy faith is the New Testament revelation handed down by CHRIST and the apostles. This requires study of GOD's WORD and a determined effort to know the truth and teachings of the Scripture.

Praying, looking to the HOLY SPIRIT to inspire and remaining in the sphere of GOD's love.

Verses for 14th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 40 & 41

Psalms 41: 1

Blessed is he that considereth the poor.

GOD has a special concern for the weak and helpless, and HE blesses those who show loving kindness to the needy. If we have shared GOD's pity for those in need, we can pray with confidence that GOD will deliver us when we are in trouble, protect us from harm, bless our lives, destroy the power of Satan and our enemies, and give us HIS presence and healing when we are sick.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 33: 21 – 33

Ezekiel 33: 12 – 20

In the day of his transgression, GOD judges everyone righteously and justly. The righteous who turn away from GOD and back to sin will be held accountable for their sins and will die in them if they do not repent they cannot count on their past deeds of righteousness to save them. If we turn to GOD in sincere repentance and true faith, HE will accept us, regardless of our past sins.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 1: 1 – 15

Romans 1: 5

Obedience to the faith.

Note that Paul, both at the beginning of the letter to the Romans and at the end, defines faith in terms of obedience for Paul the nature of saving faith must be determined by its initial intention, namely, a joining of one's life to GOD through JESUS CHRIST in love, devotion, gratitude and obedience.

Verses for 15th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 42 – 44

Psalms 42:2

My soul thirsteth for GOD.

As water is essential for physical life, so GOD and HIS presence are essential for satisfaction and wholeness of life. True believers will hunger and thirst for GOD and HIS grace, blessing and supernatural activity in their lives. We must not allow anything to diminish our intense desire for the things of GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 34: 1 – 16

Ezekiel 34: 11

Search my sheep, and seek them out.

Because of the failure of the leaders of Israel, the LORD Himself would take charge of His people. HE would care for His flock, Judge between the sheep, rams and goats and establish a covenant of peace with all people.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 1: 16 – 23

Romans 1: 17

Faith to faith.

The righteous person continues to live by faith, and in so doing, grows from one level of maturity to another. In this way, the believer progresses along the path of righteousness to live a rich and full spiritual life.

Verses for 16th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 45 & 46

Psalms 46: 1 & 2

Our refuge and strength.

GOD desires to be near His people with help and comfort. This psalm expresses trust and confidence in GOD during a time of instability and insecurity. The power and ability to face the uncertainties and adversities of life are found in GOD. Refuge pictures a shelter from danger, indicating that GOD is our true security in the storms of life. Strength refers to HIS might when battling our foes and includes HIS power that works in us enabling us to overcome obstacles in life.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 34: 17 – 31

Ezekiel 34: 23

I will set up one shepherd over them.

This shepherd is JESUS the MESSIAH, who came from the lineage of David. HE shepherded GOD's people as a righteous priest, prophet and king. HE is the good shepherd who laid down HIS life for the sheep.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 1:24 – 2:5

Romans 1: 32

Have pleasure in them that do them.

Paul's last word on human sinfulness is GOD's condemnation of a condition equally as serious as the practice itself, i.e. approving the immoral and perverted practice of others. Many have pleasure in sin in the sense of taking pleasure in the immoral actions of others as dramatized in books, cinema, videos and TV entertainment.

Verses for 17th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms- 47 – 49

Psalms 49: 1 – 20

Hear this.

This psalm stresses both the futility of trusting in riches and the transitory nature of all that this earth has to offer. The psalmist declares that the person whose life consists in an abundance of possessions or in worldly pleasures or fame rather than in seeking GOD and HIS kingdom, will perish on the other hand, those who live for GOD will be redeemed from the grave.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 35:1 – 36:15

Ezekiel 35: 2

Set thy face against mount Seir.

Ezekiel prophesies against Idumea or Edom (Mount Seir), the descendants of Esau. They had been perpetual enemies of Israel. After the fall of Israel and Judah, they hoped to possess the Promised Land, but all their attempts to gain the land would fail, for GOD would bring them to ruin. They would not be able to restore Israel.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 2: 6 – 24

Romans 2: 13

The doers of the Law shall be justified.

Paul does not use the term law in the sense of a system of statutes that we may obey and earn our salvation without grace. Law here stands for the will of GOD made known to the human race. Merely hearing GOD's Word avails nothing apart from faith, submission and obedience. There must be obedience to the faith, expressing itself through love.

Verses for 18th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 50 & 51

Psalms 51: 1 – 19

Have mercy upon me.

All who have sinned greatly and are overwhelmed by feelings of guilt can find forgiveness, cleansing from sin and restoration to GOD if they approach HIM in the spirit and words of this psalm. David's appeals for forgiveness and restoration are based on GOD's grace, mercy, loving kindness and compassion, on a truly broken and repentant heart and ultimately on the atoning death of CHRIST for our sins.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 36: 16 – 38

Ezekiel 36: 26 & 27

A new heart.

GOD promises to restore Israel not only physically, but also spiritually, this restoration involves giving them a new heart that is as tender as flesh so that they will respond to GOD's WORD. Also, GOD will put HIS HOLY SPIRIT within them. This WORD of GOD encompasses the new covenant established by CHRIST.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 2:25 – 3:8

Romans 2: 29

Circumcision...of the heart, in the spirit.

This is GOD's work of grace in the hearts of believers whereby they participate in the divine nature and become capable of living a pure life separated from sin for the glory of GOD. Thus holy living becomes the outward sign that we are under the new covenant.

Verses for 21st November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 57 and 59: 1 – 4 & 9 – 17

Psalms 57: 1

In the shadow of THY wings.

The shadow of GOD's wings represents HIS love, protection, strength and gracious presence. We take refuge under those wings when we come to HIM in prayer and rely on HIM in faith. In the shadow of HIS wings are protected from everything that would work contrary to HIS purpose for our lives.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 38: 1 – 23

Ezekiel 38: 2

Gog.

Gog was king of the land of Magog and chief ruler over Rosh, Meshech and Tubal are the names of the sons of Japheth, thus the future battle described here will be led by a descendant of Japheth.

Ezekiel 38: 5

Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya.

These countries are allies of Gog's armies. Persia, Cush, Put and Togarmah.

Ezekiel 38: 21 & 22

Every man's sword.

GOD will confuse the invading army so that some nations will turn against their allies. HE will also directly destroy the armies by earthquakes, disease and other catastrophic events.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 3:27 – 4:6

Romans 3: 31

We establish the law.

Salvation in CHRIST does not mean that the law has no value. In fact justification by faith upholds the law according to its right purpose and function. Through reconciliation with GOD and through the regenerating work of the HOLY SPIRIT, the believer becomes capable of honouring and obeying GOD's moral law.

Romans 4: 5

Faith is counted for righteousness.

Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness. The saving faith of the Christian is treated as equivalent to righteousness in regard to its effect.

Verses for 22nd November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 60, 61 and 119: 161 – 176

Psalms 119: 176

I have gone astray like a lost sheep.

The writer cannot mean that he has departed from the LORD and rejected HIS Word, for he has declared the contrary over and over in this psalm his concluding words remain, I do not forget THY commandments. The psalmist here may simply be acknowledging that he is prone to error apart from being guided by GOD's Word.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 39: 1 – 29

Prophecy against Gog.

This chapter reiterates GOD's judgement against Gog and portrays the total annihilation of Israel's enemy. It emphasizes the miraculous intervention of GOD on behalf of His people.

Ezekiel 39:6

They shall know that I am the LORD.

By destroying the armies of the invading evil nations, the LORD will manifest HIS glory so that everyone will know that HE is LORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 4: 7 – 16

Romans 4: 16

It is of faith.

Believers are saved by believing the promise of GOD, which means it is by grace. Two Biblical truths about the nature of saving faith should be noted. While one is saved through faith alone, the faith that saves is not alone, James states faith if it hath not works is dead. Paul says it is faith which worketh by love. Saving faith is a faith so vital that it cannot avoid the expressions of love for the Obedience to the SAVIOUR and of service to others.

Verses for 23rd November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 62 – 65

Psalms 62: 1

From HIM cometh my salvation.

This psalm expresses a fundamental truth by which every believer should live. In times of trouble, affliction or opposition from enemies, we should turn to GOD as our ultimate refuge and deliverer. Every believer who trusts in GOD should be able to say, I will allow no trouble or crisis or suffering to shake my confidence in GOD. Not only my salvation comes from HIM, but HE himself is my rock, my salvation and my refuge.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 40: 1 – 27

The visions of GOD.

The vision of the temple came to Ezekiel in 573 B.C., 25 years after his exile had begun. Its purpose was to encourage the people that there would be a full restoration of GOD's glory in the future, resulting in an anointing and blessing that would endure forever.

Ezekiel 40: 5

The house.

This house refers to the temple, the house of GOD. There are three main interpretations of Ezekiel's temple vision

- 1) A symbolic temple picturing the eternal state described in Revelation 21 and 22.
- 2) A symbolic temple describing the blessing of the millennium kingdom.
- 3) A future literal temple that will be built during the millennium kingdom.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 4:17 – 5: 5

Romans 5: 5

The love of GOD...in our hearts.

Christians experience the love of GOD in their hearts through the HOLY SPIRIT especially in times of trouble. The verb 'shed abroad' is a present perfect tense in the indicative mood, expressing an existing condition from a prior action, the SPIRIT continues to flood our hearts with love that sustains us in suffering and assures us that our hope for future is not illusory CHRIST's return for us is sure.

Verses for 24th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 66 & 67

Psalms 67: 1 & 2

GOD... Bless us ...That THY way may be known upon earth.

This psalm reminds us of GOD's plan for HIS people when HE first called Abraham. GOD chose this man so that through his descendants, GOD and HIS redemptive love might become known to the nations of the world. HE intended that Israel's reception and enjoyment of HIS grace and blessings would cause the heathen nations to take notice, so that they might praise HIM and accept HIS ways of truth and righteousness.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 40: 28 – 49

Burnt offerings offer.

The issue of resuming animal sacrifices after the final and ultimate sacrifice of CHRIST has perplexed interpreters. Some insist that Ezekiel's temple with its sacrifices cannot be literal because JESUS atoning sacrifice fulfilled and made absolute Old Testament sacrifices.

Perhaps Ezekiel was describing in Old Testament terms the benefits of CHRIST's atoning sacrifice, which avails for all time. Some believe that the sacrifices will be literal, offered as memorials of the sacrifice of CHRIST on the cross.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 5: 6 – 14

Romans 5: 10

Saved by his life.

The believer's salvation lies in CHRIST's blood and HIS resurrection life, whereby the believer is forgiven and reconciled to GOD. This experience is initial salvation. The believer continues to be saved by a living faith and union with the living CHRIST.

If GOD loved us enough to send HIS Son to die for us while we were enemies, how much more, now that we are HIS children, HE will make every provision to save us from the wrath to come through our present faith in HIS Son.

Verses for 25th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 68: 1 – 20, 24 – 35 and 69: 1 – 21, 29 – 36

Psalms 69: 1 – 4

Save me, O GOD.

This expression of the oppressive sufferings of a righteous person also captures the feelings of the SAVIOUR as HE underwent persecution from the ungodly and experienced the agony of the cross. Similarly, any righteous believer who undergoes great trouble and sees no way out may cry to GOD, confident that as GOD eventually delivered CHRIST from all HIS suffering, HE will likewise deliver HIS children at HIS own appointed time.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 41: 1 – 26

Ezekiel 41: 1

The temple.

The temple Ezekiel saw is somewhat different than Solomon's temple. Nothing is said about the altar of incense, the candle stick or the Ark of the Covenant. The reason for the difference is not explained.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 5: 15 – 21

Romans 5: 15

Much more the grace of GOD.

Paul stresses the supreme adequacy of the redemption provided by JESUS CHRIST to undo the effects of fall. This is the real point of the passage that the trespass of Adam brought forth sin, condemnation and death, the fruit if CHRIST's life brought forth grace, justification and life.

Verses for 26th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 70 & 71

Psalms 71: 9

In time of old age.

When strength is failing and the troubles of aging are more evident, we should recall GOD's guidance in days gone by and look to HIM as our protector, helper and sustainer for the last days of life. And at the hour of death when physical strength fails, we should know that HE will not forsake us but will be near as HE brings us by the holy angels into HIS heavenly presence.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 42: 1 – 20

Chapter Summary

In this chapter are described the priests' chambers, their use, and the dimensions of the holy mount on which the temple stood. These chambers were many. JESUS said, In MY FATHER's house are many mansions: in HIS house on earth there are many; multitudes, by faith, are lodging in HIS sanctuary, and yet there is room. These chambers, though private, were near the temple. Our religious services in our chambers, must prepare for public devotions, and further us in improving them, as our opportunities are.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 6: 1 – 14

Romans 6: 4

Buried with HIM by baptism.

Water baptism for the Christian represents his or her burial and resurrection with CHRIST, but it is more. When accomplished by true faith, baptism is part of our rejection of sin and our commitment to CHRIST, resulting in a continual flow of grace and divine life to us. Baptism means identifying with CHRIST in HIS death and burial in order that we may live in union with HIS resurrected life. As surely we who exercise true saving faith in HIM will walk in newness of life.

Verses for 28th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 74 & 75

The church silences her own complaints. What GOD had done for His people, as their King of old, encouraged them to depend on HIM. It was the LORD's doing, none besides could do it. This providence was food to faith and hope, to support and encourage in difficulties. The GOD of Israel is the GOD of nature. HE that is faithful to HIS covenant about the day and the night, will never cast off those whom HE has chosen. We have as much reason to expect affliction, as to expect night and winter. But we have no more reason to despair of the return of comfort, than to despair of day and summer. And in the world above we shall have no more changes.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 1: 1 – 18

Ecclesiastes 1: 2

All is vanity.

This verse states the theme of Ecclesiastes, i.e., all our activities on earth are meaningless and purposeless when carried out apart from GOD's Will, HIS fellowship and HIS living activity in our lives. The book also emphasizes that creation itself is subject to vanity and corruption. The author's concern is to destroy the false hopes that people place in a completely secular world, he wants them to see the solemn facts of evil, injustice and death, and to realise that life apart from GOD has no meaning and cannot produce true happiness.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 9: 1 – 13

Romans 9: 2

I have...continual sorrow in my heart.

Paul's ceaseless concern and sorrow over those without CHRIST should be every Christian's attitude. This same attitude of grief and willingness to suffer for the salvation of others existed in Moses and JESUS.

Verses for 29th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 76 & 77

Psalms 76: 10

The wrath of man shall praise thee.

GOD's wrath expressed in judgement against oppressors of His people brings HIM praise from those who have been delivered.

The wrath of the wicked can provide the occasion for GOD to rescue HIS own and to accomplish great things on their behalf e.g. Pharaoh's wrath against Israel became GOD's opportunity to demonstrate HIS miraculous power in delivering them from Egypt.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 2: 1 – 17

Ecclesiastes 2: 1 – 11

Pleasure.....this also is vanity.

Solomon relates how he tried pleasure, wealth and cultural delights in an effort to find fulfilment and the good life, yet these things did not result in true happiness life was still void of satisfaction.

We can only find lasting peace, fulfilment and joy if we look for our happiness in GOD and HIS will.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 9: 14 – 24

Romans 9: 18

Whom he will, he hardeneth.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is at times attributed to GOD and at other times to Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh, whose heart was already in opposition to GOD, received GOD's appropriate judgement. When he resisted GOD's will, GOD responded by hardening him even more.

Thus GOD's hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not arbitrary. GOD acted according to HIS righteous principle of hardening all who reject HIM.

Verses for 30th November 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 78: 1 – 39

Psalms 78: 8

Set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with GOD.

No generation of believers will inherit the kingdom of GOD in all its saving purpose and power if they fail to prepare their hearts to seek GOD and to discern HIS WORD and righteous ways. On the other hand, people whose hearts are set steadfastly toward GOD and who separate themselves from the corrupt world and all unholy compromise will know that praiseworthy deeds, strength and wonder of their GOD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 2:18 – 3:8

Ecclesiastes 2: 24 – 26

From the hand of GOD.

The author reaches two conclusions- Eating, drinking and working- in fact, all activities in life, can bring satisfaction only if one has personal relationship with GOD.

Only HE enables us to find enjoyment in life. GOD gives true wisdom, knowledge and joy to those who seek HIM.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 8

To everything there is season.

GOD has an eternal plan that includes the purposes and activities of every person on earth. We must give ourselves to GOD as holy sacrifices, allow the HOLY SPIRIT to accomplish GOD's plan for us, and be careful not to be out of GOD's will and miss HIS timing and purpose for our lives.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 9: 25 – 33

Romans 9: 22 & 23

Vessels of wrath...vessels of mercy.

The phrase vessels of wrath refers to those being prepared for eternal destruction. People become vessels of wrath by their own sinful acts and rebellion, as Paul stated earlier. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath. However, objects of wrath may still repent, turn to GOD and receive His mercy. The phrase vessels of mercy refers to those both Jew and Gentile, who believe and follow JESUS CHRIST.

Romans 9: 32

They sought it not by faith.

The spiritual condition of the majority of Israel was due to their unwillingness to submit to

GOD's plan of salvation through faith in CHRIST. Many Gentiles, however, accepted GOD's way of salvation and attained the righteousness that is by faith.

ST. JOHN'S
BIBLE STUDY
2022- VERSES
DECEMBER

Verses for 1st December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 79: 1 – 5; 8 – 13 and 80

Psalms 80: 1 – 19

Give ear, O shepherd of Israel.

In this psalm of intercession, the psalmist pleads for the revival and restoration of GOD's people to their place of full blessing and favour with GOD. The psalm depicts people whose divine protection has collapsed, laying them open to assaults from outside. They have eaten the bread of tears and are objects of derision. In great humility, the psalmist repeatedly intercedes for GOD to show HIS favour once again and to cause HIS face to shine upon the remnant who call on HIS name.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 3: 9 – 22

Ecclesiastes 3: 13

The gift of GOD.

The ability to enjoy life and live it properly is a gift from GOD that comes only when we are brought into a right relationship with HIM and sincerely submit ourselves to HIM as our LORD and GOD. HE then gives us joy in what we do.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 10: 1 – 13

Romans 10: 9 & 10

Confess....believe in thine heart.

The essentials of salvation are summarized here. They centre on belief in the Lordship of CHRIST and HIS bodily resurrection. Faith involves not only believing the truth about JESUS with our mind, but also responding with our heart and our whole person. Faith must also involve committing oneself publicly to JESUS as LORD, both in word and deed.

Verses for 2nd December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 81 & 82

The story of Psalm 81

*Harvest time is when we pick fruit and vegetables.

The Jews had three big harvest times:

- April, when they picked *barley (to make bread)
- May, when they picked *wheat (also to make bread)
- October, when they picked grapes (to make wine). Wine is a drink with alcohol in it.

Psalm 81 is a Festival Psalm. The festival was at the time of the grape harvest. They called it “the festival of tents”. Tents were houses made of animal skins. At the festival of tents the Jews lived for a week in *tents. This taught them how they lived when GOD took them out of Egypt, hundreds of years before. It told them how good GOD was to them.

Psalm 81 taught the *Jews that, now GOD had brought them into their own land, they should have no other gods. Then HE would give them help against their enemies, as HE did in Egypt.

Some Bible students think that Psalm 81 came from the north part of Israel. Its date was about 750 years before CHRIST came to the earth.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 4: 1 – 16

Ecclesiastes 4: 1

They had no comforter.

Looking around at a world that was rejecting GOD’s ways, Solomon saw oppression everywhere, and the oppressed had no comforter. It is still true that there is much oppression in the world but comfort is available, for our GOD is the GOD of all comfort and healing while on earth and the HOLY SPIRIT was promised as another Comforter. Believers are also instructed to comfort one another.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 10: 14 – 21

Did not the Jews know that the Gentiles were to be called in? They might have known it from Moses and Isaiah. Isaiah speaks plainly of the grace and favour of GOD, as going before in the receiving of the Gentiles. Was not this our own case? Did not GOD begin in love, and make himself known to us when we did not ask after him? The patience of GOD towards provoking sinners is wonderful. The time of GOD’s patience is called a day, light as day, and fit for work and business; but limited as a day, and there is a night at the end of it. GOD’s patience makes man’s disobedience worse, and renders that the more sinful. We may wonder at the mercy of GOD, that HIS goodness is not overcome by man’s badness; we may wonder at the wickedness of man, that his badness is not overcome by GOD’s goodness. And it is a matter of joy to think that GOD has sent the message of grace to so many millions, by the wide spread of HIS gospel.

Verses for 3rd December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 84 & 85

The Story of Psalm 85

Many Bible students think that Psalm 85 comes from about 520 BC. BC means “years Before CHRIST came to the earth”. This was just after the Jews came back from their exile in Babylon.

GOD was angry with His people. They had not obeyed HIM. So he let the King of Babylon beat them and take them to Babylon. He destroyed Jerusalem. After 70 years, the king of Persia beat the king of Babylon. Cyrus, the King of Persia, sent the Jews back to Jerusalem and the places near it. This is what verses 1-3 are about. But, a few years after they returned to Jerusalem, things were bad. They had not built GOD’s house (the temple) again. There was not much rain so there was not much fruit in the fields. This meant that there was not much food. Also, some enemies attacked them. So they thought that GOD was still angry with them! They asked for HIS help to make things better, verses 4-7. Someone gave them GOD’s answer, verses 8-13.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 5: 1 – 20

Ecclesiastes 5: 18 – 20

Rejoice in HIS labour, this is the gift of GOD.

When GOD allows us to enjoy our work and to gain in a just manner more than we need for our necessities, we must consider that what we have is a gift from GOD to be used to help others and to advance GOD’s cause upon the earth.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 11: 1 – 10

Romans 11: 5

The election of grace.

This phrase refers to the gracious design of GOD in sending HIS Son into the world to save all who believe in HIM. Election proceeds from the saving purpose of GOD before the foundation of the world. Since the coming of the SAVIOUR and HIS death and resurrection, this choosing includes all who believe and obey CHRIST and the gospel. Thus both GOD and humans are active in election. The goal of this choosing by grace is to be holy and without blame in GOD’s sight.

Verses for 5th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 89: 1 – 8; 19 – 52

The Story of Psalm 89

GOD made special promises to David. They are in 2 Samuel 7: 12 – 17. The important promise is that someone from David's family would always be king. Ethan wrote Psalm 89 many years after this. He called it a *maskil, a psalm that teaches us something.

In the psalm, Ethan sings about a problem. GOD had promised that there would always be a king in David's family. But now there was no Jewish king! The army from Babylon had beaten the Jewish army. They took the Jewish king to Babylon and the King of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) became king of the Jews. How could anyone explain this?

Christians have sung this psalm on Christmas Day for many centuries. This is because JESUS is a king from David's family, he will always be king and he was born at Christmas. That is how we explain the problem ... but Ethan did not know this!

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 6: 1 – 7: 9

Ecclesiastes 7: 1

A good name is better than precious ointment.

A good name means more than good social standing, it represents genuine goodness of character. Such a person has a more permanent influence on others than the person who is concerned only about social status.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 11: 11 – 24

Romans 11: 14

Provoke to emulation.

It should be the desire and prayer of all churches that GOD's power and blessing will rest upon them to such a degree that some in Israel will be moved to jealousy and turn to the LORD. CHRIST's salvation and the privileges of HIS Kingdom worked out in our lives will create in Israel a desire for the same blessings.

Verses for 6th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 90 & 91

The Story of Psalm 90

These are “words that Moses prayed”. That does not mean that Moses wrote the psalm. Some Bible students think that he did. Other students think that later writers used words and ideas from “the Books of Moses”. These are the first 5 books of the Bible. This psalm makes Bible students think of Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 32. The psalm uses “words that Moses” said, from these books.

The psalm is in 4 parts. The first 3 parts are in verses 1 – 12. They could be about anybody in the world. They are true for all of us. But the last part, verses 13 – 17, is about GOD’s people, the *Jews. Something bad had happened to them. They are praying that GOD will be good to them. We do not know what this bad thing was. Some Bible students think that it was when the Babylonians beat them and took them to Babylon. We call this “the exile”. But it could be anything after the time of Moses!

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 7: 10 – 29

Consider the work of GOD.

Solomon calls for persevering toward GOD given goals while accepting the path. GOD provides, whether it seems rough or smooth. By acknowledging that GOD is at work in us, we can rejoice in prosperity and learn to trust GOD in adversity. Like the apostle Paul we must learn to be content whether living in plenty or in want.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 11: 25 – 36

Romans 11: 33 – 36

O the depth of the... knowledge of GOD

In these verses Paul expresses his awe of GOD and of the profound and humanly incomprehensible wisdom and judgements of GOD in redemptive history related to Israel as revealed in chapter 9 – 11. What else can be said than to HIM be glory forever Amen.

Verses for 7th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 92 – 94

Psalms 94: 12

Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest.

Note several facts about GOD's discipline of believers and the hardships and troubles. He allows us to suffer. They are a sign that we are GOD's children
They are assurance of GOD's love and concern for us.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 8: 1 – 17

Ecclesiastes 8: 2

Keep the king's commandment.

The king here represents human government as instituted by GOD. Government officials who follow GOD's principles of living encourage righteous living. Our LORD wants us to obey the just laws of government.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 12: 1 – 8

Romans 12: 2

Will of GOD.

By having a renewed mind and living a transformed life in CHRIST, we are able to test, prove and affirm that the will of GOD is good, desirable and perfect, transformed believers know and embrace GOD's will as the highest and best way of life.

Verses for 8th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 95 & 96

Psalms 95:8

Harden not your heart.

Those who worship and praise the LORD must also hear and obey HIS voice. To ignore the voice of the HOLY SPIRIT results in hardening of our hearts so that we become less and less sensitive to the desires of the SPIRIT, the result is GOD's wrath coming upon a church or individual.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 9: 1 – 12

Ecclesiastes 9: 7

Bread with Joy ...wine with a merry heart.

Though death comes to all and time and chance happen to everyone, we who are acceptable to GOD should not stop enjoying what GOD has given us. In the opinion of this study Bible, the wine referred to here evidently means the delightfully sweet, freshly squeezed grape juice from the harvest.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 12: 9 – 21

Romans 12: 14

Provoke.

Verses for 9th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 97 – 99

Psalms 99:6

They called upon the LORD, and HE answered them.

Although GOD is holy and to be feared, HE has come down to us through JESUS CHRIST. HE seeks our fellowship and delights in hearing and answering HIS people's prayers. Moses, Aaron and Samuel are listed as those who had a special relationship with GOD through their intercessory prayers.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 9:13 – 10:10

Ecclesiastes 10: 1

Dead flies cause the ointment...to send forth a stinking savour.

Just as dead flies by their decay spoil a batch of perfume, so a little foolishness can counteract the effects of great wisdom. Wise plans can be laid out, but someone who makes a foolish mistake can spoil them all.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 13: 1 – 10

Romans 13: 1

Subject unto the higher powers.

GOD commands Christians to obey the state, for the state as an institution is ordained and established by GOD. GOD has instituted government because in this fallen world we need certain restraints to protect us from the chaos and lawlessness that is a natural result of sin. The civil government as does all of life stands under the law of GOD. GOD has ordained the state to be an agent of justice to protect the good in society. It is duty of all believers to pray for those in authority.

Verses for 10th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 100 – 102

Psalms 101: 2

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

Faithful believers will make it a priority to please GOD in their own homes. Family relationships are where true godliness must first be manifested and developed. The very purpose and direction of our hearts must be to seek GOD in prayer, to study HIS WORD, to have family devotions, to show love and care to the members of our families, to walk blamelessly and to have eyes that refuse to look at evil.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 10:11 – 11:10

Ecclesiastes 11: 4

He that observeth the wind shall not sow.

We are in a world where always waiting for the most favourable conditions will accomplish nothing, conditions will never be ideal during this present age. We must persevere in praying and in reading our Bibles daily. We must live by GOD's righteous standards, even if everyone around us pursues sinful pleasures.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 13: 11 – 14:5

Romans 13: 14

Put ye on the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We must be so united and identified with CHRIST that we imitate HIS life as our pattern for living, adopt HIS principles, obey HIS commands and become like HIM. This calls for a complete rejection of immorality and the acts of the sinful nature.

Verses for 12th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 104: 24 – 35 and 105: 1 – 22

Man's glory is fading; GOD's glory is everlasting; creatures change, but with the Creator there is no variability. And if meditation on the glories of creation be so sweet to the soul, what greater glory appears to the enlightened mind, when contemplating the great work of redemption! There alone can a sinner perceive ground of confidence and joy in GOD. While HE with pleasure upholds all, governs all, and rejoices in all HIS works, let our souls, touched by HIS grace, meditate on and praise HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ecclesiastes 12: 1 – 14

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Dust return to the earth ...the spirit shall return unto GOD.

This verse distinguishes between the aspect of the human person that remains at the time of death and the aspect that returns to GOD.

Ecclesiastes 12:11

The words of the wise are as goads.

The wise words of truth that come from the divine shepherd act as goads to prod us on in the right way, and as nails to secure the truth in our minds. GOD's Word, therefore, is far more valuable than all the many books of human wisdom.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 14: 6 – 17

Romans 14: 13

Let us not ...judge one another.

Though we must refrain from judging each other in trivial matters, believers should consider how to encourage each other to true Christlikeness and holiness when it concerns faith, doctrine and morals. This involves sincerity evaluating correcting and rebuking one another in love and humility and when necessary, exercising church discipline.

Verses for 13th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 105:23 – 45 and 106: 1 – 18 & 42 – 48

Psalms 106: 15

But sent leanness into their soul.

We must beware of desiring and pursuing what is not in the will of GOD. When we insist on satisfying our selfish desires, GOD sometimes lets us have our own way, but with it comes spiritual leanness or physical calamity. GOD may allow us to pursue things contrary to HIS revealed will, such as an unholy vocational ambition, an unholy love affair, worldly pleasures, covetous desires or ungodly fellowship with unbelievers, but in the end those things have destructive consequences.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 1: 1 – 17

Song of Songs 1: 6

Mine own vineyard have I not kept.

The cruel brothers of the maiden forced her to guard and care for their vineyards, something she had not done for her own. This outdoor work may be the reason her skin was so dark, a marked contrast to the sun bonneted beauties of Jerusalem — though hard work had not destroyed her real beauty. In light of these verses it is hard to see how some suppose the speaker here was the daughter of Pharaoh. This Shula mite maiden was probably the princess Solomon first loved and married before he began to enter marriages for the sake of political alliances.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 14:18 – 15:6

Romans 15: 3

Christ pleased not himself.

Disregarding the convictions of others in order to please ourselves destroys GOD's work, living sacrificially so as to help others will strengthen the kingdom of GOD, Paul points to CHRIST's example who did not live for HIS own interest but for the interests of others.

Verses for 14th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 106: 19 – 48 and 107: 1 – 22

Psalms 107: 6

They cried unto the LORD.

Four times the psalmist uses this phrase, and four times it is stated that GOD delivered them out of their distresses. GOD frequently brings HIS children to a place where their own self sufficiency fails and where no human being can help, in order that they might cry out to HIM in humble and childlike faith.

Psalms 107: 13

He saved them out of their distresses.

Note that even when we have only ourselves to blame for our troubles , GOD desires to deliver us , thus , even if we are experiencing great distress , knowing that GOD may be judging us , we can still put our hope in HIS mercy and cry out to HIM in faith for HIS forgiveness and help.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 2: 1 – 17

Song of Songs 2: 1

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

The Shula mite maiden compares herself to simple wild flowers of the fields, for she is not accustomed to the luxuries of Jerusalem. Sharon is the coastal plain just south of Mount Carmel.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 15: 7 – 18

Romans 15: 17

I may glory.

It is not wrong to speak excitedly and joyfully about what GOD is doing through us if it is done in a spirit of humility and thankfulness to GOD. Glorifying should not be in mere numbers, but in a ministry that produces the obedience of faith in word and deed and that issues from a genuine work and manifestation of the SPIRIT in power.

Verses for 15th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 107: 23 – 43 and Psalm 108

The story of Psalm 107

The soldiers of Babylon took the Jews away from their own country. 70 years later, they came home again. Then they wrote this psalm. They were prisoners in Babylon, (verses 10-16). Prisoners are people who are in a prison or not free. They had done what was wrong, (verses 17-22). That is why they were not free. But the LORD (another name for God) brought them home again, (verses 4-9). He redeemed them, or saved them from their enemies. The journey was difficult, (verses 23-32). So they must tell the LORD how good he was, (verses 33-43). Babylon was a country east of where the Jews lived.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 3: 1 – 11

Song of Songs 3: 11

Go forth.....behold King Solomon.

Because of the intervention of Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and the prophet Nathan, Solomon was brought out and publicly anointed king. The day of his espousals is his wedding day. It appears that when Solomon was brought out and anointed King he was already married and was wearing a crown with which his mother crowned him in view also are the covenant promises given by GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 15: 19 – 33

Romans 15: 20

Not where CHRIST was named.

Paul's policy of ministry was missionary-centered. He chose to direct his labours in areas where the gospel was and had not been preached sufficiently, thereby enabling those who had not heard to have opportunity to accept CHRIST.

Verses for 16th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 109: 1 – 5; 21 – 31 and 110

Psalms 110: 1–7

The LORD said unto my LORD.

This psalm speaks of the LORDSHIP of the MESSIAH, HIS priesthood, HIS destruction of the wicked and HIS reign on earth. It clearly prophesies about JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS applied verse 1 to Himself in making HIS claim to deity and the apostle Peter quoted verse 1 to emphasize CHRIST's LORDSHIP.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 4: 1 – 16

Song of Songs 4: 7

Thou art all fair ...there is no spot in thee.

Everything about the Shulamite was beautiful and without blemish. Spot can also refer to moral blemishes, thus she is physically and morally pure.

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 16: 1 – 16

Romans 16: 1

Phoebe.

Phoebe was probably the one who delivered this letter to the Romans. She was a servant or woman deacon in the church at Cenchrea who ministered to the poor, the sick and the needy, as well as assisted missionaries such as Paul. Paul's greetings to no less than eight women in this chapter indicate that woman performed distinguished service in the churches.

Verses for 19th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 118 & 119: 1 – 24

Psalms 118: 22 & 23

The stone which the builders refused.

JESUS applied these verses to HIMSELF because HE was thrown aside by His own people but afterwards became the principal stone of GOD's new house, the church.

Psalms 118: 24

This is the day.

The context shows the day referred to here is a day of salvation or redemption.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 6: 1 – 13

Song of Songs 6: 4

Terrible as an army with banners.

The bridegroom regarded his darling to be as awe inspiring as an army with banners, others take this to mean as awesome as a host of stars.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 1: 1 – 25

Luke 1: 15

Filled with the HOLY GHOST.

Notice the outcome of John's Spirit-filled and ministry. Through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, his preaching convict's people of their sins, brings them to repentance and turns them back to GOD.

Verses for 20th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 25 – 72

Psalms 119: 57

THOU art my portion.

The psalmist's life centres on and around GOD and HIS WORD. If we desire to know GOD and HIS love we must abide in HIS WORD, seek HIS favour and HIS grace with our whole hearts, hasten to keep HIS WORD, pray often, associate with those who fear HIM, look for HIS love and pray to know and do HIS will.

We cannot remain in CHRIST without abiding in HIS WORD.

OLD TESTAMENT

Song of Songs 7: 1 – 13

Song of Songs 7: 13

Mandrakes.

These herbs were considered to be an aphrodisiac.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 1: 26 – 45

Luke 1: 28

Thou art highly favoured.

While Mary was favoured above all women in being chosen as the mother of JESUS, the New Testament writers never indicate that she is to be worshipped, prayed to or given special titles. Mary merits our respect but only her SON merits our worship.

CSI Almanac – Daily Bible Reading – 21st December 2022

Mar Thoma Church Day

Collect: Almighty God, in Jesus You called disciples and made them a community of faith. We specially thank You for the Mar Thoma Church in India with whom we are united in faith and witness. Following the example of Thomas Your apostle to India ,may they continue to be Your instruments of grace , mercy , peace and justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity with the Holy Spirit , now and ever. Amen.

Verses for 22nd December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 119: 121 – 160

Psalms 119: 151

THOU art near, O LORD.

The psalmist experiences GOD's nearness in times of trouble because he loves the LORD and is devoted to meditate on HIS WORD.

LORD is near to all who love HIM and HIS WORD.

If you have trouble in your life, take your Bible and let GOD's SPIRIT and WORD revive your relationship with HIM.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ruth 1: 1 – 22

Ruth 1: 1

When the judges ruled.

The book of Ruth describes events in the life of a righteous Israelite family during the time of the judges. The setting of the first 18 verses is the land of Moab, the remaining of the book's setting is in or near Bethlehem of Judah.

The book reveals that during the pathetic moral and spiritual apostasy of that time, there was a godly remnant that continued to love and honour GOD.

The book emphasizes that GOD is active in the lives of those who remain faithful to HIM and HIS WORD.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 1: 67 – 80

Luke 1: 75

Holiness and righteousness.

The ultimate aim of our redemption is to be delivered from Satan's kingdom in order to serve GOD in holiness and righteousness before HIM, all the days of our life.

Every child of GOD must aim at a life of holiness and righteousness in an evil world.

This holy life is before HIM in GOD's presence.

Verses for 23rd December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 120 – 125

Psalms 121: 2

My help cometh from the LORD.

Family, friends or wealth must never be viewed as our ultimate source for meeting our needs physically and spiritually. We must trust in HIM with all our hearts and seek HIM for grace to help in time of need.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ruth 2: 1 – 23

Ruth 2: 12

Under the wings THOU art come to trust.

This is the key verse in the book of Ruth.

Even in the midst of great apostasy during the period of the judges, GOD watched over those who clung to HIM with sincere trust and committed faith.

The story of Ruth is the story of GOD's providence and provision in the lives of all who trust in HIM and follow HIS ways. As Abraham responded to the LORD's call in faith, so Ruth's trust in the LORD caused her to leave her country and kindred in order to follow HIS redemptive purpose.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 2: 1 – 14

Luke 2: 11

A SAVIOUR.....CHRIST the LORD.

At HIS birth JESUS is called a SAVIOUR. As SAVIOUR, HE has come to deliver us from sin.

Satan's domain the ungodly world, fear death and the condemnation of our transgressions.

The SAVIOUR is also CHRIST the LORD. HE has been anointed as the MESSIAH of GOD and the LORD who rules over HIS people. No person can have JESUS as SAVIOUR while not submitting to HIS LORDSHIP.

Verses for 26th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 136 – 138

Psalms 138: 2

I bow down towards YOUR holy temple and give thanks to YOUR name for YOUR steadfast love and YOUR faithfulness, for YOU have exalted YOUR name and YOUR WORD above everything.

Verses for 27th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 139 – 141

Psalms 141: 1 – 4

Those that know how to value GOD's gracious presence, will be the more fervent in their prayers. Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice, it is the offering up the soul and its best affections. While we live in an evil world, we have need to pray that we may neither be drawn nor driven to do anything sinful.

Psalms 141: 3

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth – Keep the door of my lips

David didn't want the same mouth that prayed as if it were incense to be used for lies or any evil thing. He asked God to keep watch over the door of my lips, so that he would not say evil or foolish things.

That I may not say anything rashly, unadvisedly, improperly. That my lips or mouth may not open except when it is proper and right; when something good and true is to be said. Nothing can be more proper than "this" prayer; nothing more desirable than that GOD should keep us from saying what we ought not to say.

Psalms 141: 5 – 10

Those who slighted the WORD of GOD before, will be glad of it when in affliction, for that opens the ear to instruction. When the world is bitter, the WORD is sweet. Let us lift our prayer unto GOD. Let us entreat HIM to rescue us from the snares of Satan, and of all the workers of iniquity.

OLD TESTAMENT

Lamentations 1: 1 – 22

The Book of Lamentations is the collection of five poems or songs mourning the conquest of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah.

Lamentations is a remarkable written work, because the first four of the five poems are written as acrostics. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used in succession to begin the lines and sections of those songs.

"The use of the alphabet symbolizes that the completeness—'the A to Z'—of grief is being expressed.

Lamentations both reflected and gave words to the deliberate choice of the Jewish people to remember and mourn their fallen city and kingdom.

Writing after the catastrophe of Jerusalem's defeat, Jeremiah thought of the contrast between happy, prosperous Jerusalem and the lonely, empty, conquered city after the Babylonian conquest. Once she was full of people, now she is empty. Once she was great among the nations, now she is like a slave.

Jeremiah understood that this catastrophe was not due to fate, human cruelty, or blind cycles of history. It was because Judah had sinned so long and so deep that it was GOD's will to

afflict her with severe correction. It was because of the great sins of the people of the city over many generations.

NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 2: 41 – 52 and Matthew 1: 1 – 6

Luke 2: 41 – 52

Know ye not that I ought to be in my Father's house; at my Father's work; I must be about my Father's business.

Herein is an example; for it becomes the children of GOD, in conformity to CHRIST, to attend their HEAVENLY FATHER'S business, and make all other concerns give way to it. Though HE was the SON of GOD, yet HE was subject to HIS earthly parents; how then will the foolish and weak sons of men answer it, who are disobedient to their parents?

Things to Learn from this passage:

- 1) It is for the honour of the LORD that children should attend on public worship.
- 2) When someone is lost, they must turn back again to CHRIST and recover their lost acquaintance with CHRIST.
- 3) Young persons should seek the knowledge of Divine truth, attend the ministry of the gospel, and ask such questions of their elders and teachers as may tend to increase their knowledge.
- 4) Those who seek CHRIST in sorrow, shall find HIM with the greater joy.

Verses for 28th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 142 – 144

Psalms 144

This psalm brings together war and peace—the destruction of GOD’s enemies and the protection of GOD’s people—at the same time. When we look at the history of redemption, at the Red Sea, Noah’s ark and the worldwide flood—there is both the destruction of GOD’s enemies and the preservation of GOD’s people.

Spiritual warfare is part of our daily lives. As Believers in JESUS, when we made our allegiance to HIM, the enemy put a bounty on our head. He is out to kill and destroy. He is out to bring down anyone who is a genuine Follower.

We learn that our weaponry is not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4), and our enemy is not flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). Between here and heaven, there is a battle to wage. Every Christian must face his Goliath. Our enemies are demonic powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness that dominates. The enemy of our soul’s wages war against GOD’s Followers and has done so since the Garden.

Yet, we are not alone. We have the One who conquered death and destruction and even right now is interceding to the Father on our behalf. Our Captain, our JESUS, is right beside in all the battles of which we face. We can only battle in the power of HIS might, in the strength that HE gives us. If we attempt to take on these terrifying enemies in our own strength, we will most certainly be lost.

In Ephesians 6:10-18, the Apostle Paul outlines a six-piece set of armour, our spiritual defence against the enemy of our souls. Towards the end of his life, the Apostle Paul claimed that he had “fought a good fight.”

While it is true that GOD fights for us, HE also teaches us to fight. If we never faced a battle, we’d never learn to lean on GOD for strength and protection. From the moment we put our faith in GOD for salvation, we are to depend on HIM for everything.

As Believers, our weapon is the Sword of the SPIRIT. This weapon is our defence against the enemies’ lies, tactics and attacks. There is not a day that should go by where we don’t pick up our Sword, the WORD of GOD, and use it throughout. Our training, the training by God as David would pen, “trains our hands for war, fingers for battle” requires the very powerful WORD of GOD to be held firmly in our hands as it has been placed in our heart for that day. David refers to the LORD as his strength, fortress, high tower, shield, and deliverer. GOD’s loving-kindness, HIS being our Fortress and Deliver, our Shield; all words used when considering a battle, is the very character of GOD we can cling to. When we continue to undergo training of HIM, these aspects of GOD become present in our lives. These are the aspects of GOD that bring determination and hope for the victory. These are the places we can take cover in because they are impenetrable aspects of GOD and what HE brings.

We are in training. GOD is directing us each and every day. Let us be diligent in following the way HE prepares us.

OLD TESTAMENT

Lamentations 2: 1 – 22

GOD expresses HIS hatred for sin, GOD was simply wanting the hearts and obedience of the

people. It's important for us to remember that although GOD hates sin, it does not cloud HIS compassion for us. However, when we choose to sin we are working against the LORD. GOD in HIS patience had tried throughout the centuries to woo the people to loving HIM through obedience. But finally, enough was enough and GOD withdrew HIS protection and let the Babylonians invade the land, destroy the Temple-its walls and furnishings and cart the people into captivity. Jerusalem once a glowing city was burned. All sources of security the Israelites had depended on were now in rubble or simply had vanished. The city gates were which protected them were sunk into the ground. The leadership of kings and princes were gone. The guidance of the Law was now silent; their enemies triumphed over them and neighbours mocked at them. The prophet's voices closed as visions ceased; false prophets deceived people and many perished by the sword, calamities and famine.

Jeremiah as a watcher of all these events was in tears. The horrors of all that had been forewarned had come to pass.

Sadly all too often we can be like the Israelites. We get duped into a false security. These things can be evident in relationships, jobs, bank accounts, our own abilities. When we put too much trust in such things, we too may see them crumble and disintegrate. But that is not the only thing that falls away – our relationship with CHRIST suffers as we drift further from HIS calling on our lives.

Let us fear GOD, and walk humbly before HIM, and take heed lest we fall.

Lamentations 2: 11 – 12

Jeremiah had exhausted his capacity for weeping and sorrowing over the destruction of his people; he felt drained emotionally. He observed small children and infants fainting in the streets for lack of food and drink. They were dying in their mothers' arms for lack of nourishment. Jerusalem was a place of starvation.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 1: 7 – 17

Matthew begins his account of the life of JESUS CHRIST with the record of the lineage of JESUS from the patriarch Abraham.

The fact that women are mentioned in a genealogy of that day and in a patriarchal culture is exceptional. Tamar and Rahab are Canaanites; Ruth is a Moabite; Bathsheba (whom Matthew dares not even identify by name) may be a Hittite (at least by marriage). This could very well support the main point that JESUS fulfils GOD's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations. And all these women were associated with sin—though we should be careful to note that it was mostly not their own sin! Tamar was forced by Judah's sin into humiliating herself. Rahab, though a prostitute, distinguishes herself by her faith and by risking her life to side with the LORD over her own countrymen. Ruth was a Moabite, which might entail guilt-by-association as descendants of Lot. And Bathsheba was the victim of David's sin, and by no means an equal participant.

Matthew's family history of JESUS correlates well with what the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in CHRIST JESUS. If you belong to CHRIST, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The lineage presented here gives us hope and confidence that GOD works through every person. Whether saint or sinner GOD's plan is made manifest. It did not need a perfect family history to bring about the MESSIAH.

It is a testimony and a testament of how GOD keeps HIS great promises, and shows CHRIST's right to the Kingship of the world through the lineage of David.

The King Has Come," to which we must respond, my GOD and my King.

GOD is the GOD of promises. GOD made promises, and GOD keeps HIS promises! This means for you too! We all have hope beyond all hope, reason, and purpose! We have faith that is deeper and wider than we could ever imagine, a gift that we did not earn or deserve. JESUS the King, who was also the son of David and the son of Abraham, fulfilled that promise and demonstrated this faith! In addition, when you accepted HIM, you became part of the promise and faith fulfilled.

We can have the faith and confidence that GOD does keep HIS word!

· We can trust HIM with all of our needs, worries, and problems, even if we do not understand what GOD is doing!

Verses for 29th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 145 & 146

Psalms 146

Psalm 146 begins a series of five final songs in the Book of Psalms, and the five are known as the Hallelujah Psalms. “

In the earlier psalms, we have studied the writers' grief, shames, sins, doubts, and fears. We have witnessed the people of GOD in their defeats and victories, their ups and downs in life. We have encountered rebellious words and struggling faith. All this is behind us now.

In these final psalms every word is praise.”

The Psalmist praises GOD and instructs others too to praise GOD with one's entire life and being. The LORD shall reign for ever to all generations and to receive GOD's blessing always praise HIM, every day. Praising GOD must be the determined choice of those who know GOD's love through JESUS CHRIST in whatever trials or joys we may find ourselves. The LORD is to be praised, but man is to be questioned. Even the highest among men – princes or men of greatest wealth and power or influential – are not worthy of our confidence. We are sure to be disappointed when we put our trust in whom there is no help, since man is subject to death and even his brilliant plans perish.

GOD never disappoints the one who hopes in HIM, hence we have to place our confidence in GOD and not man. Quiet trust is among the sweetest music that reaches the heart of GOD; and when we put our trust in man, we rob GOD of HIS glory; we are giving to others the confidence which belongs alone to HIM.

To receive GOD's blessing we need to trust GOD. When we trust in the LORD as the Creator of all things, we realize HE has power to help us and deliver us. GOD can also be trusted because HE is a moral, upright GOD, unchangingly true. HE champions justice for the oppressed. HE is true to HIS own nature, true to the relationships which HE has assumed, true to HIS covenant, true to HIS WORD, true to HIS SON. HE keeps true, and is the keeper of all that is true. GOD also cares for those who are poor, afflicted and needy. For the hungry HE provides food and for prisoners HE provides freedom. In all this we see a GOD of power, holiness, care, justice, compassion and love. This is a GOD who can be trusted with confidence.

OLD TESTAMENT

Lamentations 3: 1 – 48

The prophet relates the gloomier and discouraging part of his experience, and how he found support and relief. In the time of his trial the LORD had become terrible to him.

The struggle between unbelief and faith is often very severe. The more the prophet looked on the desolations, the more he was grieved. Even as Jerusalem was literally besieged, so Jeremiah (and countless others) felt themselves surrounded by bitterness and woe and slowly strangled by GOD. In their depths of affliction, they were surrounded, hedged, and blocked. What a figure to express disgust, pain, and the consequent incapacity of taking food for the support of life; a man, instead of bread, being obliged to eat small pebbles till all his teeth are broken to pieces by endeavouring to grind them. It refers to the type of bread made from the sweepings of the granary floor that Jeremiah must have received toward the end of the siege.

It is evident that in the preceding verses there is a bitterness of complaint against the bitterness of adversity that is not becoming to man when under the chastising hand of GOD; and, while indulging this feeling, all hope fled. Here we find a different feeling; he humbles himself under the mighty hand of GOD, and then his hope revives.

Jeremiah and many others had seen affliction, and they knew that it came as GOD's discipline. He recognized the necessity of the suffering. When things are right with our relationship with GOD, He is our refuge and defence in affliction. It was good for Jeremiah's soul to sink, to find its bottom point so that he could build on the right foundation.

In a magnificent expression of faith in the unfailing mercies of GOD, the writer looks to the distant future with renewed hope.

They remembered that as beat down and defeated the people of Jerusalem and Judah were, they were not yet completely consumed. There was still a remnant, and remnant with a promise of restoration. Wherever GOD leaves life, HE leaves hope.

Even in the severity of correction GOD's people endured, there was evidence of HIS compassions. There was rich comfort in realizing that the tender affection of GOD was not completely spent; these compassions were new every morning.

Each dawning day gives mankind hope in fresh mercies and compassions from GOD. We need a constant supply and GOD has promised to send them without fail. No matter how bad the past day was, GOD's people can look to the new morning with faith and hope. These mercies are always new because they come from GOD.

All this made Jeremiah consider the great faithfulness of GOD; that HE never fails in sending HIS mercies and compassions. Even in their catastrophe, GOD was faithful. HE faithfully announced HIS judgments and performed them, and GOD would prove to be just as faithful in HIS promised restoration.

Jeremiah found the key to satisfaction—finding one's portion in the LORD. Whatever measure he was to receive, whatever inheritance, whatever future, it would all be found in the LORD.

When GOD does allow or send HIS judgments, HE does not do it with a happy heart. It is no pleasure to GOD to afflict men. HE takes no delight in our pain and misery: yet, like a tender and intelligent parent, HE uses the rod; not to gratify HIMSELF, but to profit and save us.

Obedience to God is best learned when young. If GOD disciplines us when we are young, it is to train us for a fruitful future.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 1: 18 – 25 & 2: 1 – 6

Matthew 1: 18 – 25

Joseph is a model of faith and obedience. We are called to look beyond our own understanding and knowledge and accept things in faith like Joseph did.

GOD is revealing to Joseph HIS plan to bring the promised SAVIOUR into the world. Joseph is to name the child "JESUS" (Iesous in Greek). The Greek name is derived from the Hebrew Yehoshuah (Joshua in English), which means "Yahweh is salvation" or "Yahweh saves."

JESUS had to possess humanity to be the Saviour. HE was both GOD and man. HE died in His humanity, not His deity. As GOD, HE had eternal life and eternal life cannot die.

The SON had to maintain both deity and humanity to maintain HIS right as mediator between GOD and man. JESUS represented both GOD and man in salvation. It was the physical birth

of HIS humanity that qualified HIM to represent man. HE was born without a sin capacity and HE never committed an act of sin, qualifying HIM to die for our sins.

Verses for 30th December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 147 & 148

Psalms 147

This psalm tells us something about GOD's love and HIS power. Here, power does not only mean that HE rules everything. It also means that HE is very, very strong.

It is the second of the 5 *Hallelujah Psalms*, 146-150. "Hallelujah" means "*praise the *LORD". This means "tell the LORD that HE is very great". In verse 1, "praises" are words that say how great somebody is. "*LORD" is the *covenant name for GOD. A *covenant is when two people (or groups of people) agree. Here, GOD agrees to love and give help to His people. His people agree to love and obey GOD. In verse 5 is another word, "LORD". This is not the same Hebrew word as "*LORD". Hebrew is the language that the *Jews spoke. They wrote the psalms in Hebrew. "*LORD" translates a Hebrew word that means "master" or "someone with authority".*

There are three parts in this psalm:

- **Verses 1 – 6:** GOD's power in Israel and Babylon and in the skies above;
- **Verses 7 – 11:** GOD's power on the earth with plants and animals;
- **Verses 12 – 20:** GOD's power in giving His people what they need.

We do not know who wrote Psalm 147. But many Bible students think that it was after the *exile. The note on verses 2 and 3 explains the *exile. The *Jews used Psalm 147 in the new *temple (house of GOD) in Jerusalem. Maybe Nehemiah or one of his friends wrote Psalm 147.

The LORD is infinite in existence, in power and in knowledge. The LORD's cares for His people and heals the broken hearted. HE reverses the evil order of things. The LORD is sovereign over and concerned with all His creation, not only the magnificent stars, but also the lowly creatures on earth. Hence the LORD our GOD deserves all praise.

We are encouraged to praise GOD. There is no heaven, either in this world, or the world to come, for people who do not praise GOD. True praise is beautiful to GOD.

What God takes pleasure in is the reverence and trust of His people. Those who find their hope in HIS mercy delight GOD, because they honour HIM with their trust. It pleases GOD when we hope in HIS loyal love, HIS loving kindness. The more we understand and explain the power and care of GOD, the more we should praise HIM. The same GOD who orders and directs the natural world through HIS WORD has also brought the revelation of HIS heart and mind through HIS WORD to His people.

GOD shows that HE seeks a relationship, not simply a sequence of actions carried out.

Understanding the greatness of GOD, HIS care for humanity and all of nature, and the remarkable power and nature of HIS WORD, should move us to praise HIM all the more.

OLD TESTAMENT

Lamentations 3: 49 – 4: 12

Lamentations 4: 1 & 2

Jeremiah lamented the loss of the precious sons of Zion, who were valuable as fine gold. The best and the brightest were all taken from Judah and Jerusalem and only the poorest and least able left behind.

Although gold does not tarnish, it does lose its shine when it is covered with dust, which is precisely what happened to the golden articles from Jerusalem's temple. They were trampled in the city's dusty streets.

The generation lost to Babylon would never be as valued there as they would be in Jerusalem. They were as cheap and lowly regarded as clay pots. Clay was common in Palestine; nearly all vessels were made from it. Clay pots were abundant and their value was little. If one broke, it was thrown out and a new one replaced it. Similarly the people of Jerusalem, God's precious people, had become worthless.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 2: 7 – 15

Because Herod later commanded that all boys two and younger be killed in the area, we can assume that the wise men first saw the star a year or so previously (on the night JESUS was born). Their journey from the East to Judea was not quick, and they may have left as soon as logistics allowed. The irony is strong. Herod claimed a desire to worship JESUS, when he really wanted to kill HIM.

The star continued to guide them, apparently re-appearing. We can surmise that the star appeared some months before, guiding them to the general area, and then they visited Jerusalem to gain more information. Then the star appeared again to specifically guide them. This was an obviously supernatural phenomenon.

They saw the young Child with Mary His mother: We notice that JESUS here is called a young Child, likely being between 6 and 18 months old. When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to HIM: gold, frankincense, and myrrh: It was common – especially in the East – that one would never appear before royalty or a person of importance without bringing gifts. Considering who these wise men believed the young Child to be, it is not surprising that they gave such lavish gifts.

We may say that gold speaks of royalty, incense speaks of divinity, and myrrh speaks of death. Yet it is almost certain that the Magi did this unawares; they simply wanted to honour the King of the Jews. More important than their gifts is the fact that they worshipped JESUS. It must have been a curious sight to see these impressive dignitaries bowing before a young child. They are obedient to the heavenly dream and leave without serving as Herod's informants.

Joseph was warned in a dream by an angel to take Mother and the child and flee to Egypt as Herod was seeking to destroy the child. The command was urgent, and came right when the wise men had departed. It would not have sounded completely strange to Joseph that they should find refuge in Egypt. There was a large Jewish community in Egypt. It wasn't strange that the Holy Spirit would guide Joseph to take the family there.

Verses for 31st December 2022

PSALMS

Psalms 149 & 150

Psalms 150

Psalm 150 provides guidance on praising the LORD. We learn who, where, and how to praise, the motivation to praise, and who/what should do the praising. GOD is to be praised in HIS sanctuary (temple) and in his mighty expanse. Why should GOD be praised? Because the LORD is praise-able and is worthy of our praise. Who should be praising GOD? You, me, and all that has life; all that breathes. We are to praise GOD according to GOD's being and not according to GOD's actions.

The sanctuary of GOD is a most fitting place for HIS praise. It is a place set apart for HIS honour, and involves special recognition of HIS presence. GOD's sanctuary is not fixed to a particular building:

- JESUS serves His people in a sanctuary in the heavens (Hebrews 8:1-2).
- JESUS makes HIS sanctuary among His people collectively (2 Corinthians 6:16).
- JESUS makes HIS sanctuary in the individual believer (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- Ultimately, JESUS HIMSELF will be the sanctuary of GOD among His people (Revelation 21:22).

GOD's mighty acts are one reason to praise GOD in every place. HE has done great and powerful things, especially what JESUS accomplished at the cross and the empty tomb. While it is right to praise GOD for the mighty things HE does, there is perhaps something even greater in praising HIM for who HE is.

Any musical instruments can be used to praise GOD. Anything or everything you have can be used to worship GOD. Sing loudly and make loud music to praise the LORD who has redeemed you in JESUS CHRIST and is preparing you for heaven.

Everything that breathes should give its praise to the One who gave it breath. Every breath is the gift of GOD and praise is the worthy response we should make for that gift.

OLD TESTAMENT

Lamentations 4: 13 – 5: 22

The people were devastated by the loss of their families, by economic catastrophe. Deliverance and restoration have not yet arrived. The prophet continues to be burdened with the reality of the pain and suffering he witnesses. The hand of the LORD's discipline has been heavy. Jeremiah called on the LORD to remember the calamity that had befallen His people and to consider the reproach in which they now lived. The humbled condition of the people reflected poorly on the LORD because the pagans would have concluded that HE was unable to keep His people strong and free. Jeremiah implied that if the LORD remembered His people HE would act to deliver them.

GOD was unfair; unfair in not punishing the fathers as they deserved, and unfair in punishing the present generation. All the people suffered. The women were ravished, the princes held in chains, the young men and boys made slaves. The joys of life – elders gathering at the gate,

young men enjoying their music, the dance – all had turned into mourning. Their sin brought judgment and faintness of heart, which brought dimming eyes, which brought desolation to Mount Zion.

At the conclusion of the Book of Lamentations, Jeremiah put the focus upon GOD's eternal and unchanging nature. HIS reign is eternal, with HIS throne enduring from generation to generation.

As Hebrews 13:8 would later say, JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jeremiah understood that their only hope was to cry out to God for the gift of repentance. Jeremiah knew they didn't even have the power to properly repent on their own; they needed the LORD to turn them back to HIMSELF. If HE would, then they will be restored.

With GOD turning us back to Himself, we can trust renewal, a return to our better days as in time past.

If we have backslidden or declined, we can pray that GOD would grant us repentance so that we may renew our days as of old.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 2: 16 – 23

Once again, Joseph receives direction from GOD, through an angel, in a dream. He must take JESUS and Mary and go to Egypt to escape Herod's plan to kill the child JESUS. In this context, "Egypt" means the territory outside of Herod's authority, whose borders were a few day's journey away. The emphasis of this command is on haste, not distance; the family must leave while Herod still has no idea who they are. They leave that night, settling for a time in Egyptian territory, waiting to be called back by the angel when Herod has died (Matthew 2:13–15).

Herod realizes the wise men have left the area without telling him where the CHRIST child is. Furious, Herod sends men to kill all male babies in Bethlehem, two years old and younger. This contingency was Herod's reason to ask about the appearance of the wise men's sign. Knowing when his rival was born narrowed down possible targets. Herod's massacre aims to prevent the child from taking the throne from Herod and his sons. Herod doesn't know that the child and family have already left town. Matthew connects the slaughter of the babies to a prophecy by Jeremiah about the weeping of Rachel for her children (Matthew 2:16–18).

After Herod dies, Joseph has two more dreams. First the angel tells him it is safe to return to Israel because those who wanted to kill JESUS are dead. When Joseph gets to Israel, he is concerned about the cruel and unpredictable son of Herod who now reigns over Judea. Through another dream, GOD sends Joseph and Mary to their hometown of Nazareth in the region of Galilee, ruled over by a more stable son of the Herod family. Just as Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfilled prophecies about the birthplace of CHRIST, HIS childhood in Nazareth fulfils another prophecy about the MESSIAH being known as a Nazarene (Matthew 2:19–23).

Some think that Matthew meant, the Messiah would be a Nazirite. To be a Nazirite was to commit one's self to a special vow of consecration, as described in Numbers 6:1–21. When under the vow, people regarded themselves as especially devoted to GOD, leaving their hair uncut, drinking no wine and eating no grape products, and avoiding any kind of contact with anything dead.

In the plan of GOD the FATHER, inspired by GOD the SPIRIT, and embraced by GOD the SON, the MESSIAH grew up in the somewhat despised town. Indeed, JESUS would become known as “JESUS of Nazareth”